

**Statement by the United States of America  
Preparatory Committee for the  
Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States  
Delivered by Terri Robl  
Deputy U.S. Representative to ECOSOC  
February 25, 2014**

The United States is pleased to participate in the preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and we are looking forward to working with all stakeholders towards a successful Conference in Samoa.

In both Barbados and Mauritius, we came together in recognition that SIDS have distinct vulnerabilities and challenges, and that the difficulties they face in the pursuit of sustainable development are unique and complex. The Third Conference in Samoa is an opportunity to move towards a well-focused action plan on matters of most concern to SIDS.

Similarly, during this first International Year of SIDS in 2014, we should strive not only to raise awareness of SIDS' development goals, but also to move towards fulfilling them by identifying a discrete number of strategic, time-bound, achievable objectives.

Previous SIDS conferences produced wide-ranging outcome documents describing a broad range of challenges. To make meaningful and sustainable progress in the coming years, particularly in the context of the Post-2015 development agenda, a concise, targeted conference outcome that identifies priorities and actions for development is needed as a basis for strategic planning.

In the process of priority-setting, we believe it will be most useful to focus on critical areas where SIDS play special roles or are confronted by special challenges. Also, in an increasingly resource-constrained fiscal environment, it will be important to leverage all possible synergies in addressing priority areas. For this reason, we fully support the overarching theme of the conference to promote "genuine and durable partnerships."

In this context, my delegation believes there is particular traction to focus on outcomes and actions related to five areas: oceans, coasts, energy, food security and health. In our view, these issues provide numerous opportunities for immediate action and fruitful, cross-cutting partnerships.

Related to **oceans and coasts**, for example, the conference could focus on the conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems, especially the role that better protected coastal environments can play in contributing to both **food security** and resilience to disasters.

SIDS are already leaders in adopting plans for renewable **energy**. These clean energy successes should be celebrated and shared, and realistic, affordable and sustainable renewable energy targets for the next decade might be considered.

The Barbados intra-regional meeting's outcome document called for assistance in the development of specific national programs and policies geared towards children's **health**, noting particularly the problem posed by growing rates of childhood obesity and asthma. It should be possible, as another example, to set time-bound targets for addressing obesity and the spread of other non-communicable diseases and identify the necessary actions needed to achieve them.

Finally, as we focus our energies in preparation for the Third International SIDS conference, we should acknowledge that a number of critical issues affecting the well-being of the SIDS are being negotiated in other forums. The United States is deeply committed to achieving ambitious agreements related to climate, to the post-2015 development agenda, and to the post-Hyogo Framework on disaster risk reduction. While the SIDS outcome document should not duplicate or preempt such negotiations, it could highlight and underline topics of particular relevance to SIDS, for example, by acknowledging the vulnerability of SIDS to climate impacts, the leadership that SIDS have demonstrated in addressing climate challenges, including through the Majuro Declaration, and the importance of ambitious mitigation and adaptation action by all.

The United States is committed to working in partnership with the SIDS to ensure that the Third International SIDS Conference fruitfully addresses the most critical issues facing SIDS. We remain deeply committed to working constructively with our partners in Samoa and beyond in order to address together the unique challenges and needs of Small Island Developing States.