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Intervention by President David W. Panuelo

High-level plenary meeting -Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway

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President, moderators, stakeholders and friends,

Good morning,

Let me join previous speakers to thank the Governments of Fiji and Ireland for their leadership in this review process. I also thank the Government of Belize for their sterling leadership of the Alliance of Small Island States.

We started this high-level week with the call for leaders to focus on the health of our planet. People are at the center of our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. We have always stated that the SAMOA Pathway complements our national plans, and it is our blueprint for the Sustainable Development Goals.

This five-year review helps us take stock of our steps, and determine if we are moving in the right direction. This exercise provides the opportunity for us to learn from each other to replicate the best practices and avoid pitfalls. For this reason, the FSM attaches great value in this five-year review exercise within the UN system. We thank the Secretary-General for his efforts to reposition the United Nations Development System and welcome his decision to establish a Multi-Country Office (MCO) in our North Pacific region, and welcome the opportunity that the Federated States of Micronesia is hosting the MCO.

Climate change is the central and existential issue for my country. Mainstreaming climate change into our social, environmental and economic development plans is a necessity. It is a process that we all recognize must be done, but we have yet to master. We continue to operate our programs in a fragmented way whether it be from the International level, to the regional level, or from the national level. We know all too well how years of progress can be erased with a typhoon. Consequently, the importance of strong institutions and harmonized action is magnified. This is the gap and challenge I see, and I plan to reinforce existing laws and mechanisms in my country to ensure that we are on the right path.

In 2014, a Climate Change Act was passed by our Congress requiring the Departments of the National Government to mainstream climate change into their programs. The law also requires the President to submit a report to Congress on the progress of implementation of the Climate Change Policy, develop plans and policies, and recommend additional legislation where applicable and necessary. The law also welcomes a budget submission to implement the Climate Change Policy. We have set up a National SDG Working Group to coordinate our commitments. I will institutionalize our national mechanism and make the membership inclusive of all stakeholders including Youth and Women. I will also commit resources to enable the Working Group to be able to carry out its work starting with our preparation for our Voluntary National Review of the SDGs next year.

As we all know, in Small Governments, we find the same person serving on different boards for the same purpose. We can't continue to spend most of our time trying to report on our implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the Sustainable Development Goals. There has to be a better way—there has to be a SIDS reporting template.

Quality data and statistics are key to sound policy. The UN has to find a way to use the data and statistics of small populations and make them available and user friendly.

The need for more awareness about the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda and related international frameworks must be continuous and accelerated. We thank partners who recognize the value of direct support to build our human capacity and strengthen our institutions. We view this approach as a means to ensure ownership of our development aspirations.

We recognize that many of the challenges before us need a collective effort; we cannot do it alone. The SAMOA Pathway is about genuine and durable partnerships. We continue to count on donor partners for their commitments and continued support. We continue to count on the UN system and the Specialized Organizations for their expertise. We call on them to also harmonize their assistance to SIDS.

Thank you, moderators, for the opportunity to share our experience.