

ESCAP Remarks: Countries in Special Situations (LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS)

May 16, Tuesday - 15:30-17:00

Agenda item 3: Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Small Island Developing States in ESCAP Hall, UNCC and online

Statement by USAID - Betty Chung, USAID's Deputy Mission Director for the Pacific Islands & Mongolia

Thank you Madam Chair.

Your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies & gentlemen,

Warm ALOHA from Manila. I am very honored to join you for this important session.

The United States attaches exceptional importance to our relationships and the needs and priorities of countries in special situations, and we are committed to working together to advance progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). **We are proud to be among the largest and most consistent partners to LDCs**—disbursing around **\$11 billion** dollars annually to LDCs—in Official Development Assistance.

As noted by prior speakers, 2024 will be a pivotal year for Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) and LLDCs as we prepare for the Third UN Conference for Landlocked Developing Countries and the Third UN Conference for Small Island Developing States and discuss their decennial Programmes of Action—providing critical opportunities to identify their greatest challenges to achieving the SDGs, develop global solutions, and build multi-stakeholder partnerships to strengthen their development. The United States is proud to have been active participants in the negotiation of the Doha Programme of Action and the LDC5 Conference and we are **equally committed** to achieving successful outcomes with the SIDS and LLDCs.

We recognize that the obstacles to achieving the SDGs have never been greater, and international cooperation alone **will not be enough** to overcome these challenges. We **must** expand sources of finance in line with the commitments made in the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda**, including boosting domestic resources and scaling up private sector investment by improving enabling environments, and using blended finance, sustainable development bonds, and other mechanisms.

Towards that end, the United States is vigorously pursuing actions to assist our LLDC, LDC and SIDS partners globally. In the Asia-Pacific region, in particular, please allow me to highlight our efforts specific to the Pacific Island Countries — many of which, I am pleased to see, are well represented in this forum.

The 2022 U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy reinforced United States support to the Pacific Islands region. At last year's U.S. - Pacific Island Country Summit in Washington, DC, President Biden announced several commitments, including expanding our presence because we know - and have heard directly from our Pacific Island partners - **that presence matters**. In addition to new U.S. embassies in the region, we will launch a new USAID/Pacific Islands mission in Suva, Fiji where we will oversee programs in Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau. We will also elevate our presence in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

USAID is also strengthening our alliances and partnerships with other development partners and CROP agencies such as PIF and SPC. The United States' Pacific Partnership Strategy is closely aligned with the PIFs 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

For those of us who live in and traveled to the Pacific Island countries, it is clear that climate change is an existential threat and it **is a priority area of focus** for USAID's support to the region.

Most notably, USAID's Climate Ready project is helping Pacific Island countries to become more environmentally and disaster resilient to protect the lives and livelihoods of their peoples. To date, Climate Ready has helped Pacific Islands countries mobilize more than \$500 million from various international funds. Climate Ready has also supported the Pacific Community's accreditation so that it could directly access the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

USAID has also supported improved management and sustainability of coastal fisheries across the region, including SPC's Pacific Coastal Fisheries Management and Compliance activity, and natural resources management and biodiversity conservation, particularly in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

The United States looks forward to working more closely with our partners as we address critical challenges **together** to make a positive impact in the region. Thank you!