



INTERNATIONAL
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

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UN Conference on SIDS
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Business and Industry Statement
(This prepared statement was not delivered at the session)

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair.

My name is Lea Felluss from the International Chamber of Commerce speaking on behalf of the Business and Industry Major Group. At the outset, we would like to congratulate the Co-Chairs and members of the Bureau on your election to lead this process.

Founded in 1919, ICC is the largest, most representative business organization, encompassing 6.5 million businesses in our global network, with national committees and direct members in 130 countries, as well as, active presence in over 230 countries through ICC's World Chambers Federation.

Mr. Co-Chair, business recognizes the special needs of the Small Island Developing States in pursuing sustainable development initiatives while tackling impediments to their social and human development. Oceans and coasts provide a majority of the world's ecosystem benefits which are critical to the private sector and a substantial proportion of business and industry is dependent upon these resources, services and space.

Business and Industry strongly promotes sustainable development in its members' corporate policies and practices. The reason we do so is simple: these issues are an integral part of social license for the industry and promoting a pragmatic and effective human and indigenous rights agenda means long term, sustainable economic growth for all concerned.

SIDS are highly dependent on marine and coastal resources and ocean economic activity, and many small island developing states are entirely marine and coastal ecosystems. Many of the key issues affecting the ocean health, productivity and sustainability relate to the effects of economic activity. At the same time, ocean economic activities provide goods and services that are essential to SIDS including cost effective maritime transport, renewable/non-renewable energy, food/protein from wild caught and farmed seafood, and international telecommunications link among others.

Given this, private sector involvement is essential to the sustainable development of SIDS marine and coastal space/resources and maintaining/improving marine and coastal ecosystem conditions. There are an increasing number of responsible people in responsible ocean companies who would like to help ensure that business is developing and implementing solutions to marine ecosystem's sustainable development.

However, marine ecosystems are part of a global, interconnected, dynamic ocean ecosystem, so the best efforts by a single company or an entire sector (e.g. shipping) is not enough to address the cross-cutting,

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cumulative effects of the industry. Sustainable development of the marine and coastal areas in SIDS requires the coordinated, proactive involvement of the diverse marine and coastal business community engaging constructively with other stakeholders.

Mr. Co-Chair, if those already living in poverty are to enjoy the benefits of an improved business environment, they must be able to actively participate in the potential opportunities that this brings. To do so, requires investments in social and economic infrastructure – notably health, water and sanitation, and education – but also access to training, energy and credit without discrimination. It also requires specific attention to empowering women. In addition, it involves a sustained focus on governance reforms, particularly those that focus on promoting transparency and eliminating corruption.

Business supports the main theme of the conference on “Sustainable Development of small island states through genuine and durable partnerships.”

Improved state-business relations can be assumed to contribute to a better understanding of private sector needs by the government and thus to a more efficient allocation of resources in the economy. A government that is informed through regular meetings with the private sector about investment climate problems will have stronger ownership for reforms. Being in constant dialogue with private investors is also necessary to enable public officials to assess where markets can be expected to work and where they are likely to fail and offer or withdraw public support accordingly. This can create trust between the public and private sector, make policies more predictable, and thus minimize the risks for the private sector.

The promotion of consensus-building through stakeholder dialogue – notably between governments, business and civil society – is vital for designing effective solutions and for implementing them in practice. They create a shared sense of accountability and responsibility. Such multi-stakeholder co-operation may take place for example in the context of creating an enabling business environment.

Business will continue to engage respectfully and openly with communities, governments and other stakeholders around the world in pursuit of the of sustainable development objectives. Business and Industry look forward to bringing the vast real world experience of its business members to this effort.

Thank you.

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