

**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Simona Miculescu,  
Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations  
Third International Conference for Small Island Developing States  
1 – 4 September 2014**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the Prime Minister of Samoa, the Samoan Government, the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary General of the Conference Wu Hongbo and the President of the General Assembly for convening this conference and the Samoan people for hosting us.

We meet at a critical moment - for some countries and some people around the world, this is not just a matter for long-term planning, but for immediate, pressing action. And we know that voices are being raised demanding expanded opportunities and a greater role in the decisions that affect the lives of us all. We have the potential to answer that call.

Samoa has done the world a great service by hosting us all here. Thanks to the deft and strong commitment of all of you, we have coalesced around an outcome document that marks a real advance for sustainable development of the Small Islands Developing States. We strongly welcome the adoption of S.A.M.O.A. Pathway at the end of the Conference.

So while the outcome document that will be adopted tomorrow contains many important principles and proposals, the most compelling products of this conference are the **examples of new thinking** that can lead to **models for future action**. We should be thinking different about harnessing the power of the market. In the 1960s, official development assistance accounted for 70 percent of the capital flows to developing nations, but today it barely amounts over 10 percent, while at the same time, development budgets have actually increased. Why is that? Because while continuing to provide assistance, the private sector investments, using targeted resources and smart policies, have catalyzed more balanced, inclusive, sustainable growth. At last week's excellent Private Sector Forum, the crucial role of the private sector in development policy was clearly outlined.

Now in addition to tapping into the private sector, we should be thinking different about new types of partnerships to solve problems that might

otherwise seem insurmountable. **The Multi-Stakeholders Partnership Dialogues have shown us the real benefits that can be reaped for joining our efforts.** Partnerships are certainly the right way forward for involving the private sector and, more broadly, civil society, using different instruments and financing modalities.

I was proud to see, once again, the level of engagement of the EU and its Member States in a number of successful partnerships with and among SIDS, together with donors and stakeholders. We will continue to strengthen our involvement, with the guidance of SIDS themselves, mindful of the local cultural contexts and based on trust, mutual respect, transparency and accountability.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Of all the challenges faced by the world community in recent years, one has grown clearer than any other in both urgency and importance - I refer to the threat to our global environment.

The science is clear. It is irrefutable. And it is alarming: If we continue down our current path, the impacts of **climate change** will only get worse. Without strong – and immediate – action we can all expect new threats to critical infrastructure, regional stability, public health,

economic vitality, and, in some cases, even long-term viability of states – and SIDS are especially vulnerable to these challenges.

I applaud the steps Small Island Nations are taking to adapt to and address climate change. And let me assure you that we are committed to doing our part also. The benefits of strong, early global action on climate change could considerably outweigh the costs of inaction, and addressing climate change globally is a pro-growth strategy for the longer term.

At the last climate conference in Warsaw, the parties agreed to come forward with their intended contributions in advance of the Paris Conference, with major and emerging economies taking the lead. In just two weeks from now, many of us will meet again at the UN Secretary – General’s climate change summit in New York, which I am confident that this event will lead to a more harmonious encounter of mutually supportive ambition and concrete steps to tackle climate change. It is essential to act now and to mobilize the appropriate financial resources, while maximizing the economic opportunities, keeping in mind that the costs now are significant smaller than the costs tomorrow. It is in our hands to be part of the solution and we cannot afford to fail.

Ladies and gentlemen,

What most small island countries have in common is **heavy reliance on fossil fuel imports**. It has been estimated that on average Pacific Island

countries spend ten per cent of their GDP on petroleum product imports, and for some that figure exceeds thirty per cent. This heavy reliance on fuel imports exposes the islands to a high degree of price volatility, and takes away resources from important development priorities.

Yet on the positive side, island states are specially suited to utilize renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies, due to their economic and geographical conditions.

It makes me proud to say that EU and its Members States have been supporting several energy projects in the SIDS, including the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency strategies at country and regional level. I am pleased to see that 11 SIDS have chosen to focus their attention on energy in their bilateral cooperation with the EU. I hope many others will follow suit.

We are particularly active in the framework of the Sustainable Energy for All Secretary – General’s initiative and we will spare no effort in catalyzing action in support for much needed energy reforms, provide more opportunities for investments and deliver results in the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We cannot underestimate how important the opportunity ahead of us is: roughly one year from now, United Nations General Assembly will

have the historical opportunity to agree on a **new paradigm for international development**, which will act on the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development simultaneously.

We've all been runners in the Open Working Group marathon for the past one year and a half, which required both mental strength and physical perseverance. This process amounted to a discussion that needed to happen: what definition of sustainable development could the international community come together to support, and to what concrete goals could it collectively commit? Of the many accomplishments of the OWG over the past 16 months, perhaps the greatest was that it took the discourse on sustainable development to the next level. It is our duty to once again roll up our sleeves to take this process forward and this Conference provides a valuable opportunity to set out how the specific needs, vulnerabilities and aspirations of SIDS could be best integrated in the new framework.

Let's just take three numbers:

- The first number is **3: 3 billion people**. This is the number of people joining the global middle class by 2030, coming out of poverty.
- The second number is **6**: this is **6 degrees centigrade** what we're heading towards in terms of global warming if we don't act collectively and urgently.

- The third number is **12**: that's the number of cities in the world that had a million or more people when my grandmother was born. That was in the beginning of last century. Now there are 500 cities with a million people or more. And if you look at the century from 1950 to 2050, that's the century when we build all the world cities. **The century where we're in the middle of right now.** Every other century was kind of practice.

So think about it: we're building cities like never before, bringing people out of poverty like never before and changing climate like never before: **sustainability has gone from a nice to do to a must-do.** In short, this is a time for us to be pragmatic, but also optimistic. We should and must make decisions based on research and scientific evidence about what works. **And above all, we need fresh, agile, action-oriented partnerships that can produce results year after year after year.**

As our planet's life-support system begins to fail and our very survival as a species is brought into question, remember that our children and grandchildren will ask not what our generation said, but what it did. Let us give an answer, then, of which we can be proud. The words of Winston Churchill come to mind: *the era of procrastination...is coming to a close...we are entering a period of consequences.*

I thank you.

