



**CEB High-Level Committee
on Programmes**

Annex IV

Joint Statement
of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination
to the Third International Conference
on Small Island Developing States

1. We, members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board, welcome the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States to be held in Apia, Samoa from 1-4 September 2014 and are strongly committed to its success.
2. We recall that the unique and particular vulnerabilities of the small island developing States have been recognized as a special challenge for sustainable development since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. Member States reaffirmed their recognition of these special vulnerabilities in the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) in 1994, the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) of 2005, the MSI+5 outcome documents, and more recently in the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) the “Future We Want”.
3. We recognize that small island developing States and their populations are highly exposed to natural hazards and other frequent external shocks, are particularly vulnerable to weather and climate extreme events, lack economies of scale, and in many cases suffer from geographic remoteness, all of which make their pursuit of sustainable development particularly challenging. We further recognize that their exposure to climate changes, other disaster risks and impacts poses a serious threat to their very existence. We recall that as early as 1989, UN General Assembly resolution 44/206 had recognized the serious adverse effects of sea-level rise on islands and coastal areas, particularly low-lying coastal areas. Between 20 to 30 per cent of the land area of the SIDS is currently less than 5 meters above sea level, and 20 to 30 per cent of their populations live on this land area, and suffer from considerable exposure to tsunamis and sea-level rising.
4. We recognize at the same time that there are also significant opportunities for small island developing States collectively to redeploy their own their resources to meet present and future needs so as to form the basis for strong and resilient economies, which are also socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable so as to meet their present and future needs. A broad-based and socially responsible business and industry sector, and an active civil society, with the full engagement of all other major groups and stakeholders, including in particular children and youth, are instrumental for generating inclusive economic growth, eradicating poverty and protecting the environment.

5. We emphasize the need to create an enabling environment, including through appropriate legislation and public policies, for conducting environmentally sustainable and socially responsible business and for developing small and medium enterprises. An integral part of this enabling environment is ensuring the respect for all human rights.
6. We acknowledge that enhanced scientific understanding of the health and functioning of small island ecosystems, including the extensive marine ecosystems surrounding these islands, is urgently needed to ensure robust science-based policies that enable the sustainable management of natural resources and adaptation to climate change, leading to sustainable ocean-based economic development.
7. We recognize that while many SIDS have made marked progress towards the MDGs, progress has been uneven. Meeting the MDGs, especially in the area of health, including sexual and reproductive health, and enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment, remains unfinished business in many SIDS, especially for women and girls. To ensure that no one is left behind, we consider it vital for a post 2015 development agenda to take into account the particular needs of small island developing States, including their poorest and most vulnerable populations. A bold, ambitious and universal agenda which puts our world on a sustainable pathway is the only guarantee of a life of dignity and security for all, including for all those living in small island developing states.
8. Any post-2015 sustainable development goals must, therefore, be universal in application, while allowing small island developing States to develop their own ambitious targets based on their specific contexts, which include the challenges of SIDS graduating from the least developed country (LDC) category and consequently no longer entitled to special treatment, as well as the challenges of middle-income SIDS.
9. We welcome the decision to make the overarching theme of the SIDS Conference "the sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships".
10. Partnerships in all forms and sizes that are practical and pragmatic continue to provide an important means through which small island developing States will achieve their sustainable development objectives. Multi-stakeholder partnerships will represent an important means to achieve a post-2015 development agenda.
11. A global partnership to help implement a post-2015 development agenda needs to be accompanied by a strong accountability mechanism, which includes measuring of results, clear targets related to a set of sustainable development goals, and promotes evidence-based analysis and policy making, with transparency, good governance and inclusive decision making at all levels.
12. A global partnership beyond 2015 also requires national and regional capacities for collecting, analyzing and using vital social, economic and environmental data; examining the changing characteristics, vulnerabilities and needs of their populations; formulating policies based on evidence; and monitoring and evaluating progress towards development objectives and outcomes.

13. We are committed to a more coherent approach to working with SIDS and to bolstering the support of the United Nations system to small island developing States within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. This includes ensuring improved coordination and coherence among United Nations system entities, at the international, regional and national levels, in support of SIDS by, for example, undertaking activities together and coordinating interaction with the various government ministries, so that our organizations deliver coherently our programmatic support in these States and ensure genuine national ownership of our programmes. In this regard, we remain committed to the continuous UN system-wide engagement in small island developing States, including through the mobilization of more resources for them, as means of implementation for development.
14. We call on international and regional financial institutions and other multilateral development partners outside the UN system similarly to continue and strengthen their support and commit to work closely with small island developing States.
15. We look forward to joining small island developing States in implementing an agenda that aims to promote the well-being of current and future generations, eradicate poverty in all its forms, and ensures inclusive growth that targets inequality, while protecting and managing the natural and cultural resource base of our planet. Changes in the number, geographic distribution and age structure of people must inform the formulation of people-centered and environmentally sustainable development strategies, policies and programmes.
16. We stress the importance of strengthening national and regional capacities in the SIDS to collect and integrate vital social, demographic, economic, environmental and geographic data in order to identify the vulnerability of populations, formulate evidence-based strategies for resilience building. We further stress the importance of collecting and using disaggregated data for monitoring inequalities and disparities.
17. We will endeavour to support small island developing States in building their resilience to climate change, including by strengthening endogenous capacities in sciences and technologies, facilitating access to data and information and sharing of knowledge, including traditional knowledge, and supporting infrastructure and services to generate quality predictions, forecasts and warnings.
18. We urge all stakeholders to come to the Conference prepared to recognize and enhance their existing partnerships, as well as launch new partnerships, in support of the sustainable development of small island developing States, in particular in areas related, but not limited to: climate change and sustainable energy; oceans and seas; biodiversity conservation; forests; water and sanitation; agriculture, including fisheries and forestry; management of waste and chemicals, including hazardous wastes; economic and ecosystem vulnerability and resilience; sustainable consumption and production; sustainable tourism; trade promotion; debt management; facilitating access to international financial institutions; employment, decent work and sustainable livelihoods; sustainable settlements; population dynamics; rural and urban development; culture and development; science, technology and innovation, including technology transfer and national technological capacity building; increased connectivity and greater access to communication and information technologies; disaster risk reduction, management and resilience, including with respect to disasters related to weather and climate; quality education; food security and nutrition; health and non-communicable diseases, such

as, cardiovascular ailments, diabetes and cancer, including their diagnosis and treatment; promoting sexual and reproductive health; enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment; and eliminating violence against women and children.

19. We, for our part, will respond to SIDS' plea for genuine and durable partnerships for sustainable development by updating our existing partnerships and launching new ones for small island developing States. In so doing, we will ensure that the quality rather than quantity of partnerships launched or renewed at the Conference is our paramount concern. Central to this endeavour will be partnerships which harness the cultural, innovative and genetic wealth held by SIDS and bolster the potential and capacity for national and regional innovation and the development and deployment of technologies which address these critical areas.
20. We further urge all announced new partnerships to align their commitments and deliverables to the upcoming sustainable development goals. We recommend that the review and effective follow up of the implementation of those partnerships should take place during sessions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.
21. We support current efforts to compile all existing and newly announced partnerships in an Internet-based SIDS Partnership Platform registry on the Conference website, to allow for better transparency, effective follow-up and monitoring of the impact of partnerships in small island developing States in their pursuit of sustainable development
22. We commit to continuous UN system-wide engagement in the effective follow-up and monitoring, with regular and transparent reporting, of the partnerships for sustainable development in support of small island developing States launched and recognized at the Conference or through the Partnerships platform.
