



**CARICOM Statement by**

**H.E. Mr. François Jackman  
Permanent Representative of Barbados  
to the United Nations**

**at the**

**First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth  
International Conference on SIDS**

**GA Hall, UN HQ**

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I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 member states of the Caribbean Community CARICOM. We align ourselves with the statements delivered by SAMOA on behalf of AOSIS and by Cuba on behalf of the G77 and China.

In May 1994 in the Caribbean Community, the United Nations convened its first UN global Conference in a small island developing state; and adopted the Barbados programme of action on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, (the BPOA). The first-of-its-kind policy document comprehensively addresses the economic, environmental, and social, developmental vulnerabilities facing SIDS; and outlines a strategy that seeks to mitigate those vulnerabilities.

The conference recognized and reaffirmed the fact that SIDS are not able to graduate out of their vulnerability; they are not able to expand or rearrange their geographic size or location. It proclaimed that the special case for SIDS is such, precisely, because of the unique and inherent nature of the economic and geographical circumstances that are beyond our control.

SIDS were clear then and have always been clear since. The myriad of external, existential and unrelenting threats to our sustainable development, require nuanced and dedicated solutions.

Thirty years later, in May 2024, the SIDS conference will return to the Caribbean Community, where Antigua and Barbuda will host all UN member states to come together to *chart a course toward the resilient prosperity of SIDS*. A new and urgent opportunity for the international community to come together to produce a SIDS-led, SIDS-focused agenda that is achievable.

Co-chairs,

From Barbados, to Mauritius, to Samoa. How many times have we said that the time is now? Our citizens cannot rely on once in a decade engagement that offer high-minded promises without dedicated action. Our citizens deserve a sustained, grounded and sincere reimagining and restructuring of ineffective one-size-fits all approaches that do not advance our sustainable development aspirations.

Our challenges are many but they are not insurmountable. They require only a willingness to understand our unique characteristics, our vulnerabilities and our limitless possibilities, while maintaining a strong commitment to implement joint actions in accordance with those understandings.

It is of critical importance for SIDS that the outcome reflect the clear aspirations and targeted needs of the small island developing states in their unique contexts, based on what has been clearly articulated, including through the regional and interregional meetings of 2023. As we, therefore, pinpoint the steps for practical solutions, we urge support for the adoption and implementation of these measures in order to achieve success.

There is a final, fundamental, point to be made: because of our openness and small size, the fortunes of SIDS are reflective of, and responsive to the economic and developmental health of our international architectures in a way that no other group of states can claim. We are the barometer of the global economy and environment. Our sustainable development is not simply a discrete regional issue; it is inextricably intertwined and mutually dependent upon global development. As goes the world, so go the SIDS. And vice-versa.

As we deliberate this week on the sustainable development for and with SIDS, in a still evolving geopolitical and economic order, let us ensure that the outcome of the Fourth SIDS conference is not only achievable and implementable, but can create real benefits to citizens of our small island developing states.

Thank you.