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Statement by Mr. Jeem Lippwe
Deputy Permanent Representative

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Mr. Chairperson,

Let me join others in congratulating you and members of the Bureau for your election to this important committee,

I associate my statement with the statement made by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I also wish to express our support for the AOSIS statement delivered by its distinguished Chair.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have heard our brothers and sisters from other small island developing states (SIDS) emphasize the fact that we small island nations face the consequences of Climate Change as a challenge to our sustainable development efforts and as a threat to our very survival. As a remote, widely dispersed nation of mostly low-lying small islands we would like to add our own unique perspective to this discussion.

We have, from the beginning of our joining the United Nations, voiced our concern about the environment, and focused our attention prominently on the issue of climate change and sea-level rise. It is very clear to us that without addressing these issues, sustainable development for island countries is impossible.

IPCC's Fifth Assessment Reports tells us we are on track for a 3-5 degrees Celsius track. We know that changes due to global warming contributes to sea-level rise. A mere increase of a few meters would bring catastrophic disasters for the atolls in Micronesia.

We also know that our islands have done the least towards the cause of global climate change. We know too that we are disproportionately being affected by its adverse effects – effects with dire consequences on our food and water security, health of our population to the health of our ocean and coral reefs; resource access to biodiversity as well as our own personal security and the very existence of our island nations.

We know that the world can and should take the climate crisis seriously, and that it falls to the island nations, especially people most vulnerable, to stand up and be the moral voice we desperately need. But it will take the bold actions from the major emitters to avert this catastrophe.

Mr. Chairperson,

For small islands to survive, the rise in temperature must be kept to well below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Urgent action is necessary and the cost of inaction will increase the cost of economic damage, and worst, lead to the demise of our islands. But even as Micronesia and the rest of the small island developing states demand action, we are also aggressively taking leadership to address the adverse impacts of climate change.

That is why my country has made an important proposal to amend the Montreal Protocol to gradually phase down the production and consumption of HFCs. This action can prevent global average temperature increase by up to 0.5 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. Reducing HFCs and other short-lived climate pollutants can reduce the rate of sea-level rise by 25%. This near-term climate mitigation will give all atolls around the globe a chance to survive.

There is a need to fully operationalize and capitalize the Green Climate Fund to support adaptation and mitigation activities. We look to Lima and Paris to lead us to an ambitious and legally binding Climate Treaty to address the greatest challenge of our time.

Mr. Chairperson,

As a SIDS, we need development that is sustainable. And this brings me to the SAMOA Pathway – the outcome of the recently held 3rd International Conference on SIDS.

The SAMOA Pathway is packaged with a definite purpose in mind - to stimulate the growth of SIDS economies that can be self-sustaining. There can be no escaping that the path to sustainable development will involve economic partnership forged with our development partners and fulfilled within the framework of development cooperation. If this is to work, it must be carefully planned and executed in a way that is suitable to our people and their culture - not just taking any and all available handouts with their accompanying strings.

There also can be no escaping the importance of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and its antecedent SIDS outcome documents - from Barbados to Mauritius. These documents spell out the SIDS priorities and must be incorporated, supported and maintained in the stand alone Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) discussions on Oceans and Seas, Sustainable Energy for All, Climate Change, Means of Implementation and be part of the post-2015 development agenda for the next fifteen years. We are pleased to see these stand alone goals reflected in the report of the Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group of the SDGs.

We also look forward to the work of the Open Working Group on Financing and the Third International Conference on Financing and Development to take place in July next year.

The achievements of the international community's adoption of these blueprints for the development of SIDS will have been a hollow victory if we fail to provide for their implementations and fulfill all the commitments and pledges agreed to in Samoa. In this context we need a mechanism that can monitor the implementation of the partnerships that were announced in Samoa as well as future ones.

2014 marks the International Year of Small Islands Developing States. As we move towards the end of this historic Year of SIDS, let us remember that our urgent challenge is to ensure the collective wellbeing and survival of SIDS. Let us make this Year worthy of its dedication.

Thank you.