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## **Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

**Apia, Samoa, 1 - 4 September 2014**

Statement by  
H.E. Ivo Sieber

Head of the Swiss Delegation and

Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau

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H.E. the Chairman of the Conference,  
Honorable Heads of State and Government  
Honorable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Switzerland would like to thank the Government of Samoa for organizing the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and for hosting this event in such a marvelous venue.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude for the leadership and commitment, with which SIDS countries and their partners dedicate themselves to work in a meaningful partnership with all stakeholders and to discuss the particular challenges they are facing while addressing sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman

Switzerland is committed to strengthen its partnership with small island states. This desire is marked by increased political engagement. In 2013, a first official visit of a Swiss President to a Pacific island state took place in Vanuatu, and Switzerland recently took part as observer to the Pacific Island Forum for the second consecutive year.

Switzerland encourages the establishment of permanent missions of SIDS to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva. Switzerland offers tailored support to accommodate the opening of SIDS permanent missions in Geneva which has become today's foremost center of global governance for a wide range of critical issues that we are addressing at this Summit, including water management, environment, climate change, health and migration. Furthermore Switzerland offers its support, by means of the Capacity Development Programme for Small Island States, in educating young diplomats of the South Pacific Island States in the field of multilateral diplomacy

As I look at the diversity of delegates and friends gathered here today, I feel there is no better way to illustrate our shared recognition that working in partnership is the most powerful, efficient and sustainable way of addressing national, regional and global challenges.

An important framework to address challenges at all these levels will be the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which combines - in a single track - poverty eradication and sustainable development. As a universal agenda, it will guide the efforts of us all to ensure a sustainable future for a world, in which everybody lives in dignity and no one is left behind. The recent Outcome Document of the Open Working Group on SDGs is a milestone, and we are pleased that this report also includes most of the priorities for SIDS. We would like to thank all SIDS for the active and constructive role they played in this process.

To ensure successful implementation of this framework, we have to build a genuine and durable global partnership in which state and non-state actors are brought together, new resources are mobilized, accountability and ownership are strengthened and an enabling environment for sustainable development is created.

In reaffirming our commitment to a new Post-2015 Development Agenda and the sustainable development of SIDS, it is critical that we monitor and report on our progress to ensure that our joint vision of sustainable development is translated into action and durable results. The newly created High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the relevant UN organizations as well as Member States, NGOs and private sector stakeholders will play a key role in this respect.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the content of the SIDS Outcome Document, Switzerland is particularly pleased that provisions for disaster preparedness and response dealing with displaced persons were included in paragraph 52 c). We highly commend the SIDS for this strong commitment and are ready to support them in their endeavor: Together with Norway, Switzerland launched the “Nansen Initiative”, which aims at improving the protection of people forced to flee abroad as a result of a natural disaster. The Nansen Initiative is a state-led, consultative process, which aims at building consensus on the development of a protection agenda addressing the needs of the displaced. At its core are five Regional Consultations, which provide the source for information on the phenomenon. So far, three of these consultations were held, namely in the Pacific region, the Horn of Africa, and Central America. SIDS representatives have actively participated and will be invited to take part in the upcoming remaining consultations in South-East Asia and South Asia.

Moreover, opportunities for collaboration between the SIDS and the Nansen Initiative were discussed during our side-event on Monday afternoon, entitled “Prevent, Prepare, and Respond: Displacement in the context of disasters and the effects of climate change”. An outcome document will be made available to the participants of the conference. We look forward to further reinforcing our active cooperation with the SIDS, in particular in the run-up to the final consultation at the global level, which will be held in 2015. We invite you to join the group of friends of the Nansen Initiative.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, I would like, once again, to commend the SIDS and their partners for their tireless efforts in trying to make a difference in the lives of millions of people, and to reaffirm Switzerland’s commitment to continuing its support to your work and to strengthening partnerships for a more efficient sustainable development.

Thank you.