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**UN-OHRLLS**

**Opening Remarks**

**by**

**Ms. Rabab Fatima**

**Under-Secretary-General and High Representative  
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries  
and Small Island Developing States**

**at the**

**Thank you, Madam Secretary-General.**

**Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,**

**A very good morning to you all.**

**I am very pleased to join you and the Small States Advocacy Champions at the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4).**

**SIDS4 is a significant moment in our joint efforts to advance the UN-Commonwealth Advocacy Strategy for Small States.**

**It is a fitting platform to carry forward our work to mobilize global action and forge partnerships to support Small States.**

**Excellencies,**

**The Small States are bearing the heaviest brunt of the current global crises.**

**Their small size, geographic remoteness, narrow resource, and export base makes them vulnerable to exogenous economic, social, and environmental shocks and crises.**

**These shocks and crises are becoming more intense and interconnected. Climate-related disasters alone have almost doubled in the last 20 years.**

**The complex and overlapping nature of these challenges have put their development progress at risk.**

**More than ever before, we need strong solidarity and partnership to help the Small States overcome these crises.**

**We need a firm plan to build resilience and get these countries back on course to achieve their sustainable development goals.**

**My Office is mandated to support these** **150** **Td** **We**

**countries tackle their pre-existing challenges and overcome their structural vulnerabilities.**

**Excellencies,**

**This week our priorities converge here in Antigua and Barbuda, where we will usher in a new generation of global commitment and partnerships for the SIDS.**

**In the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), we have an ambitious and forward-looking strategy for the next decade of action.**

**This is our opportunity to put the spotlight - not only on the vulnerabilities and challenges of SIDS - but also on their tremendous potentials.**

**The ABAS has strong commitments for action on tackling their economic vulnerability, access to finance and debt sustainability.**

**It recognizes that the international financial architecture should go further to fully address SIDS' unique development circumstances. And it calls for enhanced and easier access to concessional finance for them.**

**The new Agenda also advances the discussion on how best multidimensional vulnerability could be incorporated into existing practices and policies.**

**And it proposes the establishment of a dedicated SIDS Debt Sustainability Support Service to enable**



**Here as well, our joint advocacy efforts can make a real difference.**

**We will also draw from your solution-based and action-oriented approach, as we deliver on the implementation of the ABAS.**

**Excellencies,**

**My Office remains deeply engaged with all stakeholders in raising global ambition for climate action. We have long supported the Alliance of Small Island State (AOSIS) in this endeavour.**

**And we are very pleased to see that these efforts culminated in the historic agreement on the loss and damage fund at COP28.**



**The ABAS has also made a strong call to scale up climate financing, and to urgently operationalize the new loss and damage fund.**

**Excellencies,**

**The issue of climate justice will continue to remain at the heart of our advocacy efforts, especially now as we seek to ensure a SIDS-focused lens in the fund's operations.**

**As we advance these priorities, my Office, together with the Commonwealth Secretariat, looks forward to working with the Advocacy Champions.**

**Excellencies,**

**SIDS4 is only the beginning.**



