



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

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**Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
Preparatory Committee Meeting,
25 February 2014, New York**

Co-chair

The realities and aspirations of small island developing States (SIDS) lie at the core of UNDP's mandate and are central to many of its activities. It will come as no surprise therefore that my organisation, represented in or to all SIDS, is following the discussions here very closely.

We are committed to sustainable development of SIDS and have been active in each of the previous international SIDS conferences and the preparatory processes that have preceded them. We are pleased to be continuing this commitment to the cause of SIDS as we move ahead on the path to Apia, Samoa in late August this year.

In the spirit of Rio+20 and its strong emphasis on the fullest participation of all stakeholders in sustainable development efforts, we welcome the active engagement of the UN system, relevant international and regional organisations, and the major groups of civil society, including the private sector in the preparation of this conference as well as in Samoa itself.

Experience shows that such an inclusive approach strengthens the outcomes of these events. It also reflects the changing character of sustainable development, including that of SIDS.

The participants have emphasized the relevance of the overall conference theme - "the sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships". UNDP also strongly supports this focus on current realities facing SIDS.

In the same spirit, we are keen to support this strong emphasis on partnerships. UNDP's programme in SIDS exceeded US \$430 million last year and we are the largest implementing partner of the Global Environment Facility. This is of considerable significance to SIDS with important interventions in climate change and biodiversity.

Preparations for this conference are already well underway. In the outcome document of the SIDS Barbados inter-regional meeting of last August we have a good starting point for the work of this committee. We have been following carefully the issues highlighted by previous speakers. From UNDP's perspective many resonate strongly in our work in SIDS. Issues as broad and complex as climate change, sustainable energy, disaster risk reduction and management – all are closely inter-related. So too are the challenges of gender, debt sustainability, democratic governance, indigenous peoples and youth empowerment. These are areas where UNDP has experience to share from our partnerships with SIDS and the international community that supports them.

Finding ways in which these connections can be managed in a clear manner within the conference's outcome document will be a challenge. Speakers here have made clear that there is a determination to achieve a result for the Samoa conference that we can all be proud of and that will serve SIDS well in the years ahead. UNDP is committed to supporting the development of a strong outcome document and making the conference a success.

Co-chair

The work underway here and in the SIDS conference process is not taking place in isolation of other vital activities relevant to sustainable development. We are all actively engaged in discussing the post 2015 development agenda. A key part of this is the development of sustainable development goals through the Open Working Group and the SIDS conference is mandated to be a major contribution to post 2015 work.

Similarly we will be addressing disaster risk management and reduction realities at the same time as preparations get underway for the 2015 Sendai Conference on these issues. Few issues are of more direct relevance to SIDS than disaster risk reduction and management.

And of course there is climate change and all it means for SIDS. Three weeks after the SIDS conference the world leaders are called by the UN Secretary General to a Climate Summit that will have a crucial role to play in generating commitment and momentum for new global climate commitments.

Clearly we have before us opportunities to make an important contribution to issues that are central to the wellbeing of SIDS and their peoples.

UNDP, both through its representation in SIDS and here at headquarters, stands committed to being a strong, focused participant on the road to Samoa and at the conference itself.

We wish you and your fellow Bureau members the very best for the work ahead. You have our full support.