

STATEMENT

**by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Russian Federation
VASSILY NEBENZIA
at the Third International Conference
on Small Island Developing States**

2 September 2014, Apia, Samoa

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Government of the Independent State of Samoa for the warm welcome. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Samoan side and the UN Secretariat for making it possible to prepare and successfully conduct the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The conference will become a turning point in the multilateral cooperation to ensure sustainable development of this group of countries. The meeting in Apia is to implement the political commitments of "Rio+20" concerning SIDS in specific forms and mechanisms of international community joint efforts.

The decisions made during the Conference will be of fundamental importance for mainstreaming the priorities and needs of the island states into the post-2015 development agenda. We believe that comprehensive measures in response to SIDS inherent challenges and threats shall be duly reflected in the sustainable development goals which are being developed.

The Russian Federation strongly supports the agreed draft of the Conference final document – Small Island Developing States accelerated Modalities of Action ("Samoa Pathway"). We hope that the outcomes of the Conference will ensure continuity and generate significant momentum towards the achievement of the goals of the Barbados Programme of Action (1994) and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation (2005), both of which still keep their relevance.

The current analysis demonstrates that the small island developing States continuously face challenges that halt their social and economic progress and prevent their move to sustainable development. The trends in the SIDS linked to the newly increasing poverty rate and the growing debt burden cause particular concern.

Heavy dependence of the SIDS on the economic situation in the world and their particular vulnerability to such global long-term problems as climate change, natural disasters and conservation of ocean bio-diversity bring to the forefront the need to strengthen international cooperation in the interests of this group of countries.

In this context, we welcome the focus made in the Accelerated Modalities of Action on fostering solidarity of external partners and mobilization of predictable and adequate donor assistance to the island states. A wealth of external support instruments should include such measures as adaptation of the applicable norms of international law, transfer of technologies and new investments. South-South cooperation and contacts with private sector should be used more intensively.

In our view, the main task for the island states is to create their own production capabilities and build up capacities to ensure their equitable and efficient participation in the global economic processes.

Practical needs of the island states should be properly met when determining the approaches to establishing a modern system of economic, social and environmental relations at the global and regional

levels. What is needed to overcome the existing objective constraints on economic development of the island states is to facilitate their access to key commodity markets by improving the preferential trade regime, building a reliable transport infrastructure and introducing information and communication technologies.

The key to stable functioning of the economies and to the welfare of the island states population is an uninterrupted supply of basic resources, including energy and food.

Furthermore, it is important that while focusing the attention of the international community on the special needs of the SIDS and the necessity to increase their own potential, the provisions of the "Samoa Pathway" outcome document are based on universal goals and principles enshrined in the UN Charter and on the three-point concept of sustainable development in accordance with the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference.

The broad thematic scope of the outcome document and the principles of national leadership and ownership and of common but differentiated responsibility set out in it, as well as the obligation to ensure the necessary institutional support, provide prerequisites for flexible and effective response to challenges faced by the island states consistent with their national priorities.

Mr. President,

Russia is a longtime and active partner of small island states. We have been consistently increasing the level and range of mutual political and economic ties and have been using the growing donor potential of our country to increase expert, material and financial support provided to island states.

Over the last four years, our aggregate support to the SIDS totaled approximately USD 20 million. These funds were used to implement the projects aimed at enhancing partner countries' own potential in such areas as social and economic development, modernization of physical economic infrastructure, public administration, education, health care, culture and sports and natural disaster management. For certain SIDS, the Russian Federation introduced a preferential bilateral trade treatment.

In May 2013, the first Asian and Pacific Energy Forum attended by nine delegations from South Pacific countries was held in Vladivostok under UN auspices. The event culminated in the adoption of a special section of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan for the South Pacific. I express my gratitude to the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Tonga Lord Tu'ivakano for co-sponsoring the resolution of the ESCAP 70th session in Bangkok last August, which confirmed the outcomes of the Vladivostok forum. We welcome the intention of the Tongan partners to host the next forum in 2018. Russia stands ready to provide financial support to it.

Technical assistance to island states is becoming an integral part of our interaction. ESCAP will soon start implementing, with Russia's financial support, a project to set up an electronic repository of information on sustainable energy for the South Pacific island states. The project is to facilitate the exchange and use of scientific and technical information and innovative solutions with a view to strengthening energy potential of island states. We hope that the project will mark the beginning of a broader interaction between Russia and the Pacific SIDS leading eventually to the implementation of joint profitable commercial projects.

Together with the United Nations Development Programme, we are exploring the possibility of launching a large-scale multimillion long-term project to increase the disaster resilience of Pacific SIDS.

We actively use multilateral formats and bilateral contacts to strengthen cooperation with island states of Latin America, the Indian Ocean and Africa, including in such promising areas as tourism, fisheries, maritime navigation and energy.

Mr. President,

Carrying out its foreign policy activities, Russia as a global power will continue to aim at strengthening its diverse relations with island states and maximizing their practical effect. We are convinced that the Conference will become yet another milestone in this effort, and that its decisions will contribute to fostering our political and economic cooperation with island states.

Thank you.