

Remarks by Nik Sekhran, Director, Sustainable Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

2nd Global Multi-stakeholder Small Island Developing States Partnership Dialogue.

7 June, New York

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

UNDP was proud to participate in the Third International Conference on SIDS in Samoa in 2014. As an agency with a country-facing outlook and presence in many Small Island Developing States (SIDS) countries, we are mindful that Conferences are not enough – they alone will not lead to action at the national level. Indeed, it is what happens after the Conference on the ground that really matters.

In total, UNDP committed to 47 SIDS partnerships, of which 12 had an ocean focus at the SIDS Conference.

We know however that we need to do more. I am pleased to advise that UNDP has committed at The Oceans Conference to 5 voluntary commitments with a SIDS and oceans focus. These include:

- Firstly, Implementation of the Arafua and Timor Seas regional and national Strategic Action Programme. A

partnership between PNG, Timor-Leste, PEMSEA resource Facility, Australia and UNDP.

- Secondly, an initiative to rehabilitate coral reefs. The partnership includes Mauritius, Seychelles, Nature Seychelles, the Adaptation Fund and UNDP. The initiative aims to support restoration and rehabilitation of degraded reefs, and also to enhance food security and reduce disaster risk.

- Thirdly, an initiative to conserve the Marine Biodiversity in Saint Kitts and Nevis. The partnership includes the St Kitts and Nevis Government, including 6 national agencies, the GEF and UNDP. The initiative will enable the establishment and management of five new Protected Areas (of which, three are marine areas).

- Fourthly, a Ridge-to-Reef land, and sea management initiative in Grenada. The partnership includes the Government of Grenada, GEF and UNDP. The initiative aims to provide multiple local benefits by strengthening land, forest and reef management.

- Fifthly, work to improve Natural Resource Management in Atoll Communities in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The initiative aims to support the operationalization of the Reimaanlok National Conservation Area Plan, seeking to conserve at least 30% of the nearshore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resource by 2020.

Finally, while we have focused on partnerships here today, I also want to mention that UNDP has heard your message on the need to improve access to concessional finance, moving beyond a narrow income based criteria.

UNDP is pleased to co-chair a working group with the World Bank, looking at how vulnerability and other metrics – such as creditworthiness and domestic resource mobilization capacities – can be used to determine the most appropriate level of concessionality for a country. The OECD is also a key partner in this work. Along with the OECD, we also advocate for strengthened ODA for SIDS. This is complex work but we are committed to taking this forward to ensure no state is left behind.

With these Partnerships backed by public and private financing, we can collectively realise the opportunities for sustainable development in SIDS.