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Stewardship of oceans critical to protecting ecosystems, safeguarding world's food supply, delegates say at International Conference on Small Island Developing States

Proper management of the world's vast oceans — the lifeline of the planet — and its rich marine life was vital to end degradation of ecosystems, stem biodiversity loss and ensure the world's food supply, delegates warned as the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States continued today.

Egypt's representative said the oceans and seas, home to nearly half of the earth's species, had a critical role in sustainable development and human well-being. He pointed to figures from the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that revealed that poor fisheries management and depleted fish stocks were threatening food security, costing the global fishing industry \$50 billion in losses annually. "It is imperative to break this cycle to maintain biodiversity," he said.

He also supported creation of a global instrument under the auspices of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to conserve and sustain marine biodiversity beyond areas of international maritime jurisdiction, and welcomed the decision of the Green Climate Fund's board to allocate half of its adaptation resources to small island developing States and other vulnerable countries.

Echoing that sentiment, the United Kingdom's representative said that as fisheries were an important source of income and food for millions of people, the practices of fisheries must become more sustainable. That meant tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as well as climate change, which increased ocean acidity, killing marine organisms and damaging ecosystems. Such efforts were vital for protecting development gains. To help small island developing States stem biodiversity loss and protect the natural environment, his Government had set up the Darwin Initiative, a grant scheme that since 2005 had funded 38 island projects.

Kedrick Pickering, the representative of the British Virgin Islands, cited the territory's achievements in biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change, and said several multisectoral partnerships had been instrumental in solving problems that traditional methods of development aid had not.

He stressed that greater flexibility by development partners was key. Often aid was delivered in regional clusters, excluding some islands due to their political status. But in order to tackle marine issues such as invasive species like lion fish and to sustain fisheries, all islands in a given ecosystem must be included. "It is important that future international partners utilize a more inclusive framework for SIDS that overcomes such barriers," he said.

Indonesia's representative said maritime-based development, known as the "blue economy", should play a more prominent role in the future. His country had organized the World Coral Reef Conference in May, and it intended to contribute \$20 million for various capacity-building programmes for Pacific island countries as part of enhancing South-South cooperation.

Sri Lanka's representative said the oceans had shaped the history and culture of his island nation, and would determine its future. Under the auspices of the Indian Ocean Rim Association of Countries, his Government had set up a centre on ocean sciences and environment to better prepare Sri Lanka and other ocean rim countries to tackle future challenges related to climate change and marine resources.

A youth representative from Mauritius, speaking on behalf of the children and youth major group, called on Member States to review, enforce, implement and regulate policies and legislation at all levels on sustainable fresh water systems, sanitation services and ocean management.

Thailand's representative drew attention to the devastating impact of natural hazards at sea on coastline communities, and the need for disaster risk prevention and management. He recalled how the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean had killed more than 20,000 people, among them 8,000 Thais, while a devastating flood in 2011 in the central part of the country had caused economic losses of \$45.7 billion. The Thai Government had since set up a national flood prevention and water management system. The 2014 Bangkok Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia and the Pacific, and the region's inputs for the post-2015 disaster risk reduction framework, had incorporated the concerns of small island developing States.

Also speaking today were the Prime Minister of Barbados and Government officials and representatives of Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Finland, Czech Republic, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Chile, Uruguay, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, Philippines, Brazil, India, El Salvador, Republic of Korea, Guinea-Bissau, Romania, Mexico, Costa Rica, Ireland, Pakistan, Chad, Argentina, Nepal, Viet Nam, Suriname and South Africa. A statement was also made by the representative of New Caledonia.

Representatives of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Commonwealth Secretariat also spoke, as did youth representatives from Niue and Guyana (on behalf of the children and youth major group), the Sisi Initiative Site Support Group (on behalf of the indigenous peoples major group), Diverse Voices & Action for Equality (on behalf of the women major group) and the University of West Indies (on behalf of the major group for the scientific and technological community).

The Conference will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 4 September.

Summary of Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Dialogue

FONOTOE NUAFESILI PIERRE LAUOFO, Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa and ex-officio Vice-President of the Conference, briefing on the multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue held in the afternoon of 2 September, said that social development was a driving force of sustainable development and required a social capital framework based on community trust, social justice, social inclusion, sustainable livelihoods and safe communities with access to essential goods and services. Heritage and culture energized society and were forces for social cohesion. Quality education was the key to social inclusion and mobility, empowerment of women and girls, preventing violence against women and girls, fighting disease, including HIV/AIDS, safeguarding sexual and reproductive health and addressing children's development and nutrition. Non-communicable diseases were an epidemic in small island developing States (SIDS), especially in the Pacific, but also in the Caribbean, cutting lives short and undermining all aspects of social development. Partnerships to address non-communicable diseases required whole of society and interregional approaches. Partnerships recognized included Pacific partnerships on non-communicable diseases; better

nutrition against non-communicable diseases; the Apia Challenge on non-communicable diseases; entrepreneurship for youth; education; women's empowerment; health in small island developing States; farmers' night markets; marketplaces for women; microfinance for women; insulin for life; sex education for youth; prevention of gender-based violence; and corporate volunteerism.

