

Statement delivered by Mr. Rennie Gadabu, First Secretary  
On behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States  
At the General Debate of the Second Committee  
Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017, UN Headquarters

Mr. Chairman,

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

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Solomon Islands on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum. We further align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Maldives as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and with the statement delivered by Ecuador as Chair of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, Chair, allow me to join others in congratulating you on behalf of this group on your election as Chair of the Second Committee. Likewise, our congratulations to the members of your Bureau for their election to their various positions. I wish to assure you, Chair, of the full support of this Group throughout the work of the Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

We are in the midst of a wholesale reorientation towards the objectives set by the 2030 Agenda.

Last year's quadrennial comprehensive policy review, and the repositioning of the United Nations Development System that it kicked off, along with creation of new strategic plans of funds and programmes, not to mention national reforms to sustainable development strategies—all of these efforts are an attempt to come to terms with the transformative ambition of our new development agenda.

These reforms to the UN Development System are taking place in a broader reform effort which will bring shifts to our management paradigm and the peace and security architecture. All of these efforts will have implications for our work in this committee, and we need to ensure that they support, and do not undermine, the colossal undertaking that will be attaining each and every one of the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, we must especially be attuned to interlinkages between areas that are traditionally held separate. For example, as the security implications of Climate Change continue to accelerate, the UN System must adapt.

Mr. Chairman,

As we grapple with the task of translating an aspirational agenda into policy, it is all the more critical that we hold to its touchstones that have guided our work, namely universality and commitment to the most vulnerable. This includes small island developing states, which possess unique and particular vulnerabilities that make us a “special case” for sustainable development.

Fortunately, as we eye reform, we have a concrete and actionable path forward, in the form of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on United Nations System Support for Small Island Developing States. The work of this Committee will be critical to implementing those recommendations, including in the resolution on follow up and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. It is an urgent priority that we advance and implement recommendations in our coming work this session.

Among the most critical of those recommendations are a need to look critically at the eligibility criteria for access to financing for development and technical assistance to be provided to SIDS. Classification according to income often excludes SIDS from preferential treatment, despite significant vulnerabilities.

Moreover, financing for development more broadly is also an urgent priority. Our attention to the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda reflects the fact that without actionable streams of financing, the goals and targets will be empty promises. International development cooperation and genuine and durable partnerships are both essential for sustainable development, particularly for Small Island Developing States where opportunities for additional domestic resource mobilization are limited.

Mr. Chairman,

The worsening impacts of climate change have had tragic consequences this Fall. A staggering number of lives have been lost, and the affected communities will spend many years rebuilding. These sorts of extreme events have become too common, and the projections indicate that the situation will continue to worsen for the foreseeable future. Our work in this Committee must be attuned to this dangerous, new reality and the urgent need to reduce vulnerability and build resilience in the places most at risk. It also worth noting that the security implications of climate change are mounting in concert. Therefore, we will continue to call for an appropriate institutional response, which should include the appointment of a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Climate and Security.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

We recently concluded a successful United Nations Conference focused on the health, productivity and resilience of our Ocean. The commitments made at that Conference will be critical if we are to achieve our sustainable development objectives. As we have firmly established, there are tight interlinkages between the health of our ocean and other goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda. We will continue to advocate for recognition of the importance of our ocean in the work of this Committee, and in particular its importance to the sustainable development of SIDS.

I thank you.