

**Statement:**  
**Senator the Honourable Arnold J. Nicholson, Q.C.**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica**  
**at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**  
**Apia, Samoa, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014**

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Mr. President,

Let me first of all congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this significant Conference. I also take this opportunity to express my delegation's sincere appreciation for the warm welcome and kind hospitality accorded us by the Government and People of Samoa since our arrival.

Mr. President,

As pointed out earlier by the distinguished representative of Bolivia, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and with whose statement Jamaica is aligned, the special case of SIDS for sustainable development is well established and cannot be questioned. This is evident from the decisions arrived at 20 years ago when the first Conference on Small Island Developing States was held in Barbados and later, in 2005, in Mauritius. Our task then, during this meeting, is to assess the achievements made since the international community first discussed the challenges relating to SIDS, address the gaps which need to be filled and examine how these can be tackled in a spirit of true and genuine partnership in keeping with the theme of this Third International Conference.

This approach comes against the backdrop of extreme challenges currently being faced by SIDS, ranging from the disproportionate effects of the impacts of climate change, the damaging consequences in the aftermath of natural disasters, damage to ecosystems and biodiversity, increased acidification of our oceans affecting livelihoods and food security, diminished terms of trade, economic categorisations which affect access to aid, and high levels of unemployment, especially among our young people. These challenges, taken individually or as a whole, have served to hinder or reverse the developmental progress of SIDS and have placed them very low on the sustainable development trajectory.

While SIDS have been undertaking actions since 1994 to bolster their development in recognition of our responsibility in fostering national development, it is clear that much more would be achieved through strengthened international attention which is understanding of and, sympathetic to, the concerns of SIDS. After all, we operate in a global village in which our rights and responsibilities are inexorably intertwined. Jamaica believes, therefore, that international attention has to be focussed on allowing SIDS to be able to embrace sustainable development in a way that recognises the critical contribution that this group of countries can and has played in the international economy. At the moment, SIDS constitute more than 20% of the membership of the United Nations. This is not an insignificant number.

In addition, it should be noted that a number of SIDS, including my own country, have been making vital and valued global contributions. Our creative experience, indigenous knowledge, adaptability and willingness to build resilience are some of the ways in which

the SIDS experience can be of value to our international partners. Notwithstanding, Mr. President, it is also important that attention be given to a number of issues outside of their exclusive control so as to allow SIDS to function effectively in the global economic environment. Many of these are outlined in the proposed Outcome Document to be adopted at this Conference - the SAMOA Pathway. I will however underscore the responsibility of the international community, both morally and in keeping with the principles of natural justice, in ensuring that a robust international agreement is signed on Climate Change next year in Paris. In addition, in keeping with the principle of equity and in recognition of the special case of developing countries, including SIDS, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, as agreed to among the Rio Principles in 1992, must be applied in seeking for a restoration of the balance, given the disproportionately deleterious effects of climate change being experienced by SIDS and the fact that they have contributed very little in terms of green house gas emissions to the exacerbation of the phenomenon. One way of seeking to restore that balance, given that SIDS are not responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, is to have the urgent operationalisation of the Green Climate Fund.

In addition, due account must be taken of the situation of vulnerability in designing economic programmes for SIDS. We welcome the progress being made in this regard by a number of the multilateral financial institutions but urge that more needs to be done. On the trade front, discussions are also critically necessary on the Doha Development Round and the ways in which small and vulnerable economies are treated.

Mr. President,

It is imperative that SIDS continue to engage with other states in the international community, as well as international and regional organisations and civil society, if we are to honour our collective commitment to ensure that each country has the capability and the capacity to develop in a sustainable manner.

For this purpose, one of Jamaica's priorities for the Conference is increased commitment to the partnerships to be established for ensuring the means of implementation of agreements related to the sustainable development of SIDS. Jamaica has, in the spirit of SIDS-SIDS and South-South cooperation, been engaged in a number of partnerships with bilateral partners and regional and international organisations in the areas of health, education, social protection, disaster risk reduction, agriculture and environmental sustainability. Increased commitment is essential, however, for a supportive and enabling environment geared towards the sustainable development of SIDS, as the absence of such would restrain the achievement and consolidation of success. Such partnerships would also allow for a collaborative and integrated approach that will ensure that the challenges faced by SIDS are effectively addressed, allowing us to take steps to eradicate poverty, strengthen health and education systems and improve the well-being and livelihoods of our peoples.

Mr. President,

As we prepared for this Conference, we gave due recognition to other important parallel inter-governmental processes, including the definition of a set of sustainable development

goals (SDGs) and a strategy for financing the international development agenda for the post-2015 period. We are convinced that there must be a linkage between the SIDS agenda and the global development agenda and that this Conference presents an extraordinary opportunity to do so. I therefore urge the international community to be more pro-active, innovative and forward-looking in shaping the international landscape for addressing the concerns of developing countries, particularly SIDS. SIDS priorities, as set out in the SAMOA Pathway, need therefore to be included and effectively addressed in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Moreover, international attention to SIDS should not end with the conclusion of this Conference. That would be a disservice in this International Year of SIDS.

Mr. President,

The moment for action is upon us. The true test of partnership will be how we as SIDS collectively and with the other members of the international community take this moment forward to achieve real results. We remind that there is already an international understanding and appreciation of the fact that the burden of responsibility cannot be that of the SIDS alone.

So as I close, Mr. President, allow me to reiterate my Government's appreciation for Samoa's able leadership in the period leading up to the Conference. Please be assured of Jamaica's continued commitment to work constructively with other members of the international community and with SIDS in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

I thank you.

