

Interregional Preparatory Meeting in preparation for the Third International Conference on SIDS

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Italian delegation, allow me to express our gratitude to our hosts, the Authorities of Barbados, for convening this important Inter-regional preparatory meeting and for inviting us to participate. We wish you a very successful outcome and a fruitful work on the way ahead to the Samoa Conference of September 2014.

1. Excellencies, thirteen years after the launching of the MDGs much has been achieved. Crises of different kinds, however, not foreseen at that time, have taken a toll on the speed and scope of implementation, but not on the determination of the international community. The collective aspiration of the whole world to eradicate poverty and major diseases, to provide education for all, to empower women and preserve the natural capital of the earth, is actually stronger than ever. The international community is working hard to fulfill the promises made in 2000 and to put together the goals that will guide us after 2015 towards the end of poverty and a higher standard of living for all.

2. Since the dawn of the new millennium the world has cemented three lessons: first, no single country, no single group or community, not even a homogeneous group of nations possesses the solution to the many global challenges we are increasingly facing; second, any action taken anywhere in the

world has an impact on the rest of the planet; therefore, here's the third lesson, genuine partnership and knowledge-sharing must be the foundation of international cooperation if tangible results are to be expected.

3. Excellencies, we are very proud of the partnership Italy established with the SIDS well before the word "partnership" became so popular among development experts. Indeed, together we have built a strong and farsighted partnership well ahead of time. We therefore applaud your decision to choose this concept as the overarching theme for the Third International Conference on SIDS. We have good reasons for supporting such an approach because the success of our cooperation with you is due to the fact that our collaboration is nothing else but a genuine partnership: together we have designed projects and activities, together we have established priorities. With you, as partners, we have exchanged knowledge, shared success and failure, and established mechanisms of mutual accountability. Together we have forged regional and local partnerships with all segments of society and groups.

4. Nine years ago, here in Barbados, Italy announced its support for the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (the well known 5C of Belize). This decision was instrumental in the establishment of the Centre and the strengthening of its capacity to serve the Caribbean Community to mitigate the negative impact of climate change. We are honored to be part of what was then a truly pioneering effort by the Caribbean SIDS and we take pride in the fact that we contributed to its success.

1. Three years later, in August 2007, Italy launched its Cooperation Programme with the Pacific SIDS, itself a genuine partnership in the spirit of MDG No.8. It has been particularly successful because it is based on mutual trust, thus allowing the Pacific SIDS to be recognized as skillful implementing agents of their own development strategies and projects. The program is a product of national development planning, and, as a consequence, it has much strengthened the national institutions. It has proved to be a concrete contribution to address the negative impacts of climate change, improving the lives of communities, especially the most vulnerable. It has done so because it has adapted international cooperation to national realities. The Program has also proved to be a catalyst of participation from other donors: Austria joined in 2008, then Luxembourg in 2012. These two countries that have decided to contribute to the realization of some of the program's initiatives.

Excellencies, both these programs, the one to support the 5 Cs Centre and the one with the Pacific SIDS, have also supported the construction of the SIDS collectivity which, as indicated by His Excellency the Prime Minister of Barbados yesterday, is the engine for implementing the Barbados Plan and the Mauritius strategy. We are also pleased to note that thanks to the SIDS - Dock initiative, a partnership between the 5 Cs Centre and the PREP, the Caribbean SIDS and the Pacific SIDS are deepening their collaboration in the field of renewable energies, which is a well established SIDS priority that Italy has supported.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that my country is determined to continue to assist the SIDS, both bilaterally and through international or regional organizations. Many success stories of collaboration with the SIDS deserve to be disseminated and

duplicated so that partnership, the "leit motiv" of the Samoa Conference, is translated into the main mechanism of international and regional cooperation. It is with this idea in mind that Italy has recently allocated one hundred thousand dollars to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the preparatory activities of the Samoa Conference, and is finalizing an initiative for the strengthening of the statistical capacities of the SIDS.

I thank you Madame Chair and I wish you all a very successful outcome for this Conference.