Statements

FREUNDEL JEROME STUART, Prime Minister of Barbados, said that while small island developing States had kept their end of the bargain to implement sustainable development strategies in line with the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, it was regrettable that the international resources promised to them had not been forthcoming. He stressed the importance of "SIDS collectivity", and to have an impact internationally, SIDS must speak with one voice. As noted in the Rio+20 Outcome Document and by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), small island developing States had made less progress, even regressed economically, than most groupings of countries, while sea-level rise threatened their very survival. Institutional capacity in the three SIDS regions was needed to facilitate inter- and intraregional collaboration and mechanisms, which could serve as intermediaries for direct access to resources such as the Green Climate Fund. He called on the Secretary-General and the international community to give serious consideration to the *Samoa Pathway* document. Barbados could serve as a hub for inter- and intraregional SIDS cooperation.

He expressed concern over the use of gross domestic product (GDP) per-capita income as the criteria for accessing concessionary financing. New approaches were needed to help middle-income countries and others that had graduated from access to concessional resources. Proposed mechanisms to address those concerns already existed in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, but there was a lack of implementation. The Secretary-General should develop an effective approach to monitor the progress of United Nations agencies and programmes in addressing SIDS issues. He noted with concern that to date no specific programme had been set up in the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to focus on small island developing States and called on the Facility's Chief Executive and Chair to consider ways to create one. All SIDS must be able to access resources from the specific funds set up for their benefit by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Efforts to address the specific needs of SIDS, as set forth in the *Samoa Pathway* text, should extend to the areas of trade, finance and social and cultural development. "SIDS need to have a seat at the table on all these issues," he said.

KENNETH DARROUX, Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, Physical Planning and Fisheries of Dominica, said his country had partnered with the World Bank and the Climate Investment Funds, signing a \$38 million package for disaster risk reduction and climate resilience. That package was comprised of grant and highly concessionary loans geared towards building resistance against the effects of climate change. A substantial portion of his country's budget was going towards restoration efforts after erratic and more intense weather events. The package included infrastructure initiatives, capacity-building, water resource management and food security. His Government had taken a bold step to make a transition from costly fossil fuels to clean energy, spending 10 per cent of its national budget to that end. There was a need to use the full spectrum of renewable resources — sun, wind, geothermal, biomass, hydropower, and even ocean thermal electric current, wave and tide power. As the vanguard of the great transition to clean energy, "we can show the world that it can be done".

CHARLES HENRY FERNANDEZ, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, expressing concern that small island developing States were often excluded from critical decision-making by international

institutions, corporations and individuals, said that to build successful partnerships, development partners must be more cognizant of the specific needs of those States, allowing them to fully participate in the creation of mechanisms for their benefit. The economic vulnerability of SIDS, their limited access to international financial institutions and the steady drop in official development assistance (ODA) were real threats, as was the erroneous use of GDP per capita as a marker for development. He called upon the international community to reconsider the policy that cut off access by SIDS to concessionary loans and other global financial aid once they graduated from least-developed-country status. Highly indebted small island developing States needed debt forgiveness and relief such as debt swaps.

He called for firm commitments to help small island developing States cope with non-communicable diseases, access sexual and reproductive health services, improve their health and education systems, empower women and address the needs of the vulnerable, notably children and indigenous communities. Seventy per cent of Antigua and Barbuda's economy was dependent on tourism, and the adverse impact of climate change would result in a "tremendous shock" to it and other small, fragile SIDS economies. Already, there were negative changes in the coastal ecosystem and water resources. Ambitious action on the ground that increased resilience, cut greenhouse-gas emissions and moved the world towards a cleaner, greener economy was needed. Many small island developing States, including his country, had made significant commitments to adopt greenhouse-gas mitigation targets, but they could only be reached through real partnerships. Noting with concern that many SIDS lacked the necessary baseline data to ensure success of their adaptation and mitigation activities, he called for adequate support and technology to improve those chances, and to enhance the resilience of their populations, economies and ecosystems to natural hazards.

PETTERI TAALAS ([Finland](#)) said national meteorological services had a crucial role to produce data and information for disaster risk reduction. Since the 1980s, Finland had supported development cooperation projects in that area in more than 100 countries. His country, having been among the most active members of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), had emphasized the need to pay attention to hydrometeorological disaster early warning and climate adaptation system development in small island developing States. The Finnish Meteorological Institute had contributed to the development of national meteorological services in both Pacific and Caribbean small island developing States. Preparing for extreme climatic events needed to be taken into account in agriculture and infrastructure planning.

