



**Statement to be delivered by H.E. Ambassador Marlene Moses
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations
Chair, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**

at the

**Opening of the Preparatory Committee for the Third International Conference on
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

24-26 February, 2014

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and for your excellent work in convening this first Preparatory Committee Meeting for the Third International Conference on SIDS. Let me assure you of AOSIS's support and cooperation throughout this process.

Co-Chairs,

It has been twenty years since the first Earth Summit in Rio, and while the need to meet our sustainable development imperatives is more urgent than ever, we have made insufficient progress in achieving the goals we laid out at that groundbreaking meeting.

The overarching theme chosen for the Samoa Conference is, "The Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States through *genuine* and durable partnership."

I firmly believe, that such an approach can help SIDS build resilience, improve the quality of life for our people, and bring us closer to our aspiration to eradicate poverty, but only if we clearly define what we mean by partnership and hold each other accountable to those expectations.

Too often there is an imbalance in the relationships between SIDS and our partners in sustainable development projects, an imbalance that can ultimately derail projects before they have a chance to succeed.

Effective sustainable development, therefore, requires designing programs for the people they are intended to help. This means SIDS need to be the ones driving the initiatives from start to finish and we must maintain full ownership over the process at every step.

Co-Chairs,

Throughout this process we have worked very hard to meet the many diverse interests that must necessarily be reflected in an inter-regional outcome document.

We have compromised. We have tweaked language. We have made amendments we believe necessary to see this through to completion. But I would argue that after over two decades and inadequate progress on sustainable development, even as our food and water security moves in and out of crises, even as our fisheries falter, and even as the seas rise around us, we are rapidly nearing the point at which we have nothing left to give.

The SIDS document reflects our hard-earned experience with sustainable development and it is truly our own. I, therefore, respectfully request that the international community now work with us to improve it, rather than offering changes that serve interests that run counter to our imperatives as SIDS.

Co-Chairs,

As I said, the theme of this Conference is *genuine partnership* so I will now describe how the SIDS document proposes to achieve sustainable development in working with our global partners.

The SIDS document explicitly calls for a collaborative implementation process that is responsive to domestic priorities and flexible enough to change when it is not working.

It affirms that the BPoA, MSI, JPoI, and MDGs have played an important role in focusing our efforts to date, but makes it clear that the processes have not been fully implemented, and at times have exaggerated the progress made by emphasizing the quantity over the quality of outcomes.

Co-Chairs,

Another reality that can no longer be ignored in this process is climate change. The crisis has made realizing our sustainable development all the more difficult—

as extreme weather and ecological degradation erode the economies we depend on for food and survival.

In other words, we cannot develop sustainably if we fail to act on climate change and we cannot act on climate change without effective sustainable development. The issues are inextricably linked and that reality must guide our decisions here and in other international forums.

Co-Chairs,

I know achieving the goals I have laid out will demand a new level of cooperation and commitment, and history certainly suggests that the task before us will not be easy, but I believe that emphasizing trust and mutual respect in our partnerships moving forward, will reinvigorate this process.

The SIDS document, thus, calls for a new focus on accountability and transparency, cognizant that both are two-way streets.

For our part, we should ensure that the support we receive results in measurable benefits for our people, while our partners must make good on long overdue promises to invest in our countries and people.

We know that sustainable development offers the same kinds of opportunities to build healthy and prosperous communities in all countries and ask for your support as we work together to realize a transformative future that leaves no one behind, especially SIDS.

Thank you.