



REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

750 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10017

TEL. (212) 744-2506

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**4th International Conference
on Small Island Developing States
General debate, agenda item 8**

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Krzysztof Szczerski
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland
to the United Nations**

Antigua and Barbuda, 28 May 2024

*Mr. /Ms. (Vice) President,
Distinguished Participants,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Small Island Developing States constitute one fifth of the world's countries, and although with small population, they bring to the international community unique cultural richness and diversity. They also remain guardians of valuable natural areas and biodiversity, especially marine life.

At the same time they face extraordinary challenges, resulting from both the location and limited own resources, which makes them more vulnerable to crises, as well as to the persistent global problems such as climate change and sea-level rise.

The challenges faced by SIDS require coordination and effective international cooperation at the global and regional level. Poland strongly supports joint and determined action of the international community in support of SIDS, and the mandate of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

We look forward to the implementation of The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, which constitutes a solid framework for decisive actions and close partnerships for the next decade. We also look forward to strengthening partnerships for individual SDGs, with the focus on access to quality education, digital transformation, blue economy, and climate action.

Distinguished Participants,

Poland strives to strengthen its relations with SIDS, in particular through the joint EU actions under the Samoa Agreement, which is the overarching framework for the EU relations with the Caribbean and Pacific island countries. We fully support the EU's vibrant cooperation with SIDS, including offering significant development assistance.

At the UN fora, as a current ECOSOC member Poland attaches particular importance to mainstreaming in the international debate issues such as:

reducing inequalities, building resilience and ensuring an uninterrupted global supply chains. All of them are particularly relevant in the case of SIDS. Additionally, for many years Poland has made voluntary contributions to the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund supporting the participation of those countries in the work of the Human Rights Council as a part of *Polish aid*.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges that climate change and high vulnerability to natural disasters pose to island states cannot be ignored. We believe that building resilience and investing in people and smart solutions, especially for developing sustainable tourism and marine life protection, are crucial for SIDS.

Let me emphasize that climate considerations should be mainstreamed in all dimensions of the development agenda. Poland is doing so by making climate action a cross-cutting priority of the *Polish Multiannual Development Cooperation Program 2021–2030. Solidarity for Development*.

In the context of development assistance - we share the view that it is necessary to look beyond income indicators to assess needs of developing countries, including SIDS. Using the new Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) could help measure both vulnerability and resilience and complement GNI/GDP per capita in resource allocation processes. This would also help to estimate SIDS needs when it comes to climate-related disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate adaptation.

In conclusion let me state that despite some weakening of the international community's confidence in the UN system caused, among others, by Russia's disregard for the UN Charter due to illegal aggression against Ukraine, the Fourth Conference on SIDS is an opportunity to confirm our commitment to solve global problems together, based on a sense of solidarity, shared responsibility, trust, and goodwill.

SIDS4 confirms our common expectation for effective multilateralism. We hope that this momentum will not be lost, and that the Summit of the Future this September will bring a new opening, also for the benefit of SIDS.

I thank you.