MANASVI SRISODAPOL ([Thailand](#)) said his country, like small island developing States, had suffered the devastating impact of natural hazards in the sea. Ten years ago, the tsunami in the Indian Ocean had killed more than 20,000 people, among them 8,000 Thais, while a flood in 2011 had inundated industrial estates in the central part of the country, causing economic losses of \$47.5 billion. The Government had created a flood-prevention system and a nationwide water-management system to ensure an adequate sustainable water supply for agriculture and industry. Thailand had steadily intensified its partnership with Pacific island countries, hosting the first Thailand-Pacific Island Countries Forum in Bangkok in August. At that meeting, five priority areas for cooperation had been identified — ecotourism, rural development, information and communications technology, environmental conservation and alternative energy. The new Thai-Pacific action plan would set the future direction of the two regions' partnership. The 2014-2050 climate change master plan would establish a comprehensive framework for mitigation and adaptation. The Bangkok Declaration and the Asia-Pacific inputs for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction had incorporated the concerns of small island developing States.

IVAN JANCAREK ([Czech Republic](#)) said his Government attached importance to development cooperation — it was embedded in its legislation and carried out in line with the strategic documents approved by the

Government. The country's assistance focused on several areas, including economy, trade, industry, agriculture, food security, environment, health care and education. Between 2008 and 2013, it had provided approximately \$1.6 million to small island developing States in development and humanitarian aid through bilateral and thematic programmes, on top of the cooperation between the European Union and SIDS. Isle nations were the guardians of global biodiversity and sustainable use of ocean and marine resources. However, those objectives could not be achieved without addressing the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development in small island developing States, including gender equality and women's empowerment.

TAWFEEQ AHMED AL MANSOOR (Bahrain), noting that small island developing States had suffered gravely from climate change with sea-level rise, threatening their very survival, said that national and regional plans by those States to adapt to and mitigate climate change must be supported by the international community. Bahrain had taken steps to address the impact of climate change at home, including by developing wastewater treatment and desalination systems and strategies to better manage fisheries. Climate change had strained the Government financially, and to address that it had integrated sustainable development policies into national and regional projects and enacted laws to limit the squandering of natural resources and electricity. He said that a 1 metre sea-level rise had already covered considerable areas of Bahrain's land, leading to salinization of its ground water. Oil residue threatened the ecological health of Bahrain and the other coastal Gulf States, he said, calling on the international community to implement the Convention of Biodiversity to preserve the coastal food chain in the region. He stressed the importance of the Conference outcome document, and called on developed countries to honour their ODA commitments.

MAJIU AZ-SUWAIDI (United Arab Emirates), stressing the need to raise the level of commitment to addressing climate change, said that small island developing States produced few greenhouse gases, but were among the most vulnerable in the world to the effects of climate change. There was no question about the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and who must do the heavy lifting. Voluntary action was a critical part of the solution, and his Government did not want to sit on the side lines. His country was committed to cutting its power emissions footprint by 25 per cent by 2020 and reducing emission growth in the building sector by 20-30 per cent. Renewable energy was no longer a faraway concept, but now the cheapest source of energy supply for a rapidly growing number of countries. It was a solution "everyone can get behind".

ISAURO TORRES (Chile), expressing support for the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, said the implementation of both was crucial for the sustainable development of small island developing States, and the *Samoa Pathway* document would bring the world one step closer to equitable, sustainable growth. The Chilean International Cooperation Agency had focused its efforts and limited resources on Caribbean small island developing States, and strove to transfer public policy skills and knowledge in the form of technical aid. His country had explored triangular cooperation to take advantage of synergies with traditional donors. Chile's priority areas for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) were education, agriculture, disaster prevention and management, and international relations. His country had developed a preschool programme in Haiti, and in the Dominican Republic, its cooperation focused on youth entrepreneurship. In other CARICOM nations, Chile had contributed to the health and fisheries sector through bilateral projects.

RICARDO VARELA (Uruguay), associating himself with the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, said that climate change adaptation measures had constrained national budgets and compromised the

scope of achievement of Millennium Development Goals. In addition, it presented a threat to small island developing States as rising sea levels eroded their territories. Those countries needed to develop capacity to protect themselves from external shocks, such as the global financial crisis. Food security, sustainable production and consumption, and access to markets were all among the necessary measures. Social development was crucial, as it was one of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Uruguay supported vulnerable groups, such as children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly, through policies. His country advocated for universal health care and had introduced an anti-smoking policy.

