



**Closing Statement by Mr. Fred Sarufa, Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations, New York and Rapporteur-General of the Pacific Region Workshop of the United Nations Human Rights Council LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund, 21 November 2019, Nadi, Fiji**

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His Excellency Mr. Coly Seck, President of the Human Rights Council; Mr. Sharvada Sharma, Solicitor-General of Fiji, Her Excellency Madam Nazshat Shameen Khan, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations in Geneva and Vice-President of the Human Rights Council and Co-Host of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Pacific Region Workshop; Her Excellency Madam Amatlain Kabua; Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations in New York; Her Excellency Madam Jane Chigiyal, Permanent Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia to the United Nations in New York; Ambassador Missouri Sherman Peter of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the Caribbean Community to the UN in New York; Mr. Eric Tistounet, Chief of the Human Rights Council Branch of the OHCHR and representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; and distinguished colleagues and fellow participants;

Today, as we draw to a successful close the inaugural LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Workshop for the Pacific region and in my capacity as the Rapporteur-General of this meeting, and on behalf of the Pacific region, I cannot but say how pleased I am for the remarkable manner in which we have conducted our proceedings over this past three days.

Remarkable for several reasons. Firstly, Mr. President, your landmark visit to our Blue Pacific Continent is the first-ever for an incumbent President of the Human Rights Council and also from an LDC and furthermore, in your personal capacity. This is indeed a step in the right direction for the Council and which we commend and support. We trust that this will not be the last for the Council President.

Secondly, another first, arising from this Workshop, is the increased participation of SIDS at the Ambassadorial level, where 4 took part and all of them are indeed female and leaders in their own right and also gamechangers for the greater good of not just our own Pacific peoples but all of humanity.

Thirdly, the Workshop's level of intensity reminded us, as Trust Fund beneficiaries, of the induction programme and the subsequent engagement we had in the Regular Sessions of the HRC.

Also, the heightened commitment and creativity, as exemplified, for instance, by our official Timekeeper, and the spirit of collegiality, shown through.

All of these, Mr. President, enabled our collective accomplishment of the mandate from the Human Rights Council Resolution 34/40.

I would also note that drawing from the lessons learnt and inspiration drawn from the Georgetown Declaration, our own Nadi Declaration is realistic about the opportunities provided under the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund to address support for human rights issues at the national and other levels.

It recognizes that we have collectively and remarkably come a long way in a few short years, thanks to the foresight and wisdom of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund established under HRC resolutions 19/26 of 23 March 2012 and 34/40 of 24 March 2017.

For instance, the noteworthy and welcome exponential growth of the proportion of female participants in the HRC sessions; the increasing establishment of PSIDS Missions in Geneva; and the welcomed growth of the number of successful PSIDS and SIDS members in the Council, including Fiji and also next year the Republic of Marshall Islands from the Pacific region. Such positive developments need to be encouraged and sustained for the voices of SIDS to be not only heard in the HRC but also to shape the agenda of the Council.

The Nadi Declaration is also cognizant of the Trust Funds limitations and challenges including new and emerging ones. Some of which are specific to our region and therefore one-size-fit-all modus operandi in addressing such situations needs to be avoided.

For instance, the primacy and urgency of addressing the human rights concerns arising from the single gravest existential threat the climate crisis continues to pose for our peoples and countries who are on the frontlines of climate change, natural disasters and rising sea-levels.

The Declaration also recognizes the nexus between sustainable development and human rights and the importance of addressing them holistically. The challenges of gender-based violence and capacity constraints including financial resources, and disaggregated data and statistics for informed decision-making are but some of the key areas for the Pacific SIDS that require support and partnership.

Going forward to 2022, we recognize that our governments must continue to take the leadership role but also work in partnership with all stakeholders, including HRC and build on the foundations that has been laid under the HRC resolution 34/40.

In this spirit, we count on the support of Mr. President and your successor as well as the HRC members to consider in an appropriate way the advancement of the Nadi Declaration in the Council.

In closing, we reiterate our gratitude to the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund partners, the Friends of LDCs/SIDS in Geneva and also our Geneva-based LDCs and SIDS members who continue to play a key role in sustaining this momentum.

Let me also use this occasion to once again thank Fiji for the excellent hospitality and Talanoa spirit.

May I also convey on behalf of the fellows of the Pacific SIDS region our appreciation to our fellow SIDS colleagues from the African, Asian and Caribbean regions for joining us for this Workshop. Together, we can magnify and solidify the SIDS voice in the work of the Human Rights Council.

Last but not the least, I also pay special tribute to Mr. Eric Tistounet, Chief of the Human Rights Council Branch of the OHCHR and also the other distinguished Representatives of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, particularly Ms. Fatou Kamara Houel. An outstanding solid team of champions for LDCs and SIDS, without whom we could not be where we are today.

Finally, for those colleagues traveling I wish you safe travels and for those staying I wish you well.

I thank you!

