



United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)

Statement

by

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and

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**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

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Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, let me thank Dr. Colin Tukuitonga and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for inviting me to address this timely meeting of Pacific Energy and Transport Ministers. It is indeed a pleasure to be amongst you all.

Energy and transport are at the crux of global efforts to tackle climate change and achieve sustainable development objectives. Energy is not part of the Millennium Development Goals, and has often been referred to as the ‘missing MDG’ – due to the development effects it could have had if included. It is crucial therefore that as momentum builds towards framing the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, that sustainable energy be amongst the stand-alone goals. Indeed, many countries, across all regions, have come out strongly in support of the inclusion of sustainable energy as part of the Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2015 Development Agenda. Furthermore, the outcome of Rio+20 – The Future We Want – emphasized the clear linkage between achieving sustainable energy for all and for instance eradicating poverty; leading to sustainable development and global prosperity.

The UN Secretary-General’s Sustainable Energy for All initiative provides a model for treating the different dimensions of energy in an integrated manner. Its three targets are; 1) Ensuring universal access to modern energy services; 2) Doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and (3) Doubling the share of

renewable energy in the global energy mix. Indicators, data and a comprehensive Global Tracking Framework for these targets already exist, provided by organizations such as the World Bank and the International Energy Agency. If the right conditions are in place, these targets are fully achievable by 2030. They are also fully compatible with the 2 degrees target of climate change.

When the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals discussed Energy last November, the Co-chairs Summary noted that '*The Sustainable Energy for All initiative contains ambitious but feasible targets for universal energy access, for renewable energy and for energy efficiency*'.

The Sustainable Development Goals according to Rio+20 are supposed to be universally applicable to all countries and thus it makes sense to include global targets on efficiency and renewable energy in addition to universal energy access. When considering renewables, efficiency and access, it is important that this be linked to the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental and be likewise addressed in a holistic manner.

A Sustainable Development Goal on sustainable energy for all will entail a lot of attention and focus on energy access, efficiency and renewable energy over the coming years. This will also mean more long-term predictability for all stakeholders including Governments, private sector, civil society and development partners.

Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) have made significant efforts at the national and regional level to implement the Barbados Programme of Action and its Mauritius Strategy for Implementation including through mainstreaming of

sustainable development plans, policies and strategies where energy and transport are crucial components. These efforts have been carried out despite limited national resources. Nonetheless, Pacific SIDS have demonstrated strong leadership in calling for ambitious and urgent actions to address their transport and energy concerns including access to technology, improving infrastructure and partnerships on renewable energy.

Access to clean, renewable and secure energy sources will be at the heart of both achieving sustainable development for Pacific SIDS and the global fight against the impacts of climate change. Increased access to sustainable energy will have a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of people in the Pacific. Energy poverty dramatically undermines human development, from health and education to gender equality and environmental sustainability. Access to energy promotes, for example, the empowerment of women by relieving them from the heavy burden of collecting firewood; it helps transforming the lives of rural people by increasing agricultural productivity and by encouraging other income generating activities. Thus, access to renewable energy can be a big multiplier for sustainable development and poverty alleviation as it captures all three dimensions of development – economic, social, and environmental

Many SIDS, including here in the Pacific, are heavily dependent on fossil fuels for their energy needs. As much as 15 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) can be expended on energy imports with per unit electricity costs in some cases in the Pacific being among the highest in the world. This dependency on fossil fuels leaves Pacific SIDS highly exposed to oil-price volatility. The increasing cost of imported fossil fuels represent a major impediment to the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication in SIDS as scarce financial

resources are diverted from efforts to promote social and economic development and ensure environmental sustainability. Furthermore, many remote and rural SIDS communities have little or no access to modern and affordable energy services.

Given the high cost of hydrocarbon fuel sources, Pacific SIDS are at a unique point in their developmental pathways where they can leap frog business as usual and be in a prime position to take full benefit of modern renewable energy technologies. Access to renewable energy will also set an important precedent in making inroads towards reducing the environmental footprint of energy use on the Pacific's pristine environment. This has positive implications not just for the Pacific region, but the world as a whole.

Last year, I had the great pleasure to attend the 44th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Marshall Islands on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General. It was clear from that visit that Pacific leaders continue to show a clear vision in tackling climate change including through the Majuro Declaration on Climate Leadership which Pacific leaders also presented to the Secretary-General during their meeting at the commencement of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Majuro Declaration on Climate Leadership also recognized the necessity of the energy revolution to ensure economic transformation to a low-carbon pathway which would pave the way for greater security, protect natural resources and environment and improve people's health in the Pacific. The bold energy targets set by Pacific SIDS at the 2012 Barbados Declaration on Sustainable Energy for All and also reflected in the Majuro Declaration on Climate Leadership have not gone unnoticed. I urge all stakeholders, including development partners to

