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OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO THE

**THIRD UN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

SEPTEMBER 2, 2014

Apia, Samoa

AS DELIVERED

On behalf of the United States and President Barack Obama, I would like to thank the Government of Samoa for hosting us and for the tremendous amount of work that has gone into organizing this groundbreaking event, which I understand is the largest global event ever held in the Pacific Island region. Please accept our congratulations on the conference and our appreciation for the warmth of the Samoan people in welcoming the world to their beautiful islands.

The United States also thanks all of the UN offices and agencies and intergovernmental organizations that have worked in partnership with Samoa on the conference's rich content, and for leveraging your expertise into meaningful action on the ground for Small Island Developing States.

I also thank the representatives from the private sector and NGO community for their participation in the conference this week. All countries, not just developing countries, rely on the ingenuity, technology, resources, networks, and leadership of non-governmental actors to face today's challenges.

Samoa is our neighbor. Though separated by 24 hours on the clock, American Samoa and Samoa share a maritime border, and American soil is less than 80 miles away from where we sit.

Our delegation's composition, including representatives from American Samoa, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam, reflects this understanding that some of our states and many of our territories face the same challenges and vulnerabilities that island states do.

The United States is committed to working to advance the sustainable development of all Small Island Developing States – as a donor, as a partner and member of the international community, and as a neighbor.

Climate change is among the highest of our shared priorities. As President Obama's Science Advisor, I can tell you that President Obama is keenly aware of the climate-related challenges facing Small Island Developing States, and he takes the need for urgent action on climate change very seriously.

Indeed, he has placed unprecedented emphasis in his Administration on reducing the carbon pollution that is causing climate change. Our new Clean Power Plan targets existing and new power plants, and will reduce CO₂ emissions from U.S. electricity generation by 26% below 2005 levels by 2020.

Our new fuel-economy standards for light and heavy-duty vehicles will cut emissions by more than 6 Gt CO₂e cumulatively by 2030. With these and other measures, we are on track to meet President Obama's commitment to reduce emissions 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020.

The President's comprehensive Climate Action Plan, set forth in June 2013, also includes the development of our contribution to the expected 2015 agreement, a contribution we will put forward no later than March of next year. Let me be clear that the United States is fully committed to achieving an outcome in 2015 that is ambitious, durable, and flexible, and that has legal force, consistent with what we all agreed in Durban. We want to continue working closely with you to ensure we all get it right in Paris.

While our mitigation efforts at home are perhaps the single most important thing we can do to be good partners to Small Island Developing States on the climate change issue, we also recognize that adapting to the impacts of climate change is essential, and for this reason, the United States will work to ensure that adaptation gets the emphasis it deserves in the 2015 agreement.

In terms of climate finance, the U.S. prioritizes its adaptation support to the most vulnerable developing countries, including the island states.

Here in the Pacific, our ADAPT Asia-Pacific program, which builds the capacity of Pacific SIDS to access and manage climate finance, has already helped Pacific SIDS to leverage over \$67 million in adaptation funds from multilateral sources. Our \$445 million in pledges between fiscal year 2010 and 2013 to the multilateral Least Developed Countries Fund, the Special Climate

Change Fund, and the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience have helped SIDS to access over \$385 million in adaptation assistance to date. These funds support programs that are building the resilience of island communities and countries around the globe.

The United States is also supporting preparations for the launch of the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture, which will embrace the fundamental aspirations of climate-smart agriculture: improving productivity, building resilience, and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. In just a few weeks, the Alliance will be launched in New York during the UN Climate Summit. We encourage all SIDS countries to join this valuable alliance.

The protection of the ocean and coastal environments is another imperative. Three billion people globally rely on the ocean as a significant source of protein, and the sustainable use of marine resources, from fisheries to the tourism sector, is at the very heart of SIDS economies, food security, and cultures. Yet, the health of our oceans is being challenged—by warming, acidification, overfishing, and other threats.

In June, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's "Our Ocean" Conference welcomed Heads of State, Foreign Ministers, and policy makers, environmental organizations, scientists, and entrepreneurs from nearly 90 countries, including many small island states, to Washington to mobilize action on the issues of sustainable fishing, marine pollution, and ocean acidification.

The Conference resulted in commitments from government, intergovernmental, and private sector partners valued at more than \$1.8

billion. In addition, participants announced new commitments on the protection of more than 3 million square kilometers of the ocean.

We are looking forward to working with SIDS to advance the “Our Ocean Action Plan,” including through the prevention and elimination of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. Entry into force of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement, the further establishment of effectively-managed marine protected areas, and the creation of worldwide capability to monitor ocean acidification are three important ways to monitor and protect our oceans. Just this week, here in Samoa, the United States partnered with New Zealand and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in convening marine researchers and policy makers to discuss how to strengthen monitoring of acidification.

Another challenge for Small Island Developing States is the lack of large energy resource endowments, as well as dependence on high-cost imported energy, resulting in economic vulnerability. Promoting the development and deployment of renewable energy in island states can improve energy security and support steady economic development. The United States is working to mobilize international financing resources for renewable energy.

Specifically, the United States supports the creation of an energy Sustainable Development Goal that would align with two objectives of the joint UN-World Bank *Sustainable Energy for All*, which are: (1) to bring energy to the 1.3 billion people on the planet without electricity and (2) to double the global share of renewable energy. We also support a stand-alone ocean sustainable development goal, with targets for achieving sustainable fisheries,

reducing marine pollution, addressing ocean acidification, and creating more marine protected areas.

As the declaration for this meeting, the SAMOA Pathway, acknowledges, serious challenges remain. The texts of the Barbados Program of Action, the Mauritius Strategy, and the SAMOA Pathway remind us of the work that must be done.

Beyond text and frameworks, we must focus on concrete steps that will further promote sustainable development and address vulnerabilities, including especially the vulnerability to climate change.

So let us work together to craft a new global partnership that is founded in a firm commitment by a diverse set of actors including NGOs, national governments, universities, research institutes, and companies to work diligently together to achieve tangible outcomes so that when we gather again ten years from now, we will be proud of our accomplishments.

Thank you.