

Thank you Chair.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Ethiopian Government and the Ethiopian people for their hospitality in hosting us in Addis Ababa this week.

As the representative of Australia, I wanted to draw attention to the challenges we face in our region, in the Pacific, with data collection and use.

I acknowledge and thank Barbados for their continued advocacy this week for the challenges SIDS face.

Domestic data collection and use remains an ongoing challenge for our Pacific partners, and an ongoing challenge in implementing evidence based policy making. Data access is crucial for understanding the macroeconomic context in which the Pacific operates.

Many SIDS are grappling with structural economic constraints (e.g. remoteness, access to markets, high cost of imports, more limited transport links), while at the same time being particularly vulnerable to increasing natural disasters and to the effects of climate change. Additionally, SIDS face unique challenges, with experiences in the Pacific differing from those of countries in the Caribbean.

The pandemic exacerbated many of the economic challenges faced by SIDS. The Pacific was one of the worst affected regions - in 2024 all Pacific Island countries except for Solomon Islands, Samoa, Palau and Vanuatu will have recovered to pre-COVID (2019) levels of GDP in real terms.

Additionally, between 2011 and 2020, there was 91 total major disasters across the Pacific. This caused \$1.69B in total damage caused in USD and the total population effected exceeding 5 million. Climate hazards are significant and increasingly frequent in the Pacific, and can quickly exacerbate existing economic concerns.

Half of Pacific Island countries are assessed at high risk of debt distress, including PNG, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Marshall Islands.

Australia supports capacity building in the Pacific in regularly providing technical expertise in data collection through partnerships with our statistical bureau. However, significant data gaps remain. I also raise the data gaps in the Pacific in international data collection. Credit rating agency risk ratings are not available for majority of the Pacific, and there are significant lags in publication and data updates for Pacific countries.

To echo the words of the Deputy Secretary General's remarks on Monday, there is importance and high value in having women and girls in the room. It is also crucial to have vulnerable countries in the room, and I acknowledge the absence of our Pacific colleagues in this week, highlighting the challenges of remoteness for SIDS.

On that, I encourage us all to consider what we can do to ensure our colleagues can join these conversations as we path the way to Seville next year.

Thank you.

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