Statement by
H.E. Mr. Robert G. Aisi, OBE
Permanent Representative of the Independent State of
Papua New Guinea to the United Nations

at the
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11 September 2014, New York

"Check against delivery"

Mr. President,

I thank you and the members of your Bureau for your strong continuing leadership.

I acknowledge with great respect the Executive Director's important Statement - one which painted so eloquently the stark realities of our world today, highlighting numerous challenges which we, as the broader international community, are confronted with.

It is against the backdrop of the Executive Director's Statement that I express, on behalf my Delegation, our most sincere gratitude to the Executive Director, all the Deputies and staff here in New York for all your efforts.

I thank various senior staff members who made excellent presentations on various Agenda items during this Session.

I would particularly like to acknowledge all UNICEF staff members who are serving in the field in many parts of the world, including in our country and the Pacific region, for their highly valued daily contributions in carrying out with diligence, commitment and extreme bravery UNICEF's mandate.
We would particularly recognize and pay our respects to those Staff members who have made the ultimate personal sacrifice in the service of the Children of the world.

Mr. President,

It is somewhat true that our Pacific region remains, to some extent, calm and peaceful.

However, our region is also subject to devastation from various natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, flooding, tsunami, giant oceanic tidal surges and volcanic eruptions. Overlaying all of these factors are the numerous and obvious adverse impacts of climate change which threaten, in some cases, the complete loss of some of our smaller island states.

The numbers of people affected, which include women and children, are small in comparison to the situations cited by the Executive Director in his Statement. Nevertheless, and as properly noted by our New Zealand colleagues in their Statement, the impacts from natural disasters and, I would add the increasing adverse impacts of climate change continue to profoundly impact many of our island countries' development goals and aspirations.

Mr. President,

As part of the response mechanism to natural disasters and in order to alleviate bureaucratic bottle-necks when disasters arise, the Papua New Guinea Government has announced the incorporation into the development plans and budgets of every province in the country provisions to cater for a more effective and rapid response in the aftermath of a disaster occurring in any of the provinces. Of course the National Disaster and Emergency Office will also carry out its mandated role.

Mr. President,

Last week we concluded the highly successful 3rd SIDS International Conference in Apia, the capital of Samoa.

The outcome document titled: SAMOA Pathway - the acronym is derived from the letters of the name of the country standing for "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action" -
Under the theme of "... genuine and durable partnerships" pledges and commitments totaling USD$1.9 billion worth of partnerships were signed up.

I am pleased to note the following UNICEF related issues, important to our Region, of food security and nutrition, water and sanitation, health and non-communicable diseases, gender/children are provided for in the SAMOA Pathway. Furthermore, the need for quality data and statistics was included and remains a critical factor if we are to respond to and address our development targets and aspirations effectively.

I would acknowledge the Statement delivered on behalf of UNICEF by Mr. Olav Kjorven. I am pleased to note that UNICEF remains involved in key challenges affecting Children in the Pacific in areas such as early childhood development and nutrition, education and violence. The SIDS conference in Samoa highlighted both the significant challenges faced by the Children of our region as well as raised political awareness and commitment to partnering with SIDS. We look forward to UNICEF and its partners stepping up its support to this large group of island countries, including by partnering with relevant public and private sector entities at global, regional and national levels.

Mr. President,

In the first half of 2014, we have had several high-level UN officials visit our Country. Along with the UNDP Administrator, Ms. Helen Clark, and Mr. Haoliang Xu, Assistant Administrator/Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, we were honored to receive Deputy Director, Ms. Yoka Brandt in June.

We thank Ms. Brandt for her constructive engagement with our Government officials and civil society. As Ms. Brandt noted Papua New Guinea will soon emerge as the sixth highest growing economy in the world - much of this growth being driven by gains from our world class energy and natural resources. Like our Government, Ms. Brandt also noted the need for critical attention in the areas of nutrition, water and sanitation and education. While I can report that appropriate interventions are being made by our Government in this and many other critical areas of development we remain cognizant of the plethora of human development challenges, including the rights and protection of the Children of Papua New Guinea, all of which must be addressed simultaneously and indeed continuously.
Our Government, notwithstanding the past decade of positive growth rates and glowing forecasts, is well aware of the effects and consequences of the phenomena referred to as the "Dutch Disease". While high levels of investments are currently being made in the areas of education, health and infrastructure, as part of our membership of the Pacific region we are also sharing the wealth gained from our natural resource with our other Pacific Islands neighbours under an on-going small but growing development co-operation program which was re-affirmed by our Prime Minister at the 3rd SIDS International Conference last week.

Mr. President,

In closing, let me thank UNICEF, the UN and our development partners Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China United States of America and the European Union for their continued co-operation in our on-going development.

I Thank you.