



## THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SIDS HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Third International Conference on SIDS continued its plenary discussions with Member States, intergovernmental organizations and Major Groups presenting statements and announcing commitments and partnerships. Two multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues took place on: climate change and disaster risk management (DRM), and social development in SIDS, health and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), youth, and women. The UN webcast of statements can be found at <http://webtv.un.org>

### PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

Deputy Prime Minister Fonotae Nuafesili Pierre Laufofo, Samoa, presented a summary of Monday's multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue on sustainable economic development. He said the dialogue highlighted SIDS' challenges of narrow economic bases, limited product and market diversification, and high dependence on international trade. He said delegates had called for partnerships to address these challenges, including through: small business promotion, sustainable tourism, 'business match-making,' trade promotion, the economic empowerment of women, vocational training of youth, the use of information and communication technologies, business continuity, renewable energy, and organic agriculture.

**General debate:** Country statements addressed: debt restructuring, improving SIDS' resilience, waste management, climate change, sea-level rise, and recovery from extreme weather events. Fisheries, sustainable economic development, graduation from Least Developed Country status, gender equality and the creation of decent jobs also featured in the discussions. Access to financing and operationalization of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) were stressed as key areas for the attention of the international community.

Many urged that partnerships be durable, innovative and based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Delegates stressed that partnerships must move beyond traditional models of partnership and include academia, civil society and the private sector. The SIDS DOCK sustainable energy mechanism was highlighted as a success, and Belize noted that the statute establishing it as an international entity hosted in his country opened for signature on Monday. The Caribbean Biological Corridor was emphasized as a model of regional cooperation. Speakers also welcomed recent actions, including the Caribbean Challenge Initiative for the conservation and sustainable financing of marine and coastal environments, and the International Renewable Energy Agency 'SIDS Lighthouses' initiative for scaling up renewable energy in SIDS.

Malaysia noted its commitment of US\$1 million under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme to contribute to SIDS' sustainable development, which will assist in building capacity based on development priorities.

Singapore highlighted its development of a three-year technical cooperation programme to provide more specialized assistance in crucial areas of development as identified by SIDS. Japan said that it will provide official development assistance to train 5000 people from SIDS across a number of sectors.

Turkey announced new cooperation agreements signed with both the Pacific SIDS and CARICOM, and its support of the new Coalition of Atoll Nations on Climate Change. Venezuela referenced the PetroCaribe Development Fund's energy provision to Caribbean islands, which has a loan portfolio of US\$206 billion.

The US announced new public-private partnerships on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, ocean acidification, and marine protected areas in its 2014 Our Ocean Action Plan, its leveraging of \$67 million through the Adapt Asia-Pacific Program, and its support of the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture, urging SIDS to join.

### MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE: CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Dialogue Co-Chair Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain, announced: commitments to mobilize funds for the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund, fast-start finance and the GCF; and the establishment of Caribbean and Pacific Investment Facilities.

Dialogue Co-Chair Takao Makino, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan, announced the provision of weather-monitoring equipment to SIDS, and construction of a new Pacific Climate Change Center.

Anoto Tong, President, Kiribati, announced the creation of the Coalition of Atoll Nations on Climate Change, made up of low-lying countries already suffering from climate change impacts.

Andris Piebalgs, EU Commissioner for Development, highlighted the EU Global Climate Change Alliance, and expressed support for targeted programmes in specific countries and for particular populations, and integrating climate change into sectors such as sustainable energy and agriculture.

Mary Robinson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Change, discussed how the climate challenge can be met, adding that at least 125 heads of state and government will attend the UN Climate Summit.

Rachel Kyte, World Bank Group Vice President and Special Envoy for Climate Change, said US\$1 invested in early warning saves US\$30 in relief and reconstruction, and called for clear signals to the private sector to drive investment from "the dirty" to "the clean."

Discussion moderator Margareta Wahlström, UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), said 2015 should be the "year of policy coherence" among multiple international conferences.

Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, called for better integration of climate change, DRR and disaster preparedness.

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<http://enb.iisd.mobi/>

Many countries and organizations mentioned existing or new partnerships to respond to climate change and promote resilience, including through: early warning systems; weather services; risk assessment and management for adaptation to climate change in the natural resource-based sectors of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism; developing renewable energy sources; and building capacity of local governments. UNESCO announced partnerships to the value of US\$5 million for South-South cooperation on risk reduction and loss and damage; and on regional tsunami early warning systems.

The UN Economic and Social Commission for the Asia-Pacific discussed: climate-induced migration, noting 350,000 atoll dwellers will be displaced by 2015; Kiribati's 'migration with dignity' policy; and development of a regional strategy on climate-induced migration and coping mechanisms. Switzerland discussed the Nansen Initiative, which addresses migration as a result of natural hazards and the impacts of climate change.

The Marshall Islands called for concrete action in low-lying atoll nations, and welcomed the World Bank's Small Island State Resilience Initiative. France asked how partnerships could be organized to strengthen cooperation and feed into the negotiations at COP 21 in Paris.

