

**UNITED NATIONS**



**NATIONS UNIES**

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

**Closing remarks**

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

**New York, 1 October 2014**

Mr. Secretary-General of the Conference

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for what has been a dynamic and interesting afternoon. If the Third International Conference on SIDS was about “Island Voices, Global Choices,” we have heard both in this stocktaking event. The eloquent voices of SIDS themselves, expressing a very clear vision for a sustainable future, and the commitment of the global community to work in concert with their SIDS partners to help make that future a reality.

There can be no doubt that the task ahead is formidable. The challenges are complex and multi-faceted. However, strategies and actions have come to fore as well, notably the many partnerships that were enumerated at the Conference. In this context, I would like to reiterate that, here, in the Economic and Social Council we must ensure that the issues of small islands developing States are adequately addressed.

Sustainable and inclusive economic development is the bedrock on which the future of all SIDS will be built, but it is clear that this foundation will take different forms in different SIDS. Fisheries, tourism, small and medium enterprises, and sustainable agriculture are among the many building blocks of economic development, and today’s overview has reminded us that the national context and priorities will be paramount.

In the related realm of social development, today’s review of the partnership dialogue highlighted the importance of empowering women and girls and of promoting SIDS heritage and culture as key forces for social cohesion. The scourge of non-communicable diseases is an area where immediate action is needed and the partnerships announced at the Conference must be pursued with urgency.

Climate change and disaster risk management: we are reminded again today that these areas represent global challenges and require global responses. The climate change discussions at the Conference were amplified here in New York at the Secretary-General’s summit and will continue to resound in the coming months. We have heard again and again the determination to reach agreement in Paris in 2015—the future of the SIDS and indeed the world at large depends on it.

Sustainable energy is an imperative, both because of the high cost of fossil fuels in many SIDS and because of the realities of climate change. The array of partnerships

in the area of sustainable energy speaks both to the severity of the challenge and to the great potential for growth in renewables in SIDS.

The life and livelihoods of many SIDS peoples is inextricably tied to the health of the oceans, and today's discussion reminded us again how much we all have to learn from SIDS as they work to preserve and sustainably develop this precious resource.

Water and food—the basic components of life—are under threat in SIDS as they are in too many parts of the world. I was heartened to hear in Samoa of the ambitious and innovative partnerships already underway to advance water and sanitation issues and food security in SIDS, and today's discussions served to deepen our understanding of the kinds of actions needed to implement this agenda.

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen.

In Apia I was struck, as so many were, by the spirit of good will, forward momentum and determination in the air. In some ways, this was surprising, as it is not often the way we characterize international conferences of this scale and scope. But in other ways it was not surprising—for though we speak of “global choices,” in fact, we do not have a choice. For SIDS—for all of us—we must act.

At Rio+20, Heads of State and Government recognized ECOSOC's key role in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. They reaffirmed and elevated ECOSOC's function as a platform for sustainable development.

The theme for the 2015 substantive session of ECOSOC is "Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: What will it take." The theme offers an opportunity for the Council and the entire ECOSOC system to carry forward the momentum of the Conference on SIDS. Together, we must ensure the robust implementation of the Samoa Pathway and its partnership initiatives.

It is my hope that today's ECOSOC event helped us to take one small step toward the implementation of an ambitious program of action. For us to continue, we must engage the entire global family, and I look forward to working with you all as we make our way together down the Samoa Pathway.