

Outcome

AIMS Regional Preparatory Countries for the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway 23-25 May 2018 Balaclava, Mauritius

1. Representatives of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) Region met in Balaclava, Mauritius on 23-25 May 2018 in preparation for the one-day High Level Conference on the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway to be held in New York in September 2019 as mandated by the UNGA Resolutions 70/292, 71/225 and 72/217.
2. The representatives of the SIDS made presentations on the progress in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway which focused on the national priorities, successes, challenges and lessons learnt, noting that some national reports were yet to be finalized. The meeting discussed the possible regional approaches to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway for the AIMS region, the means of implementation including financing for sustainable development in the SIDS, the necessity for a regional coordinating mechanism to support the implementation and had an exchange of views on the elements for a regional approach to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway for the purposes of the midterm review.
3. The country presentations underlined the intricate interlinkages between the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognized that the monitoring of the progress in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway was best carried out in the context of the monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs and their targets based on the SDG indicators. The meeting recognized that there exist sufficient commonalities in the priorities of the AIMS countries that could form the basis for a regional approach while emphasizing that, because of their diverse economic development levels, their geographical dispersion and other particularities, attention should also be given to their pressing national priorities.
4. In the context of a regional approach to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway for the AIMS region, the representatives agreed that the following thematic areas represented the collective priorities that should be addressed in the context of the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway:
 - Climate Change
 - Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building
 - Water and Sanitation
 - Data collection and interpretation gaps
 - Means of implementation including financing for development
 - Capacity Building
 - Gender equality and women empowerment
 - Food security
5. The meeting recognized that while an overall AIMS regional approach was desirable, the geographical dispersion of the countries of

the AIMS region also provided opportunities for action at a sub-regional level to address issues related to the geographical position of certain AIMS countries, language commonalities and similarities of the challenges faced.

6. The meeting expressed continued concern over the difficulties faced by the SIDS in accessing funding and financing for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, especially for SIDS which had graduated from LDCs, including the challenges faced in accessing funds pledged under the Green Climate Fund in the context of combating climate change and its effects as well as other such initiatives. The meeting, recognizing the efforts by the Green Climate Fund, the global environment facility and others in improving access to funding, underlined the importance of further streamlining the procedures for accessing funding for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. In this regard, they called on the funding/financing institutions like the Green Climate Fund, the Commonwealth Climate Finance Hub and the Global Environment Facility, and traditional partners such as the EU to address these SIDS concerns. The meeting also stressed on the importance of domestic resource mobilization and leveraging funds, and also considered the possibility of using innovative financing instruments such as Islamic Finance, blue bonds, debt swaps and called for the lowering of remittance transaction costs.

7. The meeting recalled the recommendations by the Committee on Development Policy (CDP) to ECOSOC to consider, at its forthcoming session, the creation of a new category of countries which are or have graduated from LDC status and which face extreme vulnerability to climate change and other environmental shocks and encouraged SIDS to actively participate in the discussions.

8. The meeting acknowledged the importance and the scaling up of strategic partnerships in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway while underlining the need for them to be geared towards addressing the national priorities of the countries.

9. The meeting also agreed that the private sector had a very important role to play in the implementation process and highlighted the need for facilitation of public private partnerships in that regard. The meeting also recognized that there was a need for greater access to finance by small and medium enterprises which can represent a powerful vehicle for attaining the SAMOA Pathway objectives and for creating jobs and wealth. The meeting further stressed the need for the involvement of civil society, youth and other stakeholders in the decision making process.

10. The meeting underlined the difficulties faced by the AIMS countries in accessing funding and financing under favorable terms especially by the middle-income and high-income countries. The meeting expressed concern that the level of income continued to be the overriding consideration in determining conditions for access to funding and financing without due attention being paid to the vulnerabilities of the SIDS. They called on agencies and partners to increase their assistance to SIDS in building their capacity to access the available funding/financing. They impressed on the capacity to formulate bankable projects and successfully addressing the complicated

modalities associated with the access to funding/financing for both projects and infrastructure development.

11. The meeting also stressed the need to facilitate transfer of technology to and promote innovation in SIDS.

12. The meeting recognized the role being played by relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the UN System in addressing and mainstreaming the priorities of the SIDS in their action programmes and encouraged them to continue their good work especially in the fields of food security, trade, environment, the oceans, education, culture, social development and sustainable tourism and country support in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in general.

13. The meeting recognized the strategic role of UNDP at national level in supporting the development of national development plans and/or long-term development plans and the mainstreaming of the SDGs in the national policies leading to the integration of the SAMOA Pathway. They called on UNDP, which was preparing the AIMS regional report on the progress in the SAMOA Pathway implementation, to use its network of country offices, in collaboration with UNDESA and UNOHRLLS, to pay particular attention to the priorities and challenges identified by the AIMS region. They also called on UNDP to continue extending its full support to the SIDS in the enabling the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

14. The meeting of the AIMS countries also underlined the difficulties faced in coordination and monitoring at the regional level due to the lack of a formal mechanism to cater for the region's needs.

15. The meeting agreed that a coordination mechanism is crucial to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in the AIMS region and recommended the holding of a high-level meeting of the AIMS region in the margins of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018 to decide on the creation and the modalities of such a mechanism.

16. The meeting called on the Permanent representations of AIMS to the United Nations in New York to meet regularly to prepare for the high-level meeting and to exchange views on promoting regional cooperation among the AIMS countries. The meeting also recommended that the UNDESA and the UNOHRLLS organize regular skype meetings with the AIMS National Focal Points and the UN Country Teams. The meeting also called on the AIMS UN country teams to coordinate amongst themselves to more effectively support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. Pending the setting up of a regional coordination mechanism, the meeting recognized that the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) may help to facilitate future coordination, in collaboration with the non-IOC Members of the AIMS, in accordance with the IOC's role as coordinator for the AIMS region during the 2005 SIDS Conference.

17. The meeting recommended that in order to accurately reflect the region's composition, the regional nomenclature should be modified to "Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) to be pronounced

as “ACE” Small Island Developing States” and adopted in the context of the High-Level Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway in 2019.

18. The meeting expressed its appreciation to the UNDESA and the UNOHRLLS for their continued support to SIDS in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

19. The meeting agreed that the AIMS regional report which together with these conclusions and the report of the Preparatory Meeting will constitute the input of the group to the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting in SAMOA in November 2018. The AIMS regional report will be finalized in New York by the group, following the receipt of the remaining national reports, by July 2018.

20. The meeting expressed its gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for ably hosting the AIMS Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway.

25 May 2018

Balaclava, Mauritius