

## **PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

### **United Nations Member States**



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#### **STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY THE CHAIR OF P-SIDS**

##### **Virtual meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Operational Activities Segment**

**10-1 p.m. 20 May 2020**

**United Nations, New York**

**Excellencies, all protocols observed.**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of twelve Pacific Small Island Developing States, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country Fiji.

We welcome the Secretary General's Report on the Implementation of GA Resolution 71/243 on the (QCPR) and GA resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the UN development system. As PSIDS, we have benefitted from the various consultations of the UN Development System. We want to stress the importance of a tailored technical and policy support specific to SIDS and those within the Multi Country Office context in order to benefit from a UN System that is coherent, coordinated and fit for purpose and one that will support the implementation of our SDGs by 2030

**Chair,**

Without a doubt, COVID- 19 has drastically shifted the development paradigm. This is no time for inertia but energy. P-SIDS members, although small and vulnerable, were able to respond effectively to COVID-19 by shutting down borders. This was done to mitigate external 'shocks' and at the same time placing the health and well-being of our people at the forefront instead of the economic impacts that are going to be felt in the coming months and years. We also closed our borders simply because of our ailing health infrastructures which cannot take additional strain from the coronavirus pandemic. Just last month, 4 of our countries- Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and including my own Fiji was affected by Tropical Cyclone Harold bringing devastations to already fragile infrastructures. Due to both demand- and supply-side shocks, economies such as ours will be hit hard because of our dependence on trade, tourism, remittances for instance as a driver of economic growth.

In the current health pandemic, we have received reports of Resident Coordinators in action, coordinating a UN system and responding to Covid-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold. The COVID-19 pandemic is the first test for a reformed UN Development System and we look forward to close consultations with countries for a tailored response, very much in line with an empowered RC to lead the system in responding to our needs, this is what we as Member States have asked for.

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We welcome the development of UN Cooperation Frameworks aligned to National Development Plans and Priorities with health and social- economic issues at the center. We want to see tangible outcomes harnessed through these new Cooperation Frameworks with Joint Programming and pooling of UN resources for real developments impact on the ground.

We look forward to further in country consultations on the reconfiguration of UN Country Teams, the composition, roles and profiles of which are tailored to the context, and that deliver shared results, including through a redesigned UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAFs) that becomes the main strategic instrument to respond to national needs and priorities.

Enhancing UN physical presence by increasing UN footprint in the Northern part of the Pacific region is vital to ensuring that the UN system is better positioned to respond to the unique vulnerabilities and challenges faced by all SIDS, leaving no one behind.

Whilst we welcome the Secretary-General's decision in establishing a Multi Country Office in the North Pacific, more so, we want concrete solutions on the implementation of this decision.

On the regional review, we welcome the creation of Regional Collaborative Platforms designed to ensure coordination, collaboration and drawing from the technical expertise within the UN system at the regional level to support RC and UNCT efforts in country. We look forward to the establishment of the Regional Coordination Officer position to be based in Fiji for enhanced coordination support and to work with existing regional entities to avoid duplication and to better support the Pacific region at large.

**Chair,**

We reiterate the importance of building capacities for our own people for a secure and sustainable future where solutions are locally tailored and driven. 10 years is a short time frame to achieve this but this is certainly part of our long-term vision and investment for the Pacific region.

I Thank You