

General Debate of the Plenary of the 3rd SIDS International Conference

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Mr President

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to thank the Government of the Independent State of Samoa for the welcome extended to me and my delegation.

I also wish to commend the Government and people of Samoa for taking up the challenge of hosting the 3rd SIDS Conference.

Mr. President

When Mauritius hosted the United Nations International Meeting to review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 2005, we spelt out a collective vision for our countries.

10 years after, I believe that we have lived up to those aspirations and we should be proud of our achievements.

Despite our inherent vulnerabilities and the challenging economic and financial environment, we have managed to make great progress in terms of sustaining our level of development and integrating the global economy.

Such accomplishments have been possible because we have put our people at the heart of development. We have upheld the belief that if we want to go far we should all go together and not alone.

This inherent faith is the essence behind the theme of the Samoa Conference “*Sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*”.

Mauritius is a firm believer that that the future development of SIDS lies in enhancing SIDS-SIDS and South-South cooperation.

We view regional cooperation as an important tool in enhancing such strategic partnerships. This is why Mauritius is proud to host regional organisations, such as the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

However, we should recognise that despite our best efforts, SIDS-SIDS cooperation can only complement and not supplement other partnerships.

We need to remind ourselves, and the international community, that despite our best efforts to build our resilience, SIDS will always remain vulnerable to natural disasters and to external shocks.

The 3rd International Conference on SIDS represents another step towards consensus on crafting a new agenda that takes into consideration our development needs and circumstances. We are of the view that the new agenda should take into consideration the fact that the relatively high GDP of some SIDS obscures their real development needs and precludes them from accessing vital development finance and support. The result is that many SIDS are unable to untangle themselves from the middle-income web.

SIDS vulnerabilities are further compounded by the effects of climate change, which threatens our livelihoods and undermines our economic development, which is largely based on 3 climate-sensitive pillars: agriculture, tourism and ocean-based industries. We cannot be expected to make progress towards the next level of development when our survival is uncertain, and our limited resources are being diverted towards managing the impacts of climate change.

We must reach a global consensus in Paris in 2015. SIDS' contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions amounts to less than 1% of the global share. Yet most, if not all, SIDS are taking mitigation measures. The international community must therefore show greater commitments and both developed and developing countries must increase mitigation targets: arriving at a global deal which limits global temperatures at 1.5 ° Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

SIDS must learn to be climate ready, with the necessary mechanisms that enable us to effectively and impactfully utilise the two pillars of adaptation to climate change, namely finance and technology.

Recognising the difficulties of SIDS in accessing the limited climate finance available globally, Mauritius will be hosting the Commonwealth Climate Finance Skills Hub to build the capacity of SIDS in identifying and accessing climate finance. I seize this opportunity to invite all SIDS and development partners present here to join the Hub's network and contribute to its expansion by providing the knowledge and insights which will allow it to support the needs of SIDS.

Our Conference should deliver on meaningful partnerships which address the pivot issues around climate change, including climate finance, technology, transition from fossil fuels to renewables and key adaptive measures.

Mr President

The key pillars for effective climate action are our energy policies, our efforts to access and utilise climate finance, and technology which is adapted to the specific needs of SIDS. In the field of Energy, we have adopted various ambitious goals to include a bigger percentage of renewable energy in our energy mix, despite our limited means to shoulder the burden of the high upfront costs of such an endeavour. We must also remember that SIDS as a total contribute less than 1% to global greenhouse gases, yet SIDS are committed to adopting a bigger share of renewables. To ensure sustainable development, we need to explore all options available to diversify our energy mix, including marine-based renewable energy sources. However, we would need to develop more meaningful partnerships, like that with IRENA. Moreover, developed countries need to honour their commitments if we are to achieve this overall objective.

Mr. President

Oceans are the next frontier for development. This is particularly true for SIDS, for whom Oceans offer the best scope for economic diversification and growth. Mauritius therefore is

of the view that the international community should take a holistic view of the Oceans especially in the context of the post-2015 development framework.

Following national consultations, Mauritius has published a Roadmap on the Ocean Economy. The Mauritius Roadmap sets out the vision, goals and strategies in order to make the Ocean Economy the next pillar of economic development.

We recognise the Oceans' immense potential in addressing our food and energy needs and in fuelling innovation. We also want to promote oceanic knowledge to ensure that policy decisions remain rooted in scientific facts. We are growing ever more aware of the ecosystem services which oceans provide. However, the very oceans which hold such promise for us are under threat. Anthropogenic stresses – overfishing, destructive modes of fishing, climate change, and pollution – including land-based run-offs and marine debris – have seriously undermined the capacity of the ocean to re-generate itself. Reckless and irresponsible attitude towards the ocean *has* to stop.

Ocean-based initiatives must form a crucial component of the compact of partnerships emerging from Samoa. Mauritius strongly believes that the time is now to develop a Global Ocean Strategy, which has the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as its foundation, and which charts the way for the sustainable use and stewardship of ocean resources.

Mr President

The international community must recognise that today's international legal and institutional order cannot be based on the post-war world order. We call for improving governance of international institutions including expansion in both categories of permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council. In this context, we support the call for a permanent seat for SIDS on a reformed Security Council.

To conclude, I wish to reemphasise that it is also high time that the AIMS region establishes a structured mechanism which will enable it to contribute to the coordination and implementation of sustainable development actions. I call upon UNDESA to facilitate the establishment of such a mechanism, to ensure that all three SIDS region have an equal voice leading up to the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Time to show leadership in shaping the global discourse towards sustainability is now. SIDS are keen to support partnerships and multilateral processes that will help us achieve global goals and commitments - and resolve of SIDS are stronger than ever.

Thank You.