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STATEMENT

By

**The Honourable Mr. Winston Dookeran
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago**

at the

**Third International Conference on the sustainable development of
Small Island Developing States**



Tuesday 2 September 2014

Apia, Samoa

Honourable Prime Minister of Samoa

Heads of State and Government

Secretary General for the Conference

Fellow Ministers and Heads of Delegation

Heads and representatives of United Nations Agencies, and Civil Society

Distinguished delegates

It is an honour to address you on the occasion of this Third International Conference on the sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States during the International year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The Government and People of Trinidad and Tobago wish to thank the Government and people of Samoa for the excellent arrangements that have been put in place for this Conference and for their genuine kindness and hospitality.

Mr. President,

I would like to recall the very impressive statement made yesterday by the Honourable Prime Minister of Samoa. He made several critical points for contextualizing the unique position of SIDS. He also outlined the framework for global partnership in support of SIDS, and our collective hope for the S.A.M.O.A Pathway in advancing the work begun in Barbados and carried forward in Mauritius. In particular, he noted that the “big problems” of our small islands would soon affect all countries, regardless of size and level of development, and spoke to the special case of SIDS as the underlying basis for our partnership with the global community. I fully endorse his remarks.

I also wish to acknowledge the historic leadership roles played by Barbados and Mauritius in keeping the issue of the sustainable development of SIDS on the agenda of the international community. In yesterday morning’s meeting of island leaders, the Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados made a strong call for us to focus on “SIDS collectivity”. On enhancing the collective voice of island nations through the

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in order to seek leverage and negotiating space in all areas of multilateral discourse. I agree with the sentiments he expressed on this issue. In so doing, I concur with the Prime Minister of Samoa that the negotiating strength of AOSIS is no longer the “monopoly of climate change”.

Mr. President,

It is my view, that in order for this “SIDS collectivity” to be effective, there is an urgent need to develop a global compact in support of the sustainable development of SIDS.

Limitations of size must now give way to new space, external shocks must now be met with resilience and integration models must now embrace the convergence process in the global economy. These challenges require innovative solutions and new approaches building on the foundations laid by the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and now the S.A.M.O.A Pathway.

It is imperative that SIDS engage with the global community in the determinants of a resilience matrix to arrive at a global compact that would secure solidarity for the implementation of the SIDS agenda. Trinidad and Tobago feels strongly that this compact must address the systemic difficulties of the existing global financial system that has caused the flow of funds to small States to operate adversely in small economies, and it should also be the basis for building just and competitive economies.

Trinidad and Tobago is both encouraged and pleased to note that SIDS leaders have now endorsed the call for the establishment of this compact in our Leaders’ Declaration.

Mr. President,

Critical issues for SIDS, such as the systemic problems related to graduation, access to financing for sustainable development, trade imbalances, the increasing urgency of addressing climate change, and the growing crisis in relation to sovereign debt, can only be addressed in the context of an effective global partnership.

Perhaps one of the best examples of how a global compact in support of SIDS could begin to work is in the context of Climate Change, where SIDS have used the unique SIDS negotiating voice and moral authority, to leverage greater ambition in those negotiations with the support of other Governments, civil society, the private sector and the NGO community.

The initiative for a global compact in support of SIDS must build on the existing initiatives and the work that has already been done within the United Nations system. Like the UN Global Compact, it should seek to combine the best properties of the UN, such as moral authority and convening power, with the private sector's solution-finding strengths, and the expertise and capacities of a range of key stakeholders.

Consequently, the United Nations system has an important role to play in facilitating this global compact, through rendering institutional support at the international, regional and local levels, and assisting in the development of the appropriate monitoring frameworks to track implementation.

Mr. President,

The partnerships that we develop during this conference and beyond, must find their place, not only in the context of the implementation framework for the Post 2015 Development Agenda, but also as the nucleus of a global compact launched here in support of the implementation of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway.

It's now 20 years since the first SIDS Conference. Today, as we meet in this historic place of the people of Samoa, who have an identity of their own, we acknowledge what has been achieved over the 20 years but, working together, we must seize the opportunity at this Third Conference of SIDS to build in haste a global compact in support of the S.A.M.O.A Pathway.

I thank you.