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

**Introductory Remarks (Ambassador Young)**

1. I am grateful to you for joining me and my fellow SIDS Colleagues for lunch today.

   It is the first time that we are meeting since the Mid-term review and I wish to take this opportunity to express AOSIS’s appreciation for your continued solidarity and support.

2. Each of you and the countries your represent have contributed in different ways to advancing the interest of small island developing states. We recognize that those contributions are not only in the wordsmithing of negotiated resolutions but, well beyond the halls of this institution, your contributions have reached our people at home. Ultimately that is our duty, to make a difference for people on the ground.

3. AOSIS places high value on deepening our cooperation and our partnership with you as we move through a very critical stage for the sustainable development of our countries. I do not wish to suggest that this is all about us. Nothing could be further from reality. The SIDS are the proverbial canary in the coalmine. But we are all in this together.

   But don’t take my word for it.

4. The science is repeatedly reminding us that the severe impacts small island developing states are experiencing now are but a harbinger of the extreme events that the world will have to become accustomed to in the not too distant future. The consequences that we face from those impacts, loss of
livelihoods, worsening health, food insecurity and displacement, will not be contained to isolated islands. Those consequences will be global.

5. There is no doubt that the urgency upon our countries is an urgency that is palpable by people all over. Your children are agitating for solutions now, the very solutions that SIDS have been advocating for in the past thirty years.

6. Though the challenges overwhelm, we are not chastened. The images of people in the streets, in major metropolitan centers fortify our conviction that the international community will rise to the task. Already we are seeing technology being advanced for climate solutions. Renewable energy costs are reaching new lows with the possibility that it can be a competitive energy solution by 2020. New battery technology could usher in the new electric car age. Industry is discovering and beginning to disclose the risks they face related to climate change; and there is prospect for further expansion through industry led initiatives as the Task Force for Climate Related Financial Disclosures. These are positive steps which we hope to be matched by leaps in transformational policy at the national and global levels.

7. SIDS are already at the forefront in advancing domestic policy to believing still that together we can meet the goals of the SAMOA Pathway and the plethora of development agendas of the 2015 era. AOSIS Member States are coordinating several second committee resolutions this year – International Financial Systems, Financing for Development, External Debt Sustainability, Disaster Risk Reduction, Operational Activities for Development, Energy and the motivation for our lunch today, the follow-up to the SAMOA Pathway.

8. It would easy for us to produce a purely procedural resolution for SAMOA Pathway noting the recent adoption of the Political Declaration. But it would not be right. The Political Declaration represents exactly that, political messaging. What SIDS need now is implementation and only the General Assembly can take action in that regard. Our intention is to have a resolution that is concise and precise. We have focused on a few areas that we believe build on the momentum of the discussions we have been having, statements being made by the Secretary-General and reports being produced by UN agencies. And we firmly believe that taking measured action in these few areas will help SIDS in the most practical ways and build concrete supportive systems.
9. We ask the Secretary-General to allow the examination of the disaster financing mechanisms. We also him to engage the Statistical Commission to allow us to measure progress in the SAMOA Pathway through a monitoring and evaluation framework. Finally, we ask the World Bank to consider the re-establishment of a working group that will explore ways to provide concessional financing that goes beyond purely income-only measurements. My AOSIS colleagues will share greater insight into those calls.

10. Allow me to conclude with a simple request – let us find a collective way forward for the mounting challenges that SIDS are facing. I trust that we can engage in frank and open discussions on the most optimum way forward.