

Statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Third International Conference on SIDS at the Intersessional meeting (21-25 April)

By Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director, Division for Sustainable Development

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**Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Conference Secretary-General Mr. Wu is on mission on behalf of the UN Secretary-General. He has requested me to deliver his opening remarks, as follows.

“As we enter the critical and intensive period of deliberations on the outcome document of the Conference, I would like to share a few thoughts with delegations.

I would like to start by expressing my deep appreciation to delegations for their contributions to the zero draft. As Conference Secretary-General, I am deeply appreciative of this active participation. I hope this dynamic energy and engagement will continue throughout this week’s inter-sessional so as to advance the deliberations on the draft outcome document.

In this regard, I also wish to commend the Co-Chairs and other Bureau members for their steadfast leadership.

As explained in the Co-Chairs’ letter of 14 March, the zero draft drew upon the outcome of the Barbados interregional meeting as well as contributions received from Member States and other stakeholders, including during the first PrepCom.

The draft not only addresses the interconnected challenges facing SIDS in the social, economic, and environmental fields but also provides guidance on partnerships and specific actions in financing, trade, capacity building, and institutional support for SIDS.

It also outlines SIDS priorities for the post-2015 development agenda and proposes concrete arrangements for monitoring and accountability.

The compilation document before you has now incorporated specific inputs and text amendments received last week from Member States, as well as political groupings.

I believe it provides a solid foundation for agreed action and genuine and durable partnerships in support of the sustainable development of SIDS.

Distinguished delegates,

The compilation text is a draft for negotiation. I am convinced that through energetic and focused negotiations, Member States will further enrich the actions and commitments to partnership set forth in the text.

Indeed, the General Assembly has called for a “concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented political document”. When world leaders assemble in Apia, Samoa, in less than 5 months, we should present them with an outcome that will effectively tackle the special and unique vulnerabilities of SIDS, while strengthening their social, economic and environmental resilience.

Excellencies,

The SIDS Conference must be a conference on action, on partnership and on implementation.

I invite delegations to approach the negotiations with these objectives in mind.

It is time to demonstrate renewed political commitment to SIDS by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions.

It is time to help SIDS tackle new and emerging challenges through the strengthening of collaborative partnerships between SIDS and the international community.

The national, regional and inter-regional reviews undertaken so far have demonstrated the commitment of SIDS to sustainable development, despite their limited resource. It is time we match that commitment by building on the long-standing cooperation and support of the international community and by preparing to launch new and innovative partnerships in Apia this September.

Distinguished delegates,

A new report issued barely two weeks ago by the Working Group III of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) drew attention to the global emissions of greenhouse gases, which have risen to unprecedented levels.

A sense of urgency must propel our work here.

The IPCC report stressed that it would be possible, using a wide array of technological measures and changes in behaviour, to mitigate emissions and limit the increase in global mean temperature to two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

SIDS are at the frontline of the global fight against climate change. In assisting SIDS meeting this and other challenges, the international community is fighting the same battle. We share this one planet and sustainable development is the future we want.

The work of reaching an agreement for Apia cannot be seen in isolation. The OWG on SDGs, the Committee on Financing, the work on technology facilitation, on disaster risk reduction and climate change are parts of the larger puzzle of defining a post 2015 development agenda which priorities a universal but differentiated agenda which brings in one comprehensive formwork our determination to act for our people and our planet. Whether it is oceans, or climate change actions, or resilience, or disaster risk reduction, or economic growth and shared prosperity, or debt sustainability or sustainable tourism – the agreements reached in your process will profoundly shape the post 2015 agenda with a strong orientation for SIDS priorities.

Let us come to the negotiations with an open mind. Let us agree on as many actions as possible, rather than on inactions.

I wish you all a successful week of negotiations.

Thank you.”

Distinguished Co-Chair,

That concludes the opening remarks of Conference Secretary-General.