IVO SIEBER ([Switzerland](#)), expressing his country's commitment towards strengthening partnerships with small island developing States, encouraged the establishment of permanent missions of SIDS to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva. Switzerland had supported SIDS through a capacity-building programme that educated young diplomats of South Pacific island States in multilateral diplomacy. He welcomed the fact that the Conference's outcome document included provisions for disaster preparedness and response for displaced persons. Switzerland and Norway had launched the Nansen Initiative, a State-led, consultative process that aimed to improve the protection of people forced to flee abroad due to disasters. Three of its five consultations had already been held, including in the Pacific region, the Horn of Africa and Central America. SIDS representatives had actively participated and would be invited to take part in future consultations in South-East Asia and South Asia.

ANNA LINDSTEDT ([Sweden](#)) stressed the need to move towards a sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy. Since hosting the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, her country had been a world leader in addressing environmental challenges through concrete action. Her country's economic policies, such as the carbon tax of \$150 per ton of carbon dioxide emissions had already reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent while its economy had grown 60 per cent since 1990. Sweden aimed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 40 per cent by 2020, with an ambition of no-net climate emissions by 2050. Her country was committed to supporting developing countries in taking on the challenges associated with achieving sustainable development and adapting to climate change. Sweden, as the single largest donor to the Adaption Fund — an initiative that financed projects in developing countries geared towards adapting to the effects of climate change — stood ready to partner with and further assist small island developing States in obtaining access to those resources. The insights gained at the Conference would further her country's ambition to build partnerships with SIDS, covering both the public and private sectors.

HELMUT BÖCK ([Austria](#)) expressed his country's commitment to combating climate change through an ambitious, new legally-binding international agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that addressed mitigation and adaptation. Austria had taken action to make climate change management a priority and a cross-cutting issue of its development cooperation. Sustainable energy, production and consumption was closely linked to climate change and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Access to reliable clean and renewable energy were a prerequisite for sustainable development, as noted in the debate on the post-2015 development agenda. The Austrian Development Cooperation had made sustainable energy a priority, with a strong focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency. Austria readily supported the Vienna-based Sustainable Energy for All initiative and regional efforts to set up a global network of renewable energy and energy-efficiency centres in the Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Oceans. Such centres could play a key role in achieving the Initiative's aims by 2030 and positively impact the quality of life in small island developing States.

VIRGINIA BENAVIDEZ (Philippines) said that the Secretary-General's five-year review report on progress made on the Millennium Development Goals indicated that several small island developing States were not on track to achieve those targets and some had even regressed. She deemed several elements consequential to attain the Millennium Goals. Economic growth must be accompanied by creation of new, decent jobs. There was a need to strengthen good-quality data collection and analysis for measuring efforts and for decision-making. Adequate financing was essential. The effects of climate change must be addressed, and disaster risk reduction was of critical importance.

EDUARDO RICARDO GRADILONE NETO (Brazil) said that in 2011, his country had set up a multilateral cooperation programme in agriculture, food security and social policies that comprised 22 capacity-building courses created by 20 Brazilian institutions. A total of 70 countries worldwide, several among them being small island developing States, had expressed interest in the programme. In April 2010, Brazil and CARICOM had signed a technical cooperation agreement for agriculture, livestock, seed production, soil use planning and environmental preservation. Brazil had bilateral cooperation programmes with Caribbean SIDS, notably Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, to help them achieve sustainable development. In 2013, a Brazilian mission to the Caribbean had created initiatives in the fields of agriculture and water resources in seven countries. His country had partnered with Sao Tome and Principe, Cabo Verde and Timor-Leste to share its experiences in agriculture and renewable energy production. Programmes for Pacific SIDS had been geared towards strengthening ties and cooperation concerning the oceans and seas.

ANUMULA GITESH SARMA (India) said that as part of his country's commitment to South-South cooperation, his Government over the past decade had strengthened its cooperation with small island developing States and established new links with them. SIDS had been important participants in the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme launched in 1964 as a fully funded bilateral programme of assistance. India's trade with small island developing States had increased manifold over the years, and in 2011-2012 it totalled over \$30 billion. It had also extended a large number of credit lines for the development of infrastructure in small island developing States. In the four years leading up to 2013-2014, such States in the Pacific had used more than \$6.5 million worth of grants-in-aid from India.

JONATHAN SINCLAIR (United Kingdom) said poverty eradication was not possible without first addressing climate change. As fisheries were an important source of income and food security for millions, its practices must become more sustainable. That meant tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as well as climate change, which increased ocean acidity, killing marine organisms and damaging ecosystems. Doing so was vital for protecting development gains. The United Kingdom was committed to agreeing on a legally-binding climate deal in Paris in 2015. Working with a non-governmental organization, it was bringing biogas, an alternative energy, directly to local communities in Samoa. From 2011 to 2016, the United Kingdom had committed £3.87 billion to the International Climate Fund. To help countries tackle biodiversity loss, it had set up the Darwin Initiative, a grant scheme that helped to protect biodiversity and the natural environment in developing countries. Since 2005, it had funded £8 million worth of 38 projects on islands, and in 2012, it had set up the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund for small remote islands.

