

Opening Remarks

by

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at

**SIDS Lighthouses Initiative 2.0:
Increasing Ambition to Accelerate Energy Transformation
in Small Island Developing States**

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Honorable Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa
Excellencies Heads of State and government present,
Ms. Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for
the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island
Developing States, and Representative of the Secretary-General,
Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to welcome you to this *High-Level Roundtable on Increasing Ambition to Accelerate Energy Transformation in Small Island Developing States*. I wish to start by personally thanking you for taking the time in your busy schedules to be here. I know that some leaders even changed their travel schedule to join us today. We see in your warm response to our invitation a sign of your trust and support that we deeply appreciate. It shows us what is possible when leadership is present and invites us to do more and better to address your needs and expectations.

Doing more and doing better is precisely what brings us here today to launch with you the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative (LHI) 2.0. Since its very inception, ambition and inclusive partnerships have been at the heart of our work with SIDS. And ambition, vision, determination and strong partnerships are what we need going forward. As the existential threats to islands brought by climate change intensify and as extreme weather events wreak ever more havoc, we have no other choice. Islands have already shown immense leadership in responding to these challenges. Their remarkable courage and determination have impressed the world

and made a decisive contribution to deliver the Paris Agreement and advance global climate action. As they continue to be on the frontlines of combatting climate change, we need to work harder together as they strengthen their resilience and their prospects not only of mere survival but also for building a secure and prosperous future for their citizens.

In the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway, SIDS recognized that this secure and prosperous future should also be a sustainable energy future which reduces their dependence on costly energy imports and harnesses their considerable renewable energy potential. Launched at the UN Climate Summit in 2014, the Lighthouses Initiative sought to provide a platform to translate this ambition into action, through a holistic and inclusive approach that encompasses policy and market frameworks, technology options and capacity building.

Four years later, success has been beyond our expectations. Today, the LHI brings together 36 SIDS and 21 partners. And since the launch of the Initiative, drastic cost reductions and technological advances have made renewables the most affordable and resilient energy option in most SIDS. Our data shows that from 2014 to 2017 the average growth of installed renewables capacity in all SIDS was around 125 MW per year, resulting in some 3.4 GW in 2017. In 36 SIDS members of the LHI, more than 400 MW of renewables were installed in that time period and over 500 million USD were mobilised for renewables investments. This means that the LHI targets for 2020 have already been exceeded three years ahead of schedule.

This is a remarkable achievement and the credit goes first and foremost to the leadership of SIDS and the strong political will they have shown to act. Today, 13 SIDS have renewable energy targets of between 80 and 100%. At the same time, I also would also like to recognise the essential and generous contributions by key development partners of the LHI: Germany, the United Arab Emirates, France, Norway, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan and New Zealand, which have financially supported the Initiative, and also other partners that have contributed to delivering valuable capacity building programmes and shared best practices in renewables deployment.

We must build on this encouraging progress. We need to take the energy transformation in SIDS to the next level as renewable energy is central to addressing many pressing challenges in SIDS. This includes not only combatting climate change, but also fostering economic growth, creating sustainable jobs and ensuring food and water security. And much remains to be done. While most islands have a vast renewables potential, it is still largely untapped as renewables account for only about 10% of total installed capacity in SIDS. Access to finance and attracting investments remains a major challenge. IRENA estimates that USD 16 billion will be needed by 2030 to meet the renewable energy targets identified in SIDS NDCs.

Against this background, IRENA undertook comprehensive consultations with SIDS and partners to better understand how to enhance the impact of the Initiative in its next phase, and to identify priority areas in the context of current efforts to advance the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some of the key areas that emerged include: 1)

Supporting SIDS in implementing and reviewing their NDCs; 2) Expanding the focus to include renewable energy technologies, such as geothermal and ocean, as well as accelerating deployment of renewables in end use sectors such as transportation; 3) Enhancing support for the development of bankable projects and access to finance. And finally, 4) Reinforcing the work on the nexus between renewable energy and agriculture, food, health and water.

A lesson we learned from the first phase of the Lighthouses Initiative is the importance of bold goals. Thus, I am delighted to announce that the Initiative's partners remain determined to lead by example and have set an ambitious new target to harness the full potential of the energy transformation. The target for the next five years will be to double the growth trend of the last five years to reach, by 2023, a total installed renewable energy capacity of 5 GW.

A key factor to the success of the LHI has been the sense of ownership and engagement of SIDS and partners. We look forward to your guidance on the way ahead. Your active participation and the outcomes of our discussion will help further shape the next stage of the SIDS LHI and a new chapter in our common journey.

Thank you.