



United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)

Statement

by

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**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

First Preparatory Committee Meeting
Third International Conference on SIDS

New York

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Co-Chairs,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be amongst you to say a few words at the start of the prepcom of Third International Conference on SIDS, as we also simultaneously celebrate the International year of SIDS. We all heard inspiring addresses in the morning.

These two events would provide a strong platform to highlight the challenges and concerns, as well as aspirations and opportunities of the SIDS and the global community as a whole. We also hope that the events would also recognize the unique diversity and many contributions of Islands in terms of their natural beauty and biodiversity.

As we all look towards Apia, Samoa, for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, it is important to remind ourselves that the road to Samoa began two years ago, when leaders decided at the Rio+20 conference to convene the conference in 2014. That decision was the further acknowledgement that the special case of SIDS, in terms of their development and environment, first recognized by the international community in the Rio conference in 1992 remained not only valid but urgent.

The historic SIDS conference that took place in Barbados in 1994 is coming to Apia via Mauritius. It assumes special significance, as the need for an integrated and holistic approach to the three dimensions of sustainable development in today's integrated and globalized world finds a stronger resonance now than ever before. Its outcome would certainly contribute to shaping the post 2015 development agenda in an inclusive manner, as well as to the success of the climate change summit hosted by UN Secretary General in September here to ensure ambition and concrete action.

The recognition of the extreme vulnerabilities of SIDS should propel us urgently towards clarity of our collective vision, and concrete actions resulting in building resilience and sustainable prosperity and dignity for the people in SIDS. In doing so, we will be rendering a great service to the global community as a whole. The health of the oceans, sustainable fishing and tourism, climate change and disasters, energy and connectivity and the livelihood and security of the people, and sustainable and inclusive prosperity are all intertwined, most starkly on a daily basis and in an inextricable manner, in the islands. The situation in islands should be an eye opener to all of us. Given the severity and multiplicity of the challenges, this should lead us to urgent actions. Leadership and actions are required at all levels local, national regional and international. The conference should prod us all towards that direction in a comprehensive and cohesive manner.

Our common efforts should be directed towards how best to leverage the general goodwill that exists at the global level into more tangible results and actions on the ground - concrete actions that benefit SIDS and the peoples in their pursuit of sustainable development aspirations. And by extension, this way we would help protect the global commons and serve the global commu-

nity. It is not only a moral imperative; it is in the enlightened self-interest of the international community as well to do so.

In moving from goodwill to concrete action, there is no doubt that cooperation and partnerships are crucial. They should be deeper and wider ; and they should have a holistic approach. And time is of essence.

SIDS have themselves acknowledged that on their own, their sustainable development aspirations will not be fully realized. Sustainable development in SIDS hinges upon genuine cooperation and partnerships, across the board and at all levels.

The theme of the Third International Conference captures it well: the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships.

Two years ago at Rio+20, the world stressed that sustainable development can only be achieved with a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and academia and the private sector, all working together to secure the future we want for present and future generations.

The need to mobilise this alliance of stakeholders in support of sustainable development in SIDS should be a central consideration during the PrepComs as well as at the conference in Samoa itself.

Through the work of my office, I pledge to continue to do our part in supporting SIDS by contributing towards building this broad alliance. To encourage private sector partnerships and engagement with the SIDS, my office is committed to organizing the private sector forum at the conference.

Finally, it is important that SIDS and their institutions are fully interlinked with the ongoing global processes within the UN and outside to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the future outcome of the 2014 Samoa conference. It is in the effective implementation of the agreed actions and the impact on the ground that would herald a better and really sustainable and secure future for the islanders.

I wish you all successful deliberations and good preparatory process.

Thank you.