



Mr. Chairman,

In the Pacific region the following are a given.

- Maritime and aviation infrastructure directly underpins the major development sectors in our region e.g. tourism, fisheries, agriculture etc. Pacific SIDS therefore need innovative support to strengthen this infrastructure.
- The digital divide is getting bigger, not lessening. The high start-up costs of accessing and connecting to the ICT can be prohibitive. This again forces the Pacific SIDS be at the end of the queue to benefit from this technology thus exacerbating further their sense of isolation from the rest of the world. This effectively robs them of the opportunity to derive any substantive benefits from ICT. Yet there is great opportunity in reducing the region's isolation by investing in the efficient connectivity of Pacific SIDS with the rest of the world. We need to unlock the development potential that can be realized through connectivity so that we can have ready and affordable access to quality education, markets, health care, advisory services to name a few.

Mr. Chairman,

The plea to the partners and supporters of the Pacific SIDS.

Our region's needs are common knowledge and require no second-guessing.

Help us reduce our isolation. By doing so, the other related challenges will, in time, be addressed and their relative severity pale in comparison.

Don't wait until our islands are in a state of crisis before injecting rescue packages. These are expensive, re-active and non-sustainable. Help us now to help ourselves by supporting some key infrastructural development in sectors that will strengthen our resilience and ab