



**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
OFFICE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS**

**First Preparatory Committee for the Third International
Conference on Small Island Developing States**

25 February 2014

Statement delivered by: Mr. Robert Kylvoh, Senior Economist, ILO

Co-Chair's,

The ILO is pleased to be involved in the preparations for the Third International Conference on SIDS and would like to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your elections. We have listened carefully to the interventions delivered by the SIDS and partners over the past two days. We have also carefully studied the Barbados outcome document adopted by the SIDS this past August as well as the outcomes from other regional meetings.

Several of the issues highlighted as priorities by the SIDS, fall directly within the mandate of the ILO and its priorities. These include:

- The need to tackle high rates of unemployment and underemployment. There can be no sustainable development without the creation of decent jobs. The promotion of decent work and green jobs go hand in hand and must be pursued as a part of comprehensive strategies that link employment with sound macroeconomic policy, social development and environmental sustainability.
- Youth employment is a particular concern in most SIDS. Improved skills, training and job creation for young people is urgently required.
- Several Member States have mentioned the need for enhanced social protection and greater assistance for the most disadvantaged. The creation and expansion of nationally defined Social Protection Floors, in line with ILO Recommendation 202, have proven effective in alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion in the vast number of countries where such policies have been pursued.
- Eliminating discrimination at work, including gender discrimination remains a central challenge.
- Finally, many SIDS identified increased temporary labour migration as a proven means to securing jobs, incomes and economic development. The ILO has a long history of assisting countries in maximizing the potential benefits of temporary labour migration. Such strategies combine migration with skills development, while protecting the rights of migrant workers and helping to ensure remittances are invested in activities that contribute to economic and social development.

The ILO looks forward to discussing these issues in greater depth in the lead-up to the Conference.

Co-Chair's,

In closing, I wish to note that the ILO is a partnership organization by design. Its governance structure combines governments, representatives of the business community and a key component of civil society – the trade unions. The ILO will continue to utilize these partnerships in all its work carried out in the SIDS and also in looking to form new partnerships.

I thank you.