



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

United Nations Member States

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Statement by

H.E. Ms Marlene Moses
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at the

Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Second Session on Poverty Eradication

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Co-chairs,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), represented at the United Nations; namely, Fiji, Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Nauru. I am also speaking for the Pacific Troika on the Open Working Group on SDGs, namely Palau, Papua New Guinea and Nauru. We are honored to be joined by Timor-Leste.

Co-chairs,

Today's interactive exchange of views on poverty eradication as an overarching concern, which is intertwined with food security, agriculture, desertification, water, land degradation, health, governance, equity and human rights opens our consideration of the substantive items to be addressed under the SDGs. I want to thank the panelists for providing the focus.

Each item is important in its own right but also link to other issues on our work plan. Let me start out with our perspective on poverty eradication. Poverty has many faces. The most obvious might be a lack of money to spend on life's necessities. But it goes further. It also denies people access to opportunities, including in education and the chance for a better life. The SDGs should look at poverty in a holistic manner. There should also be a clear definition of poverty that is universally acceptable and yardsticks considered to measure poverty levels need to account for key variables that constitute it.

Co-chairs,

Whilst we recognize that it is early days yet to know the final form and shape the SDGs may take, it is our considered view that the centrality of human wellbeing and security must remain paramount in the overall scheme of the SDGs formulation.

The basic needs of food, clean water, sanitation, health and education ought to be accorded priority whilst the other important elements that support life system and livelihoods should be constructed as part of complementary SDGs.

Hundreds of millions of people around the globe depend on the ocean's resources for income and sustenance. Particularly for island and coastal communities in developing countries, poverty eradication and food security cannot be achieved without sustainable fisheries and also cannot be divorced from the sustainable use of other marine resources. Food security is vital for island communities.

While in the past we have had an abundance of fish and crops, the situation is quickly changing. Overfishing, Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing as well as destructive and harmful fishing practices by others are threatening our fish stocks and our economic revenue sources and threaten our very livelihoods. In other parts of the world, entire fish populations have already collapsed.

The international community has already agreed on many of the solutions. For instance, states committed at Rio+20 to maintain or restore all fish stocks at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield. This commitment and others like it must now be implemented. The SDG process is a natural home. Clear targets and indicators in an SDG on healthy, productive and resilient oceans will provide environmental sustainability to all peoples who depend on oceans and will improve their opportunities for economic and social development.

Co-chairs,

Climate change further exacerbates the problem. Fish are migrating to colder waters and our coral reefs are being exposed to ocean acidification, reducing stocks on a global level and also for our local communities. We are not even safe on land. Rising oceans are penetrating our islands and inundating our fields, destroying our crops. They are also eroding our shores to a degree that resettlements are already taking place. For example, in Papua New Guinea, the people of submerging Carteret Island are being relocated away from their home and face concerns over food insecurity arising from challenges in accessing cultivable land and other life supporting opportunities.

Climate change affects all the issues under discussion today. It is truly a cross-cutting issue and, as we move forward in developing our goals, targets and indicators, it will be our constant companion. It needs to be taken into account every step of the way.

Co-chairs,

We would like to highlight the recent post-2015 consultation in Dili, Timor-Leste under the theme, 'Development for all: Stop conflict, build states, and eradicate poverty.' That brought together Pacific Island states and members of the g7+, and which resulted in the Dili Consensus. It is among these countries that the MDGs are lagging behind because the MDGs do not recognize the fundamental barriers we face ranging from post-conflict situations to the lived reality of climate change. To truly be transformational and eradicate poverty the Sustainable Development Goals must address four areas that were not adequately covered in the MDGs: inclusive economic growth, peacebuilding and statebuilding, and climate change and environmental management.

Finally, means of implementation as another crosscutting issue, should be included under each set of goals. For developing countries, in particular for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as other vulnerable countries, without means of implementation, sustainable development goals will not achieve what we are setting out to do.

I thank you.