

UNITED NATION  NATIONS UNIES

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**ISLAND DEVELOPMENT STATES**

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**Joint Side Event on Resilience in SIDS**  
**Co-organised by UNDESA and the Commonwealth Secretariat**

**Apia, Samoa - 2 September 2014**

Honourable Heads of States and Governments,  
Excellencies,  
Mr. Secretary General of the Commonwealth,  
Specially invited guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to welcome you to this Side Event on Resilience in SIDS.

The vulnerabilities of SIDS have been documented in the international community for many years. It came to the fore twenty years ago at the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in Barbados.

While acknowledging that these vulnerabilities have hampered the sustainable development of SIDS, we have committed ourselves to addressing these challenges. Our focus on resilience is taking a step beyond simply acknowledging the vulnerabilities, and instead ensuring that shocks to the SIDS can be absorbed, and not delay the developmental capacities of these countries.

UNDESA and the Commonwealth Secretariat have, over the years, worked to minimize the vulnerabilities, and ensure the resilience of SIDS. UNDESA, in partnership with the Indian Ocean Commission has piloted the Vulnerability-Resilience Country Profile (VRP) in Seychelles and Mauritius. The Commonwealth in collaboration with the University of Malta has applied the

Vulnerability Resilience Framework in St. Lucia, Seychelles, and