RUBÉN IGNACIO ZAMORA (El Salvador), associating himself with the Group of 77 and China, expressed solidarity with small island developing States as they faced similar challenges, including vulnerability to external shocks, high energy costs, greater frequency of extreme weather events and fragility to natural hazards. Between the period of 2009 and 2011, the effects of climate change in his country, including

erratic and intense tropical storms, had caused \$1.3 billion in economic losses. In 2011, that translated to 6 per cent of El Salvador's GDP. States categorized as middle-income countries, such as his, had limited access to financing despite high unemployment and other difficulties. The international community must renew its commitment to addressing those issues. More than ever before, there was a need to change the pattern of production and consumption.

HASSAN EL-LAITHY (Egypt), stressing the need to implement the Barbados Programme of Action, Mauritius Strategy and the *Samoa Pathway* outcome document into the post-2015 development agenda, welcomed the decision of the Green Climate Fund's board to allocate half of its adaptation resources to small island developing States and other vulnerable countries. Egypt supported the creation of the Warsaw Damage and Loss Mechanism and the inclusion of SIDS as members in the Interim Damage and Loss Committee. The second phase of the Hyogo Framework for Action must address disaster risk prevention and reduction and strategic resilience-building. Oceans and seas — home to nearly half of the earth's species — had a great role in sustainable development and human well-being. According to the World Bank and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the world's fishing fleet suffered \$50 billion in losses annually due to depleted stocks and poor fisheries management, directly threatening food security. That depletion increased biodiversity loss and caused the degradation of ecosystems and the quality of the environment. "It is imperative to break this cycle to maintain biodiversity," he said. Egypt supported creation of appropriate international instrument under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to conserve and sustain marine biodiversity beyond areas of international jurisdiction.

MUKHISA KITUYI, Secretary-General of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), said that many small island developing States received external support in the form of aid, market access or technical assistance. None of those measures was ever granted on the grounds of SIDS status. Regrettably, despite decades of SIDS advocacy in the United Nations, there was no internationally accepted procedure or agreed criteria for identifying those countries. That needed to be resolved to pave the way for "SIDS-specific treatment". At his organization, SIDS were identified as having small populations, as being islands, as having the income levels or income distribution of developing countries and as being self-governing. Those criteria came from the four letters of the SIDS acronym — small size, island-ness, developing status and Statehood. Twenty-nine fit those criteria. Without clarity, any proclaimed SIDS programme would lack focus, and accordingly, there was a need to agree on a process to create a SIDS category.

INANGARO VAKAAFI (Niue), speaking on behalf of the children and youth major group, said young people from small island developing States needed a real voice in the post-2015 development agenda. She called for partnerships among young people, Governments, the private sector and educational institutions to review and update the educational curricula of SIDS and ensure those included ways to give youth the skills needed to sustain their communities, as well as addressed the needs of marginalized youth.

LEON NILES (Guyana), also speaking on behalf of children and youth, called for enhanced information and communications technology infrastructure to ensure full, reliable and affordable Internet access across the SIDS regions to enable interregional youth connectivity, innovation and partnerships. He called for bold leadership and stronger political will and solidarity among small island developing States for any real action on climate change, as well as full access for youth to quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health.

MEGHNA RAGHOOBAR (Mauritius), also speaking on behalf of children and youth, said water was essential for all aspects of life. Noting that most Member States had stated their concerns over degradation of

marine ecosystems, the importance of sustainable ocean economies and that oceans were the future of small island developing States, she said it was vital to review, enforce, implement and regulate policies and legislation at all levels on sustainable fresh-water systems, sanitation services and ocean management.

PETERO QALOIBAU, Sisi Initiative Support Group, speaking on behalf of the indigenous peoples major group, said he was “cautiously” encouraged by the Conference theme of “genuine and durable partnerships” and welcomed the specific reference to indigenous peoples in paragraph 40 of the *Samoa Pathway* outcome document in connection to climate change. He expressed concern, however, over the invisibility of indigenous peoples in the rest of the document. “As we learned with the [Millennium Development Goals] progress, invisibility does not promote genuine and durable partnerships,” he said, proposing some technical revisions be made to the outcome text.

Summary of Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Dialogue

MAUMOON ABDUL GAYOOM (Maldives), Vice-President of the Conference, briefing on the morning’s multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue, said that available, affordable and reliable sustainable energy for all small island developing States represented a key enabler to achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. SIDS faced a number of challenges unique to those countries, mainly related to aspects such as size, distance, connectivity and scale. Such States were greatly impacted by climate change and depended heavily on fossil fuels which translated into major losses of country revenues and had a negative impact on their economies. There were also the negative impacts resulting from the use of fossil fuels on the environment. Renewable energy represented a major opportunity for small island developing States to accelerate towards greener economies. Numerous partnerships had been recognized, including with the International Renewable Energy Agency and European Union-New Zealand Energy Access.

