



**Remarks**

**by**

**Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya**

**Under-Secretary-General**

**High Representative**

**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing  
Countries**

**and Small Island Developing States**

**at**

**High Level Dialogue on Advancing Sustainable Development in  
SIDS**

**World Bank Head Quarters**

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Hon. Minister Pierre Laporte of Seychelles and Chair of the small islands forum,

Mr axel van Trotsenberg, Vice President for East Asia and the Pacific,

Excellencies Ambassadors and delegates,

World bank group executive directors,

Colleagues,

At the outset allow me to thank the World Bank for jointly convening this seminar with the United Nations. I hope that today's discussions will make an important contribution to the overall preparation for the Samoa conference. After all, it is the collective, coherent and comprehensive support from all that will help promote genuine and durable partnerships, the theme of the Samoa Conference.

I am glad to see that many of the topics we are discussing today are of utmost importance to SIDS. And these issues have been raised in various preparatory meetings including the regional and interregional meetings. The continued partnership between the Bank and United Nations is most appreciated.

One of the key outcomes of the Rio+20 process was the need for better integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. SIDS could be among the leaders in ensuring that this integration is put into practice. After all for the people in SIDS, they were never separate. They were and are always intertwined.

The macroeconomic challenges facing SIDS can often be traced to their inherent vulnerable characteristics, including their small size, remoteness and isolation and those resulting from high cost of doing trade and that of energy. International debt and export capacity are other important issues. They are related with the structural constraints as well as global support mechanisms. In view of the heavy dependence on a narrow resource base, SIDS have also adopted many innovative policies to attract goods in services, including the tourism and international business and financial services.

It has been said that many SIDS have some of the world's most open economies but this also leaves them exposed much more to the exogenous shocks. The

right policy mix may need to be tailored to fit the strengths and weaknesses of individual SIDS in order to get dividends down the road, including in job creation and sustainable revenue generation. Given their capacity constraints, any measures taken to support initiatives on the ground, to strengthen SIDS macroeconomic performances, will continue to need enhanced and sustained level of investment for structural transformation together with a strong capacity development component. I hope that that would be given due priority.

Ensuring human and social development is a vital component in the SIDS path to sustainable development. When faced with fiscal pressures and challenges, human and social programmes are often under pressure. The overall social wellbeing of its citizens are crucial for sustainability of the progress, while maintaining macroeconomic stability.

One of the issues that has been identified by SIDS is the issue of non-communicable diseases, which in some SIDS have reached endemic proportions. This is clearly an area that SIDS will need the support of their development partners, including the UN system and the Bretton Woods entities, in addressing it in a comprehensive manner.

We know that SIDS are more vulnerable to exogenous economic shocks, as seen in the financial and economic crisis, and food and fuel crisis. We also know that SIDS are prone to natural disasters, be they hurricanes, cyclones, tsunamis, flooding and so forth. The adverse impacts of Climate change will also continue to increase global warming and raise the sea-level adding to the multifaceted vulnerabilities they face. As such, in both cases of economic crises and natural disasters, reconstruction and rebuilding have to help them move forward towards better resilience, risk reduction and progress, so that their long term development prospects and human development capacities are not undermined.

The MDGs have done much to focus on addressing the social dimension of the sustainable development agenda. Reports from regional and national assessments have shown that SIDS have made progress in the areas of poverty reduction, gender, health, education and the environment. There are differences between SIDS regions though and the quality of the services. International support would be crucial for them to make sustained and comprehensive progress in these areas.

One of the issues that continue to hamper efforts in gauging the performance of many SIDS in meeting the MDGs has been the issue surrounding data, including its collating, collection, and upkeep. SIDS Statistics offices will continue to need support to ensure that capacity in this crucial area is maintained and even strengthened. That fits in very well with world banks focus on being a knowledge hub as well as promoting data revolution.

While we all depend on the planet's natural capital to support our way of life, SIDS provide the clearest example of how this dependency works on a daily basis. Because of their limited size and narrow terrestrial resource base, SIDS themselves are fully aware of this dependency. For many islanders, their livelihood revolves around the delicate balance of utilizing the natural environment and their surroundings to live and the need to protect and conserve this very same environment. Their dependency on the ecosystems within which they live is clear. The role of the oceans, coastal resources and their interactions in the context of modernization and development are of utmost importance to SIDS.

We know that SIDS are home to a fifth of the earth's biodiversity. The intrinsic value of their biodiversity are well acknowledged. Perhaps there could be room to further investigate, in the ongoing work of natural capital valuation, and have a closer look at the SIDS specific angle to this work. Of course, SIDS would need to continue to be closely consulted on any such work.

For many SIDS, their ocean spaces are often larger than their terrestrial spaces. For many SIDS, as they themselves have said, the Green Economy is in fact a Blue Economy. This reflects the fact that many of their economic activities, including foreign income earnings, are ocean based. As such the work of the Global Partnership for Oceans is of great importance and relevance to many SIDS. I note that many of them are listed as partners already and a number of their representatives are also members of the Blue Ribbon Panel.

The five high-level principles identified by the Blue Ribbon Panel Report are all important to SIDS. Indeed, the need to integrate the principles outlined in the report through multi-dimensional partnerships focused on achieving economic and socio-ecological sustainability as proposed by the Panel is the way forward. Because of the high importance and dependency on oceans for economic and social development of SIDS, there may be merit in aligning it with SIDS

perspectives as well. The appropriate partnerships and support would need to be extended to SIDS, many of whom play a role of custodian to the world's oceans.

This year is a momentous one for SIDS. The UN General Assembly has designated this year as the International Year of SIDS, the first time that a group of country has been honoured in such a way. This September Samoa will host the Third International Conference on SIDS, a once every ten year event. The timing could not be more right for targeted, strengthened and new partnerships and support to SIDS, including from the Bank.

In Samoa on 30 and 31 August, my office, working jointly with the Government of Samoa, is convening a two day private sector partnerships forum. Sectors of focus include: oceans and marine resources, sustainable tourism, agriculture, connectivity – transport and ICT, disaster risk management, and renewable energy. There will be a session on cross-cutting issue of financing and gender dimension as well. Multistakeholder approach is key to the solution of many challenges and the private sector including small and micro and family based economic activities and civil society play a very important role in sustainable development. The aim is to announce the initiatives, or scale up concrete private sector SIDS/SIDS, SIDS/Development partners, and PPPs during the two days. We look forward to the Bank's and your private sector partner's participation at this Forum as well.

Finally, this is the time to enhance and strengthen global support for SIDS to complement their national efforts and leadership. Best practices should be shared. Investment should be enhanced. It is in the larger interests of the international community to do so. At a time when the globalization is showing us both the prospects and perils, it calls for a visionary, inclusive and sustainable development agenda with multistakeholder partnerships. As we all work towards shaping the post 2015 development agenda at the UN, we should not lose sight of the great opportunity that we have to make it transformative to all, none excluded. Doing it right in and for SIDS will immensely contribute to the global sustainability efforts.

Thank you for your kind attention.