continue strengthening and fostering new partnerships with Pacific SIDS for the realization of these exemplary targets and to enable the realization of these targets in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The 2012 Barbados Declaration on Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in SIDS emphasized that there are commercially feasible options for providing energy such as wind, solar, geothermal, and ocean energy, and that many SIDS are particularly suited to these options because of their geographical location. Access to these technologies however remains a major challenge for SIDS and the international community particularly developed countries must ensure the provision of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building in SIDS to ensure the realization of utilizing renewable energy resources. Given the interdependence of various sectors such as water, food and agriculture, eradicating poverty, transport and improving livelihoods with access to sustainable energy, the issue of developing viable renewable energy resources remains a high priority for SIDS and the promotion of renewable energy technology should be pursued with vigor in the SDGs and Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Partnerships will have a transformative and multiplier effect for achieving sustainable energy in the Pacific. Such partnerships are already underway, including the United Arab Emirates-Pacific Partnership Fund which has initiated renewable energy projects in Pacific SIDS including Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The solar and wind projects involved in this partnership are estimated to save more than 1.2 million litres of diesel fuel annually and mitigate 3,030 tonnes of CO₂ per year. Likewise, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community is assisting Pacific SIDS to move away from reliance on hydrocarbon fuel sources

through The North Pacific Renewable Energy Project that is assisting communities to switch to renewable solar energy.

These are examples of the types of transformative partnerships that the international community and development partners must continue to engage in to make inroads allowing for the Pacific SIDS to achieve their sustainable energy goals.

Aside from sustainable energy, transport and mobility are key issues for achieving sustainable development in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda including through enhancing economic growth and improving accessibility. Sustainable transport improves social equity, health, resilience of cities, urban-rural linkages and the productivity of rural areas. Viable regional transportation arrangements, including air, land and sea transport will facilitate greater access to regional and international markets. It is clear therefore, that transport is a cross-cutting issue that has the great potential to transform societies and economies and contribute to the sustainable development of entire countries.

As the Pacific SIDS continue down their respective development pathways, it is crucial that the transport sector develop sustainably through a holistic approach which avoids haphazard development that is often more costly to correct in the future. Strong focus should be placed on public transport and non-motorized transport that also strengthens access to low income groups. Reduced congestion and air pollution, as well as improved road safety, can translate into economic savings equal to several percentage points of GDP. Since transport has such large and broad externalities, it makes this sector one of the most promising in terms of its potential for increasing efficiencies and contributing to green growth.

Achieving low carbon transport should also encourage the use of clean fuels and

all manner of vehicles and developing the right policies towards implementation. Partnerships will also be crucial in achieving sustainable transport which enables access to jobs, goods and services that support equitable development while limiting short and long-term adverse environmental, social and economic consequences.

The 2012 UN Secretary-General's Five Year Action Agenda identified transport as a priority area to convene aviation, marine, ferry, rail, road and urban public transport providers, along with Governments and investors, to develop and take action on recommendations for more sustainable transport systems that can address rising congestion and pollution worldwide, particularly in urban areas. Likewise, The Future We Want stressed that transportation and mobility are central to sustainable development" and recognised the inherent link between achieving greater energy efficiency and transport as part of integrated planning and management.

While much of the debate on transport in the post-2015 development agenda has focused on land-based transport, it is important, including for SIDS, that due consideration be given to both sea and air transport given the inherent nature of the geographic dispersion of this group of countries. For Pacific SIDS, often referred to as Large Ocean States, air transport is a crucial consideration for the overall efforts to access international markets and strengthen tourism which is an important sector in the region.

The year 2014 is proving to be a major milestone for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Not only has the United Nations General Assembly designated 2014 as the International Year of SIDS, the first group of countries to be

recognized in such a way, but also in September, Samoa will host the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

As we look towards Samoa for the SIDS Conference, it is important that the outcomes of the Conference address the challenges that SIDS face in building resilience of their societies, economies and most importantly, their people. People are the greatest asset that SIDS possess and together with international support and partnerships, investments are needed to further boost education and training and to achieve higher rates of economic growth and job creation to address the high rates of unemployment particularly for women and youth.

I encourage international partners to work together with SIDS through the provision of support and resources that will generate the genuine and durable partnerships that SIDS are calling for as an outcome of the SIDS Conference.

Immediately prior to the SIDS Conference in Samoa, my Office, alongside the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce, will convene a two day Private Sector Partnerships Forum from 30 to 31 August which will provide a platform where concrete partnerships for SIDS can be showcased and new ones announced. Both Energy and Transport will be major thematic areas of focus at the Forum. Furthermore, the Forum will also allow for interactions between business and government leaders regarding policies, programmes and practices geared towards strengthening business and industry in the pursuit of sustainable development. I encourage all stakeholders both public and private to take part in the Forum and make your voices heard.

I will conclude by offering my assurances that alongside my Office I will continue to work in close collaboration with the UN system, SIDS development partners, and others, in helping to sensitise the global policy agenda towards ensuring that the sustainable development of SIDS includes consideration for sustainable energy and transport and that this receives the widest recognition in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and that international support measures are geared towards effective and strengthened implementation of the outcomes of this year's SIDS Conference in Samoa

I thank you.