

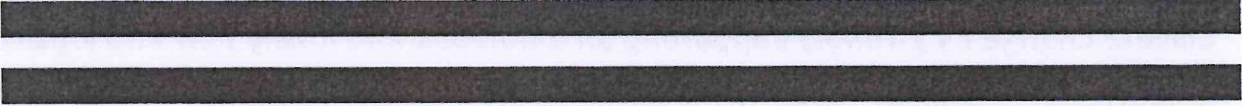


**Statement by the Head of the Austrian
Delegation,**

**Ambassador
Dr. Helmut BÖCK
at the
Third International
Conference on Small Islands
Developing States**

**September 1 – 4, 2014
Apia, SAMOA**

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**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me first of all to congratulate the Independent State of Samoa for hosting the United Nations Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and for providing this beautiful venue.

Austria highly values this conference as an important opportunity to conduct a thorough assessment of the progress made to-date in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, including an evaluation of the remaining gaps, as well as to seek a renewed political commitment to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS. In addition we are looking forward to identifying new and emerging challenges and opportunities for SIDS and ways to address them, as well as to defining priorities for the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Secretary-General's report underlines that SIDS have made important progress towards the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy, albeit uneven in some cases.

In this respect climate change remains a major challenge for the sustainable development of SIDS, which are confronted with rising sea levels and other long-term impacts. Thus, climate change mitigation and adaptation is a question of survival. Austria therefore remains committed to combating climate change by strongly supporting an ambitious and timely new and legally binding international agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which addresses both aspects of mitigation and adaptation.

In order to lend credibility to its engagement on the international level, Austria has taken action on the ground by making the management of climate change related risks a priority and a cross-cutting issue of its development cooperation, including in its strategies, programs and projects.

In this context, allow me to underline the importance of sustainable energy, the production and consumption of which is closely linked to climate change and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Energy-related issues are also reflected in the current debate on the post 2015-agenda, with access to reliable clean and renewable energy being cited as one of the main prerequisites for an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development. Energy dependency, notably on fossil-fuels-based sources, is a major source of economic vulnerability and therefore a key concern for many SIDS.

Seen the significance of sustainable energy, the Austrian Development Cooperation has decided to make this issue another of its top priorities, focusing strongly on renewable energy and energy efficiency. In this context Austria readily supports the Vienna-based Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, launched by the Secretary-General in 2011, which follows a three-pronged approach: ensure universal access to modern energy services, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency, and double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

In addition Austria and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization jointly support regional efforts to set up a global network of centers for renewable energy and energy efficiency, including in the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. I am confident that these centers and the emerging global network can play a key role in achieving the objectives of the Sustainable Energy-For All-Initiative by 2030 and, most importantly, have a concrete and positive impact on the quality of life and well-being of the people in the SIDS.

Speaking about the quality of life and well-being, allow me to also underline the importance of sustainable and inclusive industrial development, which constitutes another crucial issue. Creating an enabling environment that fosters inclusive and sustainable industrial development as well as entrepreneurship, including the creation of jobs for young people, is essential for leading SIDS on the way towards innovation and environmentally sound economic growth. In this respect, the role of the private sector cannot be over-emphasized.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Austria strongly welcomes the focus of this conference on the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships. We are convinced that innovative partnerships can make a difference. These partnerships, many of which are already in place today, should reflect the full range of the necessary national and international efforts required to implement them, contain the roles and responsibilities of all countries, and be based on the principles of shared responsibilities, mutual accountability, respective capacities, ownership, trust, mutual respect, good governance, rule of law, and transparency. They should promote the effective use of the whole range of available resources, such as official development assistance, domestic actions and resources, multi-stakeholder partnerships, innovative financing as well as the private sector, which are all key to sustainable development.

In this context, I would like to briefly mention our successful partnership with Italy, Luxemburg, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the SIDS of the Pacific region in the area of sustainable energy. I believe that this program, which has been operational since 2007, can provide a useful template for these new partnerships.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by recalling last year's Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals, where all UN Member States expressed the need to reinforce the international community's commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development through an approach which embraces the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – in a balanced manner. At the same time it was decided by the heads of state and government that the new global agenda should promote peace and security, democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all. I trust that these universal aspects will be fully taken into account by the SIDS when formulating their positions for the post-2015 process.

Let me assure you that Austria remains fully committed to participating in the international efforts to strengthen the cooperation with the SIDS and to have their needs integrated into the post 2015-agenda.

Thank you.