#### **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, YOUTH AND WOMEN**

Dialogue Chair Winston Dookeran, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago, welcomed delegates. Yanerit Morgan, Mexico, moderated the session.

**Keynote Address:** Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, noted: challenges posed by NCDs due to diabetes and obesity in SIDS; high youth unemployment rates; migration due to lack of opportunities; and gender inequality issues related to low participation rates of women in decision making, limited access to decent work, and family violence.

**Social Development:** Ewen McDonald, Australia, noted that his country's new aid policy focuses on: trade and infrastructure; women's empowerment; fisheries, water and agriculture; governance; DRR; social protection and community engagement.

Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO, underscored inclusiveness for achieving social development and highlighted education as the strongest ally to foster social inclusion and equal opportunities.

Fuimaono Falefa Lima, National University of Samoa, highlighted training for private and public sector employees, and women entrepreneurs, and for generating employment opportunities for youth.

In the ensuing discussion, Grenada highlighted the Grenada Sustainable Farmers' Night Market Network, which aims to, *inter alia*, help women start businesses, develop products and connect to markets.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime discussed programmes in SIDS to enhance criminal justice systems and increase access to drug treatment services, and partnerships to combat transnational organized crime.

The Pacific Islands Association of NGOs discussed a partnership with the Caribbean Policy Development Center, which aims to, *inter alia*, enhance interregional collaboration, establish knowledge hubs for best practices, and monitor and evaluate progress made in implementing the SAMOA Pathway.

UNICEF called for a child-focused partnership for SIDS.

UNEP introduced the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability, and said a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on SIDS would be launched in early 2015.

**Health and NCDs:** Leao Talalelei Tuitama, Minister of Health, Samoa, mentioned the Apia Challenge partnership, which highlights opportunities where SIDS can jointly strengthen NCD policies.

Toomas Palu, World Bank, highlighted a roadmap to tackle NCDs in the Pacific and highlighted efforts for joint pharmaceuticals procurement.

Colin Tukuitonga, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, lamented the lack of impact on the ground, and called for a multilateral and multi-sectoral, rather than a silo, approach to addressing NCDs.

In the ensuing discussion, Palau, for the Pacific Island Forum, officially launched the Pacific NCD Partnership for a Multi-sector Approach to Prevent and Control NCDs (Pacific NCD Partnership). The US expressed support for the World Health Organization's Global Coordination Mechanism for NCDs. Tonga highlighted the UN Pacific Interagency Task Force on NCD Prevention and Control, which addresses, *inter alia*, leadership, governance, multi-sectoral action and accountability. Saint Kitts and Nevis lamented the loss of GDP due to NCDs. The UN Population Fund emphasized a comprehensive approach to nurturing and investing in human capital. Israel said it would provide 25 SIDS student healthcare scholarships, and is partnering with Australia to provide diabetes medications.

The NCD Alliance supported including civil society voices in providing technical expertise and a patient-oriented perspective.

**Youth and women:** Roberta Clarke, UN Women, presented the organization's 'Markets for Change' project, a component of its Pacific Women's Economic Empowerment Programme, which is working to ensure decent working conditions for women vendors in marketplaces in the region.

Noelene Nabulivou, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), outlined the scale of environmental degradation and lamented the high rate of sexual and gender-based violence in the region. She stressed that gender-just approaches and women-led input are necessary for social development.

Karuna Rana, SIDS Youth AIMS Hub, presented the pre-conference Youth Forum outcomes, and highlighted a forthcoming Caribbean partnership to be launched on International Girl Child Day to address violence against girls.

In the ensuing discussion, Samoa announced the High-Tech Youth Network, which aims to promote digital entrepreneurship, saying that this builds on outcomes of the SIDS Youth Forum and on the SAMOA Pathway with regard to fostering entrepreneurship and encouraging the participation of women and youth.

Other countries and organizations presented partnerships to: strengthen women's participation and leadership in public decision making; build awareness among parliamentarians regarding the International Conference on Population and Development; improve the quality of education for girls; and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in high-risk groups. Networks that were mentioned included the Pacific Partnerships to Strengthen Gender, Climate Change Responses and Sustainable Development.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

The second day of the Conference continued with delegates looking to the short- and long-term future. With the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit taking place on 23 September 2014, where 125 world leaders are expected to attend, it was not surprising that multiple references were made to the summit during the general debate and in the Partnership Dialogue on climate change and DRM. However, some delegates expressed concern that this high-profile event and its emphasis on concrete climate change commitments may be stealing some of the glory from the SIDS meeting in Samoa, with some countries likely preferring to wait until New York to announce new pledges or commitments. Other delegates felt that emphasis on the Summit was a good thing, in that the momentum created at the SIDS Conference would be carried forward to the end of 2014, and hopefully beyond. Meanwhile, some delegations vying for seats on the UN Security Council pledged support for SIDS, should they be elected. "Looks like wherever you turn here, all roads lead to New York," said a seasoned delegate, stepping out into the warm evening sun at the end of the day.