



UNITED NATIONS

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MR. LI JUNHUA

UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
AFFAIRS

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Opening Remarks

2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory Committee for the Fourth International Conference on Small  
Island Developing States

1 April 2024, 10:00 am

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**Co-Chairs,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**I welcome you all to the Second, and final, session  
of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth  
International Conference on Small Island Developing  
States.**

**We have come a long way since the start of this  
important journey to Antigua and Barbuda. We are  
now in the final stretch of our preparations, with only  
56 days until we gather in St. Johns.**

**Throughout the Regional and Interregional Preparatory Meetings, the message from SIDS has been clear. The development challenges SIDS face are outpacing their capacity to respond. It can no longer be “business as usual.”**

**SIDS have called on the international community to respond with bold actions that reflects the urgency and level of ambition that is critically needed at this time.**

**SIDS have long demonstrated their global leadership role by demanding action on climate change and advocating for a Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index.**

**This is not simply a choice, but out of necessity. SIDS are on the frontlines of the global climate crisis. Chronic underfinancing of sustainable development, challenges accessing concessional finance and the**

**burden of high debt levels mean SIDS face greater gaps to achieving the SDGs than the rest of the world.**

**Throughout this process, the commitment of the international community to SIDS has never been in doubt – specifically helping SIDS fight climate change and achieve the SDGs.**

**Excellencies,**

**I take this opportunity to acknowledge, with deep appreciation, your generous contributions to which will enable the participation of many SIDS.**

**I want to also acknowledge the partner countries who have contributed to the preparatory process and for the support provided directly to the host country.**

**Excellencies,**

**Since the first Preparatory Committee meeting, Member States have made significant progress translating SIDS' vision into a new programme of action.**

**The draft outcome reaffirms SIDS as a special case for sustainable development given their unique vulnerabilities. It articulates the sustainable development aspirations of SIDS and the means of implementation required to achieve this vision.**

**Delegations have worked tirelessly through informal consultations and small group discussions, to find common ground. The result of this hard work is the text before you, which has many paragraphs already agreed.**

**In this connection, I acknowledge the hard work of the Co-Chairs and Bureau, much of which has gone unseen. You have facilitated an open, transparent and inclusive process of intergovernmental negotiation, and guided progress toward key elements in the organization of the Conference and its programme of work.**

**Moreover, my profound gratitude goes to the Host Government. Ambassador Webson and his team have been working tirelessly with their partners and the Secretariat to prepare for the Conference in Antigua and Barbuda.**

**Excellencies,**

**I am confident that under the able leadership of the Co-Chairs, the Preparatory Committee can conclude negotiations on the outcome document this week, as encouraged by the General Assembly.**

**I reaffirm the full support and commitment of  
DESA and the entire UN family to the  
intergovernmental process.**

**May our collective commitment - to leave no one  
behind - continue to guide this process, as we work to  
deliver a transformative outcome for SIDS.**

**I wish you all the best on your deliberations.**

**Thank you.**

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