

Secretary General, Fiji Red Cross

Event: UN Conference on Small Island Developing States
Date: Wednesday, 3 September 2014 (3-6pm)
Theme: Plenary statement

Mr President, on behalf of the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the IFRC, I would like to congratulate you, the Government of Samoa and the people of Samoa for making the Pacific proud for the successful hosting of this UN Conference on Small Island Developing States.

Your Excellencies ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this important gathering. Taking place before 2015, the Conference presents a significant opportunity to galvanise international action in support of our communities, and to focus on partnerships for their sustainable development, between member states and local and international civil society groups.

The IFRC welcomes the progress made so far on the draft outcome document, entitled S.A.M.O.A. Pathways. We hope that the outcome will build on previous agreements and reflect a renewed political commitment to support the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States.

In the draft outcome document, we are particularly pleased to see a strong section on disaster risk reduction including financing for early warning systems, a reference to the Global Framework for Climate Services, and the mainstreaming of risk reduction policies and programmes. We are also pleased to see strong recognition of the burden of non-communicable diseases.

To create a platform for sustainable growth and poverty eradication, the IFRC urges Governments, donors and partners to consider taking the following six actions:

- 1. Build the capacity and resilience of local institutions for effective partnerships by recognizing the role of volunteers, both in national laws and through support and training,** so that they can bring development benefits to people at the community level.
- 2. Integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change plans into national, regional, and international frameworks to enhance development outcomes,** including through agreement of an ambitious post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction in Sendai Japan next year, and the retention of strong targets on disaster risk reduction and resilience in the Sustainable Development Goals. We call upon Governments and local authorities to strengthen resilience and preparedness and to enhance action on adaptation as a first line of defence for vulnerable people.
- 3. Make legal frameworks part of disaster preparedness.** The International Disaster Response Law Guidelines or the IDRL Guidelines can significantly

strengthen national institutional frameworks for disaster response and risk reduction. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the IFRC stand ready to provide technical expertise and support around these legal instruments.

4. **Address food security within a wider livelihoods agenda** by offering long-term development support, within a broader livelihood agenda that enables the most vulnerable people to address their own food and nutrition needs in a sustainable manner.
5. **Recognize the threat posed by non-communicable diseases, not only to human health, but also to development and economic growth.** We endorse the call to action made by WHO and partners for radical shifts in the approach to non-communicable diseases in Small Island Developing States, and call on Governments to increase their spending on prevention and treatment.
6. **Invest in and involve youth.** We call upon Governments to increase investments in youth-tailored education activities and skills, and leadership training, as well as youth-led opportunities for voluntary service and community-based activities. We also call for the active involvement and participation of young people in the decision making process that affect their communities and their future.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Certain vulnerabilities are particular to Small Island Developing States. Their underlying causes must be addressed by local institutions, as it will not be possible to build resilience without a focus at the community level.

The IFRC commits to making a practical contribution to the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States through meaningful partnerships, and to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway from community to international level.

We call upon Governments, donors and relevant actors to partner with IFRC's network of 189 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world. In particular, those in Small Island Developing States. Our National Societies, in their unique role as independent auxiliaries to their Governments, can provide an effective bridge between the community and national authorities.

Building on this partnership between National Societies and their Governments, the IFRC looks forward to working with you all more closely at the global, regional, country and community levels for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. Only in partnership, can we improve the well-being of the most vulnerable people and support their efforts to build resilient communities in the Small Island Developing States.

Thank you very much.