

Chairman of the 71st Session of ESCAP

Distinguished Presidents and Prime Ministers;

Honourable Ministers;

Executive Secretary of UNESCAP;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I bring greetings from the Prime Minister, government and people of Solomon Islands.

I also wish to register my sincere gratitude and thanks to UNESCAP for the warm hospitality accorded to my delegation since arriving in Bangkok and for the excellent meeting arrangements.

The 71st session of UN Commission this week is part of the ongoing global effort to map the way forward so that vulnerable states can access the contents of declarations and platforms of regional and international discussions and subsequently can rip the benefits of the post 2015 development agenda outcomes.

My government recognizes the uniqueness of the SIDS in the context of cultural diversity, development economic perspective and social

behavior of the people; hence, designing a national socio-economic framework integrating key issues from the SAMOA pathway. This will not be an easy task. Needless to say, “if with a big “IF”, you don’t have a plan, you would be lost before you have started.”

My government also recognizes the need to specifically integrate the “Green Growth Development” principles within the sustainable development framework in order to successfully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the post 2015 Development Agenda.

As I alluded to in my statement during the High Level Exchange yesterday on the SAMOA Pathway that our score card shows a history of un-achieved MDG’s for Solomon Islands in the last decade. However, that fact will not deter and discourage us as a government to be complacent and do nothing. Although our situation is different to some of your states, sir, but our commonalities over weights the differences. We are SIDS and from the same region and embrace the SAMOA pathway with the continual support rendered by ESCAP for an integrated approach to sustainable development as the way forward.

SI came out from the eschewed violence of 2000 that saw the country

on its knees and never fully recovered since. We had falling growth rates in real terms (from 6% in 2010 to zero % growth rate in the 3rd quarter of 2014 because of the pulling out of the largest Gold mining Company in 2014; a string of balance of trade deficits of around SBD \$600.0 m annually, a current account deficit in terms of GDP of around 9.5% compounded with falling world market prices of our commodity exports- Palm oil, cocoa, coconut, fish and timber; a CPI inflationary rate of around 5% in real terms upgraded recently by the WB and IMF and a slow growth in the foreign exchange inflow in the last 2 years, wholesale price inflation is moderate, and a foreign exchange reserve cover of approximately 12 months import.

The Sogavare led government has over the recent months instituted stringent measures in the management of public finances in view of the principles of “Financial inclusiveness” and we believe that in doing this, every “penny” spent will touch the lives of the citizens in terms of creation of jobs, access to finances by SME’s, equal wage distribution, work place democracy, non-adversity in the tax regime, welfare of labor, up skilling youths, digital connectivity- my government is currently considering 3 options, mainstreaming in provinces, protection of culture,

food security in Agriculture and fisheries, early warning systems before a disaster and bolstering trade and commerce in the region.

We have to feel optimistic about this framework because we created it. For my government, the outcome of this meetings, building on the SAMOA pathway are not merely “pieces of papers” to be shelved. These declarations will set the tone of a new page in the development of a comprehensive “time-table”. This time around, we pledge to accomplish its objectives by facilitating these national SDG programs on a timely manner.

I concur with the Prime Minister of Fiji and Tuvalu and other speakers on the High Level Ministerial exchange yesterday that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) must be accessed on the principles of the UNFCCC and the Red tapes of a big bulwark of bureaucracy should never be applied to SIDS in advancing our SDG's.

According to Ben Benaki (Fed Reserve) and former WB chairman- Joseph Stiglitz, the globe is chasing a recession and with the fragile economic

base, susceptible to economic shocks and natural disasters outlooks, SI must be vigilant, work by the time-table set and conform to the rules, then and then only can we remain resilient and focus to the cause of achieving the post 2015 Development Agenda and SDG's.

Chairman,

Let me repeat what I said yesterday, Climate Change stands out as the no. one issue of our time. It is not only a Global Agenda, nor a regional matter but a country-level issue. It is real and real in its entirety. As HOS and governments, we must forcefully get out of our conventional strategies and tackle these challenges head-on now for the protection of our future generations using innovative strategies and the SAMOA pathway *provides the path forward.*

I therefore call on the international community to thoroughly address and control the emissions of greenhouse gases by developed nations to acceptable sustainable levels. In this regard, the international community should be more responsible in its efforts to mitigate effects on the environment cause by development. On the other hand, Small Island states should be encourage to involve more meaningfully on

conservation and management of fisheries and marine resources.

In terms of the Istanbul Program of Action (IPOA), the Solomon Islands government instituted a National Development Strategy (NDS) 2011-2020 in 2010 that provides the platform for implementation on the national level. The NDS sets out the country's vision and priorities to advance both human as well as economic development. The progress made to date include; *Promoting Productive Capacity, Trade, Private Sector Development and Public Finance Management, Human and Social Development, Reduce Vulnerabilities and Creating Resilient Societies, and Mobilizing Financial Resources for Development and Capacity Building.*

However, with the SAMOA pathway on the horizon, this doc will be reviewed in due time.

Finally, the combined efforts to ensure SIDS priorities feature in the SDG's have at least been achieved. The challenge now is for the successful implementation of the Samoa Pathway and that of the SDG's and the Post 2015 Development Agenda. It is imperative that partnership for sustainable and equitable development between

government, private sector and key relevant stakeholders regionally and internationally is encouraged in the years ahead.

I thank you Chair.