KIM SEONG-IN (Republic of Korea) made four suggestions to help small island developing States to craft a strategy to address their sustainable development challenges. The ongoing negotiations of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the post-2020 climate regime should create an effective and flexible climate change response regime that secured the participation of all States. It was essential to fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization. All countries should strive to include sustainable development as a vision and core element of the post-2015 development goals and ensure that it was put into practice. Global partnership was essential, but an active partnership platform should be established at the national level.

JOÃO SOARES DA GAMA (Guinea-Bissau) said most small island developing States were still grappling with sea-level rise, pollution, ocean acidification and other adverse effects of climate change that continued to impact the survival of the islands and the life-support system of the planet. Everyone must assume responsibility in addressing global warming and commit to adaptation and mitigation measures, particularly in developing countries. Many SIDS depended on the ocean for their survival, and the constant pollution and degradation of those waters was causing biodiversity loss, constituting a great threat to those States. Healthy oceans were crucial for the survival of islands, and all nations must commit to a durable, genuine partnership to help SIDS protect those bodies of water. The islands of Guinea-Bissau were rich in biodiversity and the Government had created two protected land areas and corridors of flora and fauna. The percentage of national territory that was marked as protected would increase from 11 per cent today more than 26 per cent in 2015.

SIMONA MICULESCU (Romania) said 3.3 billion people globally would join the middle class by 2030, coming out of poverty, and the planet's temperature would rise by 6°C if collective and urgent action was not taken. Only 12 cities had had a population of 1 million or more in the beginning of the twentieth century; now that number had risen to 500. "We are building cities like never before, bringing people out of poverty like never before and changing climate like never before," she said. Sustainability had gone from a nice-to-do to a must-do. Fresh, agile, action-oriented partnerships could produce results year after year. The words of Winston Churchill came to mind: "The era of procrastination is coming to a close we are entering a period of consequences."

THISARA SAMARASINGHE (Sri Lanka) said implementation of the *Samoa Pathway* document, as well as of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, was vital if those processes were to lead to truly meaningful, tangible results. A monitoring and accountability mechanism would make them more effective. Global efforts should focus on establishing a vulnerability and resilience framework for small island developing States, as a basis for determining access to resources and a means to promote and support economic stability, market efficiency, social development, environmental management and disaster risk assessment and preparedness. As an island nation, Sri Lanka had great interest in the state of the oceans and the marine environment, and that had shaped its history, culture and future. Sri Lanka had played a central role in the negotiation of the Law of the Sea Convention, which enabled developing countries to reap the benefits of the continental shelf in a lawful, sustainable way. His country had also created a Centre of Excellence on Ocean Sciences and Environment under the auspices of the Indian Ocean Rim Association of Countries to help develop better preparedness against future challenges related to climate change and the sustainable development of marine resources.

YANERIT MORGAN (Mexico) said it was in the interest of the international community to forge partnerships and, in that regard, her country aimed to enhance cooperation with small island developing States. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action in Barbados in 1994 and the Mauritius Strategy in 2005, progress had been made, but much remained to be done. Mexico was implementing the Programme of Action in many fields, including infrastructure, human resource development, education, HIV response and humanitarian relief, particularly in the Caribbean region. At recent meetings of CARICOM and the Association of Caribbean States, the importance of alliances and partnerships had been highlighted as the best way to implement sustainable development objectives.

WILLIAM CALVO (Costa Rica), stressing the need to work towards full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, Mauritius Strategy and the *Samoa Pathway*, called for speeding up capitalization of the Green Climate Fund and urged developed countries to honour their commitment to mobilize \$100 million annually until 2020. As most small island developing States were net importers of food, it was essential to promote sustainable practices in agriculture, farming and fishing in order to improve food security and guarantee sustainable water resources. He noted that his Government, in partnership with the Maldives, UNDP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and CARICOM's climate change centre, had recently organized an event that focused on practical suggestions to address the challenges related to climate change.

PATRICK DUFFY (Ireland) said the *Samoa Pathway* outcome document presented a clear vision for the elaboration of small island developing States priorities in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and beyond. His country welcomed the agreed focus on food and nutrition security, including the positive emphasis on smallholders, women, fisheries and resilience to climate change, as well as addressing desertification, land degradation, drought and the clear link with healthy oceans. His Government looked

forward to the partnership with FAO, as agreed in the *Samoa Pathway*, on an action plan that addressed food and nutritional security challenges in small island developing States.

