

Third International Conference on Small Island Developing

1-4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa

Statement by Finland

President of the Conference, President of the General Assembly, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States and Secretary-General of the Conference

Distinguished participants, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

August 19 was the date when humanity had exhausted nature's budget for this year. According to Global Footprint Network's calculations, our demand for renewable ecological resources and the services they provide is now equivalent to that of more than 1.5 Earths. We are on track to require the resources of two planets well before mid-century. Though consumption patterns of countries vary, the problem is shared and the trend – present since 1970's - needs to be turned everywhere.

The SIDS are a group whose viability and sustainable development are threatened by numerous challenges. Finland is fully aware of, concerned about and keeps addressing this. As we all know, for the SIDS climate change is a survival issue. The SIDS conference takes place at a crucial time ahead of major international efforts towards sustainable development, including those undertaken in the UNFCCC to reach a global climate deal in 2015 and to diminish emissions already before the new agreement enters into force.

The EU, the statement of which I align with, and SIDS share common overall objectives to combat climate change by efficient mitigation. Effective mitigation action will limit adaptation action needed and would give us more time to adapt. We should now benefit from the SIDS Conference to help further align the views of the SIDS and the EU to be able to distill in Lima the core elements for an efficient 2015 climate deal. Adaptation is vital for us all but especially for the SIDS, and it must be

an important part of the new agreement. Earlier commitments to support developing countries' implementation of climate actions continue to be implemented but it is evident that the neediest and most vulnerable countries require further support from various sources. However, the existing, often very new mechanisms under the UNFCCC - including the Warsaw International Mechanism for supporting efforts to address loss and damage - need time to take off in order to result in enhanced action and support. Therefore, let us use our time wisely in Lima, and concentrate on defining those very core elements of the agreement that can help us stay within the safety limits of global warming.

More broadly on adaptation, Finland backs ecosystem-based adaptation to strengthen sustainable management practices aimed at reducing vulnerability to climate impacts. Such practices should be integrated into climate change strategies and action plans as well as into general development plans at all levels. The climate deal is not the only deal or process with the aim to deliver successful adaptation and mitigation, the other side of the adaptation-coin. In particular, the post-2015 process needs to help bring about the transformative change towards low-carbon future for which the necessary technologies and solutions already exist. Respect of planetary boundaries, including climate protection, is the principle to be duly made effective under various post-2015 goals. We need to mainstream climate change to thoroughly address the challenges it presents. Ensuring coherence between Post-2015 Development Goals and successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action to be agreed in Sendai, Japan in March 2015, is crucial. The future international framework for Disaster Risk Reduction should better target and empower the poorest and most vulnerable, and DRR should be tailored in national and local contexts through multi-stakeholder consultations. Furthermore, designing multilateral trade rules to facilitate global access to environmentally sound technologies would be a win-win for all, including the climate. Now is the moment to design the different processes to work to the same end so that they complement and support each other. After all, poverty and vulnerability, especially in rural areas, can be reduced only by sustainable management of natural resources, which, in turn, contributes to mitigation, adaptation and increased resilience. This is why integration of climate change and sustainable use of natural resources to national development plans – and all planning and policy making at all levels - is not the step to be taken after

some others, but a prerequisite to poverty reduction and economic and social development per se.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a way of adaptation and mitigation, I take note of the significant efforts already undertaken by many SIDS to protect and sustainably manage your marine resources e.g. through establishment of marine protected areas. That provides us all with an example how environmental sustainability goes together with economic sustainability.

Climate change and its adverse impacts have a central role in Finland's development policy. National meteorological services have a crucial role to produce data and information for disaster risk reduction. Finland has already since 1980s supported development cooperation projects in meteorology for over 100 M EUR in over 100 countries being one of the major donors of development cooperation in the field of meteorology by strengthening capabilities of national meteorological institutes, including an on-going regional project for the Pacific. Finland has also been one of the most active Members of the World Meteorological Organization, WMO and has emphasized the necessity to pay attention to hydrometeorological disaster early warning and climate adaptation system development in SIDS and developing countries. Finland and the Finnish Meteorological Institute have contributed to the development of the national meteorological services both in the Pacific and Caribbean SIDS Countries. Finland has also been working to direct the resources of the World Bank and the European Commission to strengthening of the national meteorological and hydrological early warning capacity in the SIDS countries.

Building the capacity of developing countries is central in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Provision of good hydro-meteorological data can help people survive, especially in vulnerable areas. Prediction of hazards is assisted by developing early warning systems. Preparing for extreme climatic events need to be taken into consideration in agriculture and infrastructure planning. Developing national meteorological services to be more relevant and accurate will benefit the

society at large. National meteorological services have a central role in information production for risk management, food production, socio-economic development policy and climate change adaptation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Finland and the EU are looking forward to working together with SIDS partners towards a successful result in the forthcoming sustainable development and climate negotiations culminating in the latter part of 2015. When there is a will there is a way, but the way is easier to find when the global community the soonest manages to set its priorities right to first concentrate on the essentials. Our shared core task is to preserve a livable planet to be enjoyed also in a slightly more distant future than our own eyes may have time left to see.
