

SIDS joint MG statement to be read on 24th February 2014 at the launch of the International Year of SIDS

We are here today to celebrate the launch of the International Year of Small Island Developing States. This is our chance to share our SIDS cultures, diversity and values with the global community. An opportunity to build global solidarity and understanding of our interlinkedness.

At the same time, it is important not to forget our realities. As a youth from Trinidad, I am aware of how vulnerable Small Island Developing States are to climate change and climate-related hazards including sea-level rise and ocean acidification. Our tourism industry is constantly impacted by biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation due to lack of regulation and awareness of their value. Children, women, local authorities, farmers and business communities are suffering most from the economic repercussions of a lack adaptation, mitigation and emergency disaster relief preparedness plans. NGOs are working globally to ensure human rights, poverty eradication and better education systems. Globally, we are all struggling to handle the repercussions of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. We share one precious planet -- which we need to protect to preserve our future.

This year of SIDS is a great opportunity to catalyse global awareness, mobilise and work together to action local, regional and global solutions. Small Island Developing States have traditional knowledge that Indigenous Peoples have been using for generations. The scientific and technological community are constantly creating innovative alternatives. As a global society, we need to change towards a social and economic system where human rights are respected, and where social equity, ecological issues, oceanic development – beyond GDP indicators – are recognised and incorporated in all Sustainable Development plans.

Today we celebrate the beginning of action, ambition and global partnership towards creating a better future. Please do not disappoint us. On behalf of all the nine Major Groups, we call on you to work with us to conserve our futures, protect our heritage and ensure our culture and diversity is not lost into the rising oceans.