ZEHRA AKBARI (Pakistan) said sea-level rise and other adverse impacts of climate change continued to pose a significant risk to small island developing States and their efforts to achieve sustainable development, and for many represented the gravest threats to their survival and viability. Her Government felt it critical to reach an agreement at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015. It must be built on the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly that of common but differentiated responsibility. Greater political will was needed, and addressing adaptation needs of developing countries, in particular small island developing States, through new, additional and predictable financial resources, remained critical.

PAPOURI TCHINGONBÉ PATCHANNÉ (Chad) said his Government had formed the “Great Green Wall” project, which urged every man and woman to plant trees in order to reduce desertification. The use of wood for fuel in major cities of the country had been banned and the use of chemicals in agricultural products was strictly controlled. Chad had partaken in regional efforts to combat desertification as the drying up of lakes had been a major source of concern. Appropriate solutions were needed to aid small island developing States, and stronger international and South-South cooperation and preserving and strengthening trade preferences were needed. SIDS required technical and regional support as well. The World Trade Organization (WTO) should be mindful of those parameters in its international trade policies. The post-2015 development agenda must consider the special situation of small island developing States.

FERNANDO ESCALONA (Argentina), expressing his Government’s commitment to small island developing States, said it was vital that those States were supported. His country called for capacity-building support for developing countries, increased triangular cooperation, greater efforts to improve the quality of ODA and more mechanisms to procure global financial resources for SIDS. He called on all delegations to approve, at the upcoming General Assembly meeting, the draft resolution submitted by the Group of 77 and China on sovereign debt restructuring, which would help bolster sustainable development worldwide, particularly in developing countries.

DURGA PRASAD BHATTARAI (Nepal) said his country was already enduring the sharp pinch of erratic weather patterns every year, noting that more than 100 lives had been lost in August when an entire village slid down into a swelling river. The increasingly rapid melting of Himalayan glaciers and the resulting floods and landslides had devastated the fragile mountain ecosystem, lives and livelihoods of millions of people and the hard-gained development infrastructure. Strong partnerships should be the order of the day. Only genuine and innovative partnerships with and among the private sector, civil society, leaders in the information and communications technology field, international organizations and Governments in all forms of networks and groupings could help humankind rise to the daunting challenge.

GARY JUSUF (Indonesia) said his country could further enhance cooperation with small island developing States in four areas, including negotiations towards a successful outcome at the 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris, and exchanges of experience to manage marine resources in a sustainable manner. With more than 17,000 islands, his country had always been a maritime nation. Maritime-based development, known as “blue economy”, should play a more prominent role in the future. His country had organized the World Coral Reef Conference in May, and it intended to contribute \$20 million for various capacity-building programmes for Pacific island countries as part of enhancing South-South cooperation.

NGUYEN HONG CUONG (Viet Nam), supporting the call for increased global efforts to advance sustainable development in small island developing States, said that it was crucial those countries received more finance, technology and capacity-building support from developed country partners and relevant international institutions. Viet Nam looked forward to working closely with SIDS at the bilateral and tripartite level, and it stood ready to share its experiences and best practices to address challenges to sustainable development, including those related to mitigation and adaptation. Protecting the climate was the responsibility of all countries, in line with common but differentiated responsibilities and each nation's respective capability. He looked forward to the possible adoption of another legal instrument in 2015 that continued to respect and ensure the fundamental principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

HENRY MACDONALD (Suriname) said his country ranked youth involvement among its highest priorities as that group's participation was critical for achieving sustainable development. As part of that commitment, the Government had created a youth parliament, an institution of elected young representatives that advised and monitored policies and actions and made recommendations. Samoa should be proud of its achievement of high community involvement. His country shared the same experience of the graduation to middle-income country status, based on one-dimensional criteria of per capita income and the subsequent loss of opportunities to concessional financing. The United Nations should take the lead in revising that criteria.

NICHOLA SABELO (South Africa), noting that the India-Brazil-South Africa Fund had operated in the context of South-South cooperation and in partnership with the UNDP South-South cooperation office, stated that the Fund had helped change the lives of several communities in the developing world, including through projects in Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Haiti. In Cabo Verde, where global warming was depleting the water supply, safe drinking water had been provided to more than 12,000 residents, thus reducing the health risks. In Guinea-Bissau, the Fund had reduced poverty and enhanced food security by rehabilitating low-lying coastal land for rice cultivation and by supporting food processing. Some of the projects had contributed to the development of agriculture, small-farm herding and agricultural services in rural communities, as well as provided solar energy to 20 villages. Greater technical aid and technology transfer were needed to enable small island developing States to develop adequately.

