

## **SMS' statement during the plenary session of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.**

Mr Chairman,

Singapore thanks the Government of Samoa for hosting the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and the United Nations for assisting in the preparations for the Conference. As Co-Chair of the Preparatory Committee for this Conference, we would also like to thank those who participated for helping us and our Co-Chair New Zealand, to successfully conclude the negotiations on the draft outcome document.

### SIDS Unique Traits & Vulnerabilities

All SIDS are vulnerable to issues and events beyond our control. The effects on us of global challenges such as climate change or economic downturns are often greatly magnified compared to larger countries. Yet like all countries we are necessarily part of global networks; and can use the upsides of globalisation to improve our resilience against the downsides.

It is timely that the theme for this SIDS Conference is on the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships. We look forward to fruitful discussions in the days ahead and the launch of concrete and useful partnerships to support the development of SIDS.

### The importance of partnerships in Singapore's development

Singapore's own development history is made up of successful partnership stories. When the Dutch economist, Dr Albert Winsemius arrived in Singapore in the 1960s as leader of the UNDP's Survey Mission to Singapore, he remarked that Singapore was a "poor little market in a dark corner of Asia". As a young nation, Singapore benefitted greatly from technical assistance and cooperation with international organisations from almost all sectors such as the FAO, the ILO, the ITU, the WHO, UNESCO, UNIDO and UNCTAD. We were also helped by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Overseas Training Programmes and Joint Government Training Centres with companies such as Tata of India and Phillips of Holland let Singaporean workers improve their knowledge and skills. In the 1980s, Singapore co-established institutions of technology with Japan, Germany and France to meet the specialised manpower needs of high-tech industries.

The benefits that such partnerships brought to Singapore have made us firm believers in the value of partnership programmes and technical assistance. Hence, as we have grown to become more advanced economically, we have not forgotten the help we received in the past. The Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) started in 1992, was developed as our main programme to give back to Singapore's friends and partners. Over the past two decades, more than 90,000 officials from over 170 countries – including 8,000 SIDS officials – have attended SCP courses on topics such as economic development, governance, civil aviation, port management, sustainable development and climate change. We have received very positive feedback from other countries and their officials on the SCP.

### Current State of Play for SIDS

Mr Chairman,

The 5 year review of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI+5) in 2010 showed that SIDS had generally made good progress in gender equality and health, and in certain educational and environmental goals.

However they made less progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in poverty reduction and debt sustainability. The review also found that many SIDS were not able to achieve a sustained level of good economic growth. The varying challenges of small size, remoteness, small export bases, and vulnerability to external shocks are continued challenges to their development.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) addresses issues that go to the heart of SIDS' development opportunities and challenges. We are pleased to note that the final Open Working Group Meeting on the SDGs have included many goals that are important to SIDS such as poverty reduction, climate change, sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, the protection and sustainable use of ecosystems and strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising partnerships. We call on the UN to ensure that the interests of SIDS are reflected in the final Post 2015 Development Agenda.

We believe that more triangular cooperation would be helpful on issues such as the development of sustainable energy options for SIDS, and measures to prepare for both extreme weather and slow onset events.

Trade partnerships to further integrate SIDS into the global trading system would also help to buffer systemic imbalances, thus improving both growth and stability. There is also a need to look into how SIDS can better access international capital markets to develop infrastructure.

SIDS account for less than 1% of the world's population. SIDS-specific partnerships are a useful way of protecting our interests and promoting sustainable development. Collaborative projects such as SIDSDOCK, which aims at mobilising \$10 billion for sustainable energy partnership by 2033, are a testament to the SIDS ability to work together in a coordinated and targeted manner. Other good examples are the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management for the Caribbean SIDS and the Pacific Mangroves Initiative, which promotes sound practices and capacity building in mangroves in the Pacific SIDS.

Singapore's co-operation with other SIDS is founded on the principle that human resources are vital to SIDS, and that capacity building through continuous consultations can deliver successful outcomes.

I am very happy to announce today that Singapore has prepared a dedicated three-year technical cooperation package to provide more customised technical assistance and fellowships in areas that are relevant to SIDS' capacity building needs. Beyond the full suite of courses offered under the SCP Training Calendar, this package will provide to three customised programmes for senior SIDS officials in relevant areas such as sustainable development and climate change, disaster management and public health, and non-traditional security. We will also offer up to one hundred and fifty civil aviation fellowships for courses conducted by the Singapore Aviation Academy, an ICAO-recognised civil training centre for aviation safety and security, as well as up to thirty fellowship awards for the annual Maritime Public Leaders' Programme, conducted by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore. Singapore hopes that these programmes will form a meaningful contribution to our fellow SIDS' sustainable development aims. My colleagues from the Technical Cooperation Directorate who are with me in Samoa would be happy to meet and share more about this package and to learn how we can better customise these programmes to meet the needs and interests of SIDS.

Mr Chairman,

Despite our vulnerabilities, small states can become models of how globalisation can assist rather than detract from sustainability. However, success depends both on strong political will at the national level to implement possibly difficult policy choices, and a good enabling environment, including close cooperation with development partners.

I look forward to hearing from my colleagues at this Conference on what SIDS have managed to achieve in spite of their inherent challenges. We should seize upon this Conference to showcase how SIDS matter to the world and why it is important to ensure the sustainable development of SIDS. We should not just focus on our challenges but also our advantages such as our nimbleness, focus, abundant marine resources and the natural beauty and biodiversity. SIDS should not be reduced to the proverbial “canary in the coalmine” for climate change. SIDS can also be a beacon for the rest of the world. Through partnerships and cooperation, developed at this Conference, we can highlight how SIDS can play this positive role too.

Thank you.