

**New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations
Te Aka Aorere**

**United Nations General Assembly:
*Preparatory Committee for the fourth
International Conference on Small Island
Developing States***

**New Zealand Opening Remarks delivered by
Permanent Representative, H.E. Ms. Carolyn Schwalger**

Monday 22 January 2024

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

I would like to express my thanks to each and every one of you for being present here today. Your participation in this meeting is a sign of the wide support for SIDS and their sustainable development ambitions.

UN processes and meetings only come together through the work of many behind the scenes. I would like to extend my appreciation to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) for their significant work in organising this session and assistance provided to the Co-Chairs and the Bureau.

I would further like to express my gratitude to the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Permanent Representative of Samoa, for his leadership and guidance.

I also wish to recognise the large amount of work being undertaken by Antigua and Barbuda, as the team at the mission and on island take forward arrangements for the Conference.

Lastly, I would like to extend appreciation to the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for their invaluable contributions in shaping the agenda, the sound advice they have given to the Co-Chairs, and their collegiality.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with the team from Maldives.

Excellencies,

The aim of the Preparatory Committee is two fold. Firstly, we are tasked with establishing the foundation for an efficient and successful Fourth International Conference on SIDS. The modalities we agreed last year and the decisions we will take today are fundamental to setting us on the right footing. In particular, the decision on accreditation of stakeholders will help us bring to life the vision of an inclusive conference, building on the model set in Samoa in 2014.

Our second crucial task, is to come together to deliver an ambitious and action-oriented outcome document; that addresses SIDS unique challenges, fosters resilience and prosperity, mobilises resources, and charts a course for SIDS development over the next ten years. UN business as usual is not sufficient. We ask that all delegations bear this aim in mind as we enter negotiations.

Excellencies,

Once again, let me express my sincere gratitude to all the delegations in attendance today.

New Zealand takes great pride in having also served as Co-Chair of the last SIDS Preparatory Committee, which led to the 3rd International SIDS Conference and the adoption of the SAMOA Pathway. I look forward to working with you all to achieve a similarly successful 4th International Conference.

Thank you.