PRESS RELEASE

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SIDDS DOCK Assembly, a solemn ceremony – tears for Tonga and the Bahamas

October 22, 2019, United Nations Headquarters, New York, U.S.A.: The fifth session of the Assembly of SIDS DOCK opened with observance of a minute of silence in solidarity with the Government and People of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, on the devastation caused and the lives lost as a result of Hurricane Dorian, and also on the passing of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga, His Excellency Akilisi Pohiva, who was to have been elected the President of the fifth session of the SIDS DOCK Assembly. The fifth session of the SIDS DOCK Assembly was held on 28 September 2019, at the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Chamber, on the sidelines of the seventy-fourth (74th) UN General Assembly, at UN Headquarters, in New York City, United States (U.S.).

In an extraordinary gesture of solidarity, and without setting any precedence, the Members of the SIDS DOCK approved by acclamation, the extension of Grenada’s Presidency to the fifth session of the Assembly, with the understanding that the Presidency of the sixth session will rotate to the Kingdom of Tonga, as Vice Presidents to the fifth session of the Assembly. His Excellency the Right Honourable Dr. Keith C. Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada, will serve as President of the fifth session of the Assembly of SIDS DOCK, along with the two Vice Presidents, His Excellency Mr. Ronald Jumeau, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Seychelles to the UN, and His Excellency Mr. Vainga Tone, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga to the UN.

The meeting was highlighted by a symbolic signing ceremony, welcoming two new SIDS DOCK Members acceding to the Statute Establishing the SIDS DOCK – the Republic of Guinea Bissau and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, increasing the SIDS DOCK membership from 16 to 18 countries. The Instruments of Accession were signed by Her Excellency Ms. Suzi Carla Barbosa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Communities, Republic of Guinea Bissau, and The Honourable Mr. Osvaldo C.V. Abreu, Minister for Public Works, Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment.

SIDS DOCK also made significant progress in the implementation of its Ocean Energy and Island Women Open Network (IWON) Work Programmes, where three Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) were signed with the private sector, in keeping with the aim of the Samoa Pathway, the dedicated programme of action for SIDS, which focuses on building “genuine and durable” partnerships among the organizations, companies and individuals which have strong interest in renewable energy and/or climate
change resilience and sustainable development in SIDS. The MoUs were signed with Naval Energy, a French-based, ocean energy technologies company; the Global Coral Reef Alliance (GCRA), that has innovative solutions to monitoring of ocean environmental management, rehabilitation of ecosystems, and ocean based renewable energy technologies, and; the law firm of Rivkin Radler, LLP, Ullman, Shapiro, Ullman of Counsel, which will assist the IWON with the development of a regulatory infrastructure to support the development of a sustainable botanical/herbal supplier market including the protection of biodiversity and intellectual property interest and creation of general protocols and policies addressing the risk of cyber or other data breach and appropriate legal response should a cyber security incident occur.

During the meeting, Her Excellency Ms. I. Rhonda King, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, received the 2019 SIDS DOCK IWON Leadership Award for selfless dedication to the establishment and registration of the SIDS DOCK Organisation and for helping to chart the course for recognition of the Organisation as a United Nations (UN)-recognized international platform with all the rights and privileges for addressing climate change, resilience, and energy security in SIDS, and for helping to establish and launch the IWON in 2014 and serving as its first Chair, and significantly, for piloting the “tiniest” country, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, to a seat on the UN Security Council, in 2019.

The meeting closed with the new SIDS DOCK Partner, Rivkin Radler, LLP, Ullman, Shapiro, Ullman of Counsel, presenting a monetary donation to the Bahamas Disaster Relief Fund, to Her Excellency Ms. Shelia Carey, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to the UN. Ambassador Carey said that fifty-nine (59) lives were lost and 600 are still reported missing. She announced that the Bahamas has designated bank accounts in several denominations, to receive monetary donations.

SIDS DOCK was launched in 2015, and is the only UN-recognized international organization with all the rights and privileges for addressing climate change, resilience, and energy security in small islands. Small islands comprise more than one-fifth of the total membership of the UN, and have stewardship over more than 20 percent of the world’s oceans.

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