

UNITED NATIONS



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THE PRESIDENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
H.E. AMBASSADOR MARTIN SAJDIK

Opening remarks

**ECOSOC Informal stock-taking meeting on the outcome of the
3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States**

New York, 1 October 2014

Mr. Secretary-General of the Conference

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to start by thanking Samoa, through its distinguished Ambassador, for having hosted the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

This conference was truly a unique experience. And I am not only talking about the striking beauty of Upolu and the unforgettably warm welcome we, the participants, received from all its inhabitants which more than rewarded us for the many strenuous hours it took to get to this island so much treasured by Robert Louis Stevenson.

I am also thinking of the quality of the debate and of the lively and action-oriented partnerships dialogues. The conference was remarkably well organized. I must also say that having put the negotiations of the outcome document behind us allowed us to focus on the content of the discussions, dialogues and numerous side events.

We are gathered here in the Council to take stock of what happened at and around the Conference. Our purpose is to underscore once again the importance of the outcomes of the Conference, both the S.A.M.O.A pathway – and the partnerships that were launched in Apia.

This conference was in many ways revealing for me and many others I believe. SIDS leaders vividly spoke of the multiple challenges they face, from climate change, ocean acidification and natural disasters - to social and health issues. As many said, SIDS are a magnifying glass for the issues confronting the international community. The impacts of climate change in SIDS are a preview of what we will all face if we continue on the current development path. The conference brought back home the importance of reaching an ambitious climate change agreement in Paris in 2015 – a message that also pervaded the Secretary-General's timely Climate Summit last week.

The Samoa conference also bolstered my strong belief that we can only achieve sustainable development by mobilizing actors from all walks of society -- from government to business sector to citizens. The multistakeholder partnership dialogues showed vividly that durable and genuine partnerships are a critical tool for sustainable development progress. The dialogues have shown that all stakeholders must be willing to hold themselves accountable in terms of their rule of law and human rights

record, capacity to deliver, and financial transparency, among other parameters.

Partnerships spread knowledge and lessons learned. They mobilize and focus resources of all kinds. Support to small businesses. Sustainable tourism. Business matchmaking. Public finance management. Trade promotion. Economic empowerment of women. Sustainable pearl farming. Youth vocational training. Using ICTs. Renewable and clean energy. Organic agriculture and value chains. These are only some examples of the kind of partnerships that were launched or enhanced.

As the conference has shown, SIDS have already understood that it is through different types of partnerships that many challenges can be overcome.

Of course, many challenges persist. The breadth of the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway speaks to that.

Even for partnerships, there are issues related to durability, scaling up and accountability.

Still, we have identified the problems. We have put forward possible solutions. We now need implementation at all levels.

At the regional level, several organizations are helping countries that face similar challenges. There is much we can learn from them.

At the international level, as President of the Charter body entrusted with economic and social development, I will do the utmost to help deliver the actions SIDS need. ECOSOC is committed to addressing the unique policy challenges of Small Island Developing States

As I said in Samoa, ECOSOC has an important role to play in the area of partnerships, in particular those involving the business sector and foundations and those among Governments and other state actors like parliaments or Supreme Audit Institutions.

The Council (as well as the high-level political forum on sustainable development held under its auspices) will help to advance partnerships for implementing the post-2015 development agenda. It did just this for the outcome of the Millennium Summit.

The High-level political forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC will conduct reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives. It is mandated to provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders. I am sure that the HLPF can be a space within the ECOSOC System where partnerships for SIDS can be monitored and lessons learned can be shared. I believe that ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies and platforms, such as the HLPF, the Development Cooperation Forum or the annual Partnership, Forum will provide the place for nurturing partnership and for discussing the way forward after Samoa.

We will concentrate on these issues in the months to come and thus contribute to shaping the 2015 Development Agenda in its final form.

Let me now turn to our speakers. Excellencies, thank you joining this meeting. We are looking forward to your views on the pre-Conference activities, the Conference itself and the way forward. Thank you.