

**STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA TO THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES, APIA,
SAMOA**

1-4 SEPTEMBER 2014

President of the Conference, Prime Minister Tuilaepa Lupesoliai
Sailele Malieleaoi;

United Nations Secretary General, Ban-Ki Moon;

Secretary General of the SIDS Conference, Mr Wu Hongbo;

Excellencies;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me first start by expressing our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Samoa for the gracious and warm hospitality afforded to all delegations in this beautiful country. We also commend the outstanding and successful preparations for this conference.

Allow me to also extend our congratulations to you Mr President, on your election as President of the Conference. We appreciate the

manner in which you have been guiding our engagements thus far and under your guidance, I am sure that the Conference will have positive outcomes.

We would also like to add our voice in thanking the co-chairs Ambassador Tang of Singapore and Ambassador Taola of New Zealand for their remarkable guidance in ensuring that we have the Samoa Pathway before us today.

Mr President,

South Africa's presence and participation in this important conference is informed by the acknowledgement that Small Islands Developing States (the SIDS) face peculiar vulnerabilities and marginalisation that can only be effectively addressed if an enabling international environment is created. Our presence here is guided by our strong belief that the development challenges of the planet, including those faced by the SIDS require our collective actions.

Our collective action is required in ensuring that the Post-2015 Development Agenda that is being crafted adequately addresses the development challenges faced by all developing countries, including the SIDS. It will also be important to recognize that the SIDS face particular challenges, including the scourge of natural disasters that lead to loss of lives; devastation to infrastructure; underdevelopment. This in turn results in momentous pressure on already struggling economies.

These challenges can only be addressed adequately if the international community displays the requisite political will and provides the necessary support to the SIDS. It is for this reason that this conference is crucial in steering the international community towards finding strategies and a way forward in ensuring that we work collaboratively and drastically together with the SIDS to reduce the effects of these challenges.

We have come a long way from Barbados and Mauritius where political commitments were made. Indeed a lot has been done since then. However, it is important that we renew and increase our efforts in ensuring that the outcomes and agreements made are implemented so as to achieve tangible outcomes at the Country Level.

It is for this reason that partnerships should be the building blocks in arriving at these tangible results. It does not matter how big or small the partnerships are or whether it is simply the exchange of knowledge and expertise – what is important is to foster and solidify these partnerships as they will cumulatively aid in attaining far reaching progress to the benefit of the SIDS.

Mr President,

South Africa bears testament to the importance of these partnerships as noted through the India-Brazil-South Africa Fund (commonly known as the IBSA Fund). This fund operates in the context of South-

South Cooperation and is in partnership with the UNDP South-South Cooperation Office. The fund has made a significant contribution to the changing of lives of a number of communities in the developing world. Some of these projects have been within the SIDS amongst others Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Haiti.

In Cape Verde, safe drinking water has been provided to more than 12000 residents, thus reducing health risks associated with poor quality water. “The project constitutes a climate change adaptation measure, since global warming is making water supply scarce in Cape Verde”.

In Guinea Bissau, the IBSA Fund has contributed in reducing poverty and enhanced food security by rehabilitating low lying coastal land for rice cultivation and supporting food processing. Additionally some of the projects have contributed to the:

- Development of agriculture and small animal herding;
- Development of agriculture and services to rural communities;
and
- Provided solar energy to 20 villages and reached over 15000.

It is our hope that more of such partnerships could be made in order to extend the reach particularly to the SIDS because of their vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, we are mindful that slow economic recovery has led to the dwindling of ODA. However, it is important that the international community increases its efforts in providing support to developing countries as well as honouring commitments already made. Additional assistance is required with the provision of technical assistance and technology transfer in order to allow SIDS to develop adequately.

It is also important that we reaffirm the Rio Principles, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. There can be no universal and uniform approach. Special attention should be given accordingly to different regions. These principles remain vital for developing countries to realize tangible and lasting progress.

As we conclude, Mr President, it is important to recognize that the intergovernmental process on the Post-2015 Development Agenda will provide an opportunity for all developing countries to ensure that the global development agenda reflects their needs. We will, however, only be able to do this if we are united in our endeavor. While there are those developing countries, which require our most urgent attention and support, such as the SIDS, we should resist any attempt to divide developing countries and fragment our common cause.

I thank you and once again appreciate the privilege of participating at this meeting.