



## **Outreach Luncheon on the follow-up and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway**

31 October 2019 (1:15pm – 2:45pm)  
West Terrace, Delegates Dining Hall

### **The Latest Science on Climate Change, and the necessity for the examination for a Disaster Risk & Reconstruction Fund for SIDS (Ambassador Thilmeeza)**

#### *Introduction*

1. Climate change poses the greatest challenge for sustainable development in SIDS and the latest science confirms that if warming exceeds 1.5 C our sustainable development would be definitively compromised. .

#### *IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*

2. The 2018 IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, indicated that SIDS already experience severe consequences even at 1° C. global warming. .
3. Moreover, it finds that at 1.5 C, some impacts will be unavoidable and will be most severe for poor and the most vulnerable due to loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, population displacement amongst others.
4. But, the Report also finds that risks associated with warming are substantially lower at 1.5 C than at 2 C. At 1.5 C there are greater opportunities for adaptation, especially for SIDS. Importantly it makes the case that achieving 1.5 C is possible albeit with unprecedented and far reaching systemic transitions.

#### *IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land*

5. The subsequent IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land, released in August this year, finds that the risks for land-based systems, including irreversible impacts are increasing.
6. It also highlights the limits to land-based adaptation and mitigation, and like the 1.5 Special Report, emphasizes that urgent and near-term actions are required to avoid escalated loss and damage.”

#### *IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere*

7. Finally, the most recent IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere, released last month finds that global warming has altered the chemistry of our oceans and is having far-

reaching impacts, including rise in sea-levels and ocean temperatures, increase in frequency and intensity of cyclones and ocean acidification.

8. The Report highlights that SIDS are particularly exposed to these impacts, but face resource challenges in investing to adapt to these impacts

*Examination of the possibility for a disaster related fund for SIDS*

9. There are three common messages emerging from these reports:
  - I. Climate Change is resulting in increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, as well as irreversible slow onset events, all of which SIDS are particularly vulnerable to.
  - II. Urgent and stringent mitigation strategies are required
  - III. There are limits to adaptation beyond which there will be an increase in loss and damage for SIDS.

These messages are directly relevant to the SIDS sustainable development agenda and our accumulating technical and financial challenges for which the international community must tailor a robust coherent and responsive support mechanism.

10. Official development assistance will continue to be a significant source for SIDS as we aim to build resilient societies and economies. However, there are two issues that will need to be addressed to orient ODA to our current development context.
11. First, not all SIDS are ODA eligible. Some SIDS are forced to borrow to respond to disasters that are the consequence of the actions of better off countries. Second, there is greater focus on targeting financial assistance or instruments for disaster recovery and less so for addressing risk.
12. Taken together, limited availability of ODA and inadequate financial instruments, results in a support lacunae for resilience building in SIDS.
13. For SIDS, as for any other country, resilience building ultimately strengthens disaster preparedness. Without adequate preparation and support many countries struggle to “build back better”, as per Priority Four of the Sendai Framework. Without such preparations, there is a significant likelihood of recreating the risk that led to the disaster through recovery and reconstruction.
14. In the wake of the third consecutive season of above-average damaging Atlantic, hurricanes in the Caribbean region there have been generous pledges for donor assistance, but only a small portion of these pledges have actually been realized. For instance, USD 1.6 billion was pledged following the destruction caused by hurricane Irma in Antigua and Barbuda, but to date, only 20% of this has been received. There needs to be a systemic evaluation of whether there are issues that inhibit access, or failure to realize on the pledges which have been made.

15. Regional mechanisms such as the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) have provided immediate injection of cash for recovery efforts , but even that is nowhere near the scale of what is required.
16. The recipe of public debt and renewed external borrowing to absorb the impact of a natural disaster leads to more burdensome debt servicing and constraints both for economic growth, maintaining social protection floors, and the capacity to invest in long-term climate change mitigation and adaptation. The debt to GDP ratio of SIDS is increasing. In some cases, particularly for those countries impacted by disasters, the debt to GDP ratio is in excess of 100%.
17. It is in this context that we wish to request the Secretary-General to conduct an examination of the finance landscape from the vantage point of the confluence of challenges SIDS face from managing risk to building resilience. Given the fragility of our sustainable development and given that our ability to cope is a matter of international concern at this point, it is critical for the international community to determine whether and how international cooperation and support can effectively respond to our needs because they are unprecedented, they are immediate and they are urgent.
18. We have requested a report on this examination in advance of the HLPF in 2020, so that this issue can be considered during that session. We believe that this examination and report will provide a good basis to see how we can make concrete progress in the further implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. It can also be an important contribution for the wider discourse of coherence and coordination across the array of actors in the humanitarian, climate and disaster space. But let it begin with the SIDS.