

Check against delivery

**Plenary Speech by Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator at the  
Third International Conference on Small Island Developing  
States (SIDS)  
2 September 2014  
Apia, Samoa**

| Greetings | to the government | and (also) | people (all citizen) | of  
Samoa

| ‘Ou te fa’atālofa atu | i le mālo | fa’apea | tagatānuu ‘uma| ‘o Sāmoa.

**It is a pleasure to be here in Apia. The Teuila Festival is showing  
the very best of Samoan life and culture, alongside this Third  
International Conference on Small Island Developing States.**

**These are exciting and challenging times for those committed to  
sustainable development and to SIDS. World leaders are  
preparing to meet in a few weeks at the UN Secretary  
General’s Climate Summit and, one year from now at the UN  
in New York to agree on the next global development agenda.**

Check against delivery

**It is critical that they hear a clear and unambiguous message from Apia.**

**The message will be most powerful if it reflects the perspective of those who live in SIDS. For them, the struggle for sustainable development is anything but theoretical. The world's success or failure in tackling climate change and other forms of environmental degradation, disease, poverty, and economic volatility - will have a major impact on families, health, livelihoods, and future prospects of the people in SIDS. Indeed, for some island nations, climate change is a question of whether they will survive.**

**UNDP has the privilege of working across the SIDS countries. Our staff there, overwhelmingly citizens of SIDS, experience the extreme weather events and are there when neighbors, communities, governments, and partners come together to clean up and recover. We understand what it looks like when**

Check against delivery

**increasingly deadly and costly natural disasters test the remarkable resilience of the citizens of SIDS.**

**Given the challenges they face, SIDS have signaled that they won't wait for others to act. Rather, they will be advocates for and role models of the transformative changes the world needs to make. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Leaders Declaration adopted on Monday makes this clear. I quote:**

**“We understand that it is the land, the seas and oceans surrounding us that define us and that will largely determine our future. We know that we have inherited them from our forebears and hold them in trust for future generations of our people. Our determination to survive and thrive on these lands is based on these realities”.** *End quote.*

**UNDP hears and supports this message fully. But SIDS cannot carry the burden of change alone. In this globalized world SIDS need sufficient support to keep pace with development**

Check against delivery

**opportunities and ensure that their voices are heard wherever decisions affecting them are taken. This conference must be a vehicle to spur the global action which will generate the financing, technology, and support SIDS need to secure their futures.**

**To strengthen the resilience of SIDS, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation must be seen as two sides of the same coin. More should also be done to include women, youth, excluded, and vulnerable groups in the design and implementation of programmes and policies. UNDP and UNCDF's joint efforts in SIDS to bring development financing for climate resilience to local levels and empower people in remote areas with digital banking is an example of what could be scaled up.**

**The 'S.A.M.O.A. Pathway' outcome document is a good guide for those looking to advance sustainable development in SIDS.**

Check against delivery

**UNDP welcomes the call for a comprehensive review of UN system support to SIDS, and stands ready to assist. We congratulate SIDS on achieving tangible commitments, backed by clear financing and accountability provisions. The agreement provides a sound basis for durable partnerships capable of measurable accomplishments in the years ahead.**

**The priorities agreed in Apia can also give strong direction to SIDS in climate change negotiations and Member State deliberations on the post-2015 sustainable development goals. The outcome of Apia can and should inform the world's next development agenda - ensuring that it reflects both the vulnerabilities and the culture of resilience inherent to SIDS.**

**The consensus and good-will generated in Apia can help SIDS make the most of the post-2015 opportunity to mobilise and focus the efforts of diverse actors on shared targets. UNDP will work with SIDS to this end. Our focus will remain on**

Check against delivery

**strengthening the national systems, institutions, and capacities which enable SIDS to drive their sustainable development priorities at home and in global fora. In recent years, UNDP's delivery in SIDS has reached over USD 230 million per year, and there is scope to do more as funding becomes available.**

**SIDS have long presented a uniquely valid and compelling case for sustainable development. Growing global challenges have made the needs, strengths, and vulnerabilities of SIDS even more evident. Now it is time to make solutions just as evident.**

**\*\*\***