ANTHONY LECREN, representative of New Caledonia, highlighted the importance of establishing governance to protect the environment. In 2014, designated as the Year of the Small Island Developing States, the international community had a responsibility to forge international policy dedicated to those nations. With 18 months left to the Climate Change Conference in Paris, the international community must shape a warning message against climatic change. The Oceania 21 meeting in 2013 had underscored the need to mobilize the international community and donors, and had also proposed an innovative approach and use of traditional knowledge, which must be handed down to future generations.

KEDRICK PICKERING, representative of the British Virgin Islands, said that in 2014, his government had announced the creation of a shark sanctuary covering its territorial waters and was well advanced in the Caribbean in setting up a climate change trust fund for adaptation measures, in conjunction with biodiversity conservation efforts. Multisectoral partnerships were helpful in finding solutions to overcome seemingly intractable problems that went unresolved under traditional methods of development assistance. Greater flexibility was needed in the SIDS framework. In the past, international partners had tended to deliver aid in regional clusters. Too often, some island in the Caribbean and Pacific were excluded based on political status. That approach was regressive and unhelpful. Biodiversity was a clear

example as islands were linked to their ecosystems. It was difficult to effectively tackle marine issues such as invasive species like lion fish and sustainable fisheries without the participation of all the islands in a cluster, each of which may not have the same political status. "It is important that future international partners utilize a more inclusive framework for SIDS that overcomes such barriers," he said.

JOSE GRAZIANO DA SILVA, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), said that the agency had worked with individual countries and groups of small island developing States to tackle climate change challenges they faced such as rising sea-level and sea-surface temperatures, and changing rainfall patterns. FAO guided them in food security, sustainability, improved market access and resilience. In the Caribbean, the agency supported the development and implementation of resilience-building and disaster risk reduction plans. In the Pacific, it was part of the food security and sustainable livelihood programme. The agency's blue growth initiative was helping SIDS sustainably use their aquatic resources. Those States faced the added burden of malnutrition, from undernourishment to obesity, and he invited small island developing States to participate in the Second International Conference on Nutrition, to be held in Rome in November.

DEODAT MAHARAJ, Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, said that to help small island developing States adapt to climate change, his organization had worked through practical aid and partnerships to access and unlock climate financing and press for a strong accord in 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It had formed a climate resilience islands partnership with regional organizations and a Commonwealth climate fund and skills hub based in Mauritius, as well as set up a strategic partnership with the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers to provide practical ways to help small ocean-based economies diversify through the sustainable use of ocean resources. To help small island developing States ease their debt burdens, the Commonwealth had promoted innovative approaches, including concepts of resilience and vulnerability, debt-for-nature swaps and counter cyclical loans.

RAUL GARCIA-BUCHACA, Director for Programme Planning and Operations of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), said the region had made much progress in pursuing the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, and now would implement the *Samoa Pathway* within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda and the future sustainable development goals. The small island developing States perspective had four priorities for inclusion in the post-2015 development agenda. Those priorities included addressing poverty and inequality issues and reducing risk; ensuring that unmet Millennium Development Goals continued to be part of the post-2015 development agenda; building capacity to address sustainable development; and raising the question of the middle-income status of small island developing States with the international community to avoid the middle-income gap. Regional integration, based on cooperation, not just on competition, was crucial. That could be achieved by improving interconnectivity through information and communications technology and development of regional transport and other public goods.

MARGARITA ASTRALAGA, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said that the agency's programme on ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction intended to promote and mainstream it. Under the UNEP regional seas programme, four conventions concerned small island developing States, and the agency had opened its office in Apia two days earlier to cover the Pacific subregion and would open one in the Caribbean. Those offices should form the institutional bases of UNEP to provide the necessary support for small island developing States.

MARK GETCHELL, International Organization for Migration (IOM), said forced migration due to natural hazards and climate change had increased the vulnerability of small island developing States, presenting a formidable obstacle to development. Good migration governance through planned mobility could be a powerful driver of resilience and adaptation. Disaster risk reduction strategies must take migration into account. Regarding the issue of brain drain, the problem was not that people migrated, but rather it was the lack of opportunities at home — reflected by high youth unemployment and poor infrastructure in health and education.

SHIRLEY TAGI, Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, speaking on behalf of the women major group, pointed out that many small island developing States unfortunately had criminalized adult same-sex relationships, enabling violence and discrimination against people with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity. That was contrary to universal human rights. She looked forward to the removal of those archaic laws and penal codes, most from colonial pasts and now repealed in those origin countries. It was time to end another colonial hangover. She also called for ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with a draw-down to national laws and policies.

MICHELLE MYCOO, University of the West Indies, speaking on behalf of the scientific and technological community major group, noted that a priority area for small island developing States was the forging of stronger partnerships among scientific researchers, policymakers and practitioners. It was imperative that scientists translate knowledge production into action for the benefit of citizens. That could be achieved by developing platforms for them to exchange innovative ideas and technology to confront the challenges facing small island developing States. Robust science required data and that called for funding.

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