

## **UNGA68 - High-level Breakfast on SIDS**

**New York, 25 September 2013**

### **Speaking points of President Barroso**

- President of the General Assembly,
  - Secretary-General,
  - President Zuma,
  - Prime Ministers,
  - Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
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- Anyone who still doubts the urgent need to pursue global climate action and sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions should look no further than the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the specific vulnerabilities – and sometimes even existential challenges – which they face.
  - Many of our friends among these nations are confronted with rising sea levels, changing weather patterns, and other long-term effects of climate change, on top of natural and environmental disasters that are growing ever more frequent and violent. We can only be horrified by reports forecasting that some islands in the Pacific could be submerged in a near future.
  - At the same time, Small Island and Developing States face particular economic challenges: geographic isolation depletion of resources, food insecurity, and not least problems with energy access.
  - The European Union is all too aware of these challenges. We have therefore supported past SIDS initiatives and remain a committed donor. Our development aid to SIDS countries over the last few years has reached more than 2 billion Euros. Moreover, 16 SIDS countries are fully participating in the EU's 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme, which will strengthen their resilience too.
  - But we want to move far beyond a traditional donor-recipient relationship. I see the EU and the small islands nations as natural, equal partners on critical global issues, which by definition defy borders and on many of which we already see eye to eye
  - Still, I believe there is even bigger potential for strengthening our strategic cooperation and pursuing our shared interests, notably in the crucial multilateral negotiations of the next two years on climate action and the post-2015 agenda.
  - The European Union and the AOSIS group have already had a major impact in international fora by working closely together, for instance during the difficult climate change discussions in Durban and Doha.

- But we should pool our forces even more effectively in the negotiations on a comprehensive, binding global climate agreement, starting with the Conference of the Parties (COP 19) in Warsaw in a few weeks. The clock is ticking up to 2015, and we have no time to lose.
- The SIDS Conference next year should be a springboard for advancing the climate agenda and pushing for legally binding commitments by all emitters. I take this opportunity to welcome the “Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership” which was adopted earlier this month at the Pacific Islands Forum (the 2011 Summit of which in Auckland I had the pleasure to attend).
- Moreover, we could cooperate even more closely in the on-going work on a comprehensive, coherent and universal post-2015 development framework, which embraces both poverty elimination *and* sustainable development. I very much see the fight *against* poverty and *for* sustainability as two sides of the same coin. In a globalised world, one cannot succeed without the other. I think that this nexus is particularly relevant for most of your nations.
- I will be outlining our views on these issues when I have the honour of addressing the Special Event on MDGs later today, where I will also underline Europe's unwavering commitment on the final stretch to attaining the MDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- We have a number of historical multilateral moments before us where the international community must live up to great responsibility. I believe the Small Island Developing States and the European Union, together with other partners, can really make a difference for our planet at these key occasions.
- That is also why we very much welcome the decision to convene a third SIDS conference next year to bring these matters forward. I thank the Government of Samoa for taking the initiative to host this event, and I am happy to announce that we will be providing the Samoan Government with financial support to organise this no doubt successful event, to which I look forward.

Thank you very much.