



**SOUTH
CENTRE**

Statement by the South Centre

Third International Conference on the Small Island Developing States

General debate (item 8 of the provisional agenda)

1 - 4 September 2014, Apia, Samoa

Thank you Honourable Prime Minister and
President of the Conference,
Distinguished Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and gentlemen,
co-Chairs,

The South Centre, an intergovernmental organization of developing countries, welcomes the Third International Conference of Small Island Developing States.

We thank the government and people of Samoa for their warm and generous hospitality.

We congratulate you on the excellent conference arrangements.

As an intergovernmental policy research institution for developing countries, The South Centre has been working since its establishment in 1994 on many development-related issues, seeking to highlight developing countries' perspectives on these issues in many multilateral forums as part of our mandate. While many developing countries, including small islands states, have made major strides in recent years in their development, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development continues to be a primary and overriding but challenging objective for Small Island Developing States.

The South Centre believes that the processes shaping the concerns and priorities of Small Island Developing States toward this third SIDS conference have been in the making for well over twenty years now and is more than ripe for consideration under the conference theme of *sustainable development of Small Island Developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*.

In this regard, Mr. President, we would like to highlight some key points:

First, since the first international conference on SIDS, Barbados 1994, followed by the 2005 review and implementation under the framework of the Mauritius Strategy, SIDS have been more proactively charting their own blue print for sustainable development. Yet, while some progress have been made in terms of education, health, gender and environmental goals, robust and sustainable economic growth remains elusive for far too many SIDS.

For many SIDS, growth is fragile and vulnerable, especially amidst rising debt burdens and continued economic, social and environmental challenges. SIDS's exposure and vulnerability to the vagaries and vicissitudes of international trade, financial markets and the over-riding global macroeconomic policy governance are growing with each passing crisis and crisis response stage. This exposure is greatly heightened by the challenge of adapting to extreme weather events, and the serial 'stop-and-start' economic cycles that are associated with adjusting to the severe losses and damages caused by these events.

Second, climate change, as we are aware, poses grave existential challenge for SIDS and threatens to destroy much of the progress made in economic and social development, including poverty eradication, hunger, and environmental protection efforts.

Third, these continuing economic and social challenges in addition to emerging SIDS threats point to the critical importance of accelerated means of implementation (finance, technology development and transfer, capacity building, institutional support and data collection and management) for ensuring SIDS development. This issue of means of implementation was identified in the Mauritius Declaration as important for building resilience in SIDS. It is strongly re-affirmed here in Samoa.

Fourth, in this International Year of the SIDS, the Outcome of Samoa must be bold and ambitious. It must build on the concerted actions, strong leadership roles and contributions that SIDS have made to the global economy and on SIDS' own articulation of their development challenges, constraints and commitments and opportunities in moving forward.

SIDS have pledged to be carbon neutral through the use of renewable energy. This will require strong, consistent and sustainable partnership support.

SIDS are working to protect the seas and oceans and to ensure the integrity of coastal areas, which are both critical lifelines and part of their cultural heritage and assurance of food security. In this context, SIDS have strongly pushed for goals and targets around the seas and the oceans in the post 2015 development and SDGs agenda.

SIDS will require strong partnerships and long term reliable support to deal with the issues of ocean acidification, illegal and unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the degradation of oceans and seas (linked to pollution from international shipping sectors).

Fifth, the viability and survival of the SIDS countries and regions depend on the interweaving of innovative partnerships, involving the effective, meaningful and sustained participation of civil society, particularly women and youths, local communities and Indigenous Peoples, both within and across SIDS regions, and through healthy and vital south-south collaborations.

In this context, a strengthened, robust and principled global partnership for development grounded in the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibility remains an

essential core of multilateralism and international solidarity, responsibility and accountability. This is of central importance for supporting SIDS sustainable development efforts.

Sixth, the outcome from Samoa must chart a definitive path forward, building on the foundations of the SIDS-specific internationally agreed goals in the Barbados, Mauritius, and the Barbados Outcome 2013, which is well integrated into a forward looking comprehensive and transformative Post 2015 Development and SDG agenda.

The SAMOA Pathway must emphasise the imperative of closing the implementation gaps of the BPOA and MSI by pushing for new and adequate flow of resources to confront and address threats (such as non-communicable diseases and communicable diseases, including through access to sexual and reproductive health services and improved health system); as well as address the impacts of climate variability and more frequent and intense extreme weather events.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the SAMOA Pathway must also push the envelope so that SIDS can effectively participate in more democratic and inclusive global governance arrangement. SIDS must continue to work in collaboration with partners to strengthen their voices and improve their effective participation in global decision making forums with regard to macroeconomic, global finance policy-making and in standard setting bodies in order to promote better enabling environment for ensuring sustainable development. Critical elements of this strategy must include:

- Strong SIDS focus on an international sovereign debt restructuring mechanism that provides preferential options for economic and social development;
- Strong SIDS focus on new adequate and predictable flows of climate finance that is accessible through simplified direct access modalities and which is driven by the adaptation and other climate-related needs of SIDS.

And, finally, Mr President, the SAMAO pathway should continue to build on the very commendable efforts taken in SIDS (as evidence in the document) to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls—which are imperatives for women’s and girls’ full self-realization and their human development as well as critical for ensuring sustainable development.

The South Centre will remain fully engaged in the processes charted by the SAMOA Pathway and in helping to support the implementation of the outcomes of Samoa, within its mandated capacity.

Thank you.