



Delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross
and Red Crescent Societies to the United Nations

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**STATEMENT BY MS. KALLIE AULTMAN
ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES**

Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth International Conference on Small
Island Development States

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Distinguished Co-Chairs,

On behalf of the IFRC network, including our 37 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in small islands, I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this Second Session of the Preparatory Committee meeting ahead of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) taking place in Antigua and Barbuda this May.

The SIDS4 Conference comes at an ever-critical time. While it may seem to some that we just met in Samoa, the everyday reality for people and communities in small islands has changed throughout the last decade. Communities face a higher risk of disasters and climate-related events and are still trying to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, tourism, and health systems.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

While the negotiations on the Political Declaration for the SIDS4 Conference are already underway, the IFRC network supports an ambitious outcome document – one that goes beyond rhetoric, takes into account these new realities, and works to achieve sustainable development and resilient SIDS.

First, we support the efforts of the Co-Chairs and Member States, but we still see opportunities to strengthen commitments on disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate adaptation, and health systems strengthening for and with SIDS. The new outcome should prioritize multi-hazard risk governance or disaster laws, policies, and plans. In the event of a disaster, these laws are the invisible foundation behind any disaster management strategy, as they set out the roles and responsibilities for all authorities and local actors, including the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Second, the outcome should bring to the table new climate financing, technical assistance, and capacity building at the local level – where disasters hit the hardest. Unfortunately, as of today,

we still see that of the 70 countries that are highly climate vulnerable, 32 of these countries receive less than \$1 dollar per person in DRR and climate adaptation financing, including SIDS. Given these constraints, it is important to build on existing partnerships and initiatives, such as the UN Secretary-General's Early Warning for All initiative, that looks to improve early warning and early action systems in all countries, including SIDS - ultimately saving lives and livelihoods and reducing losses and damages.

In closing, the IFRC network will be at the SIDS4 Conference. Our delegation will be led by the IFRC's Under Secretary-General for Operations and National Society Development and include the participation seven National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies from small islands across each region. In the lead up to the Conference, we strongly ask for the UN departments and agencies and the host country to prioritize the inclusion of the humanitarian sector and local actors. While national governments are, of course, vital, so is the participation of local authorities and actors who live in the communities they serve. They know the local language and culture and often have the best practices and community knowledge to share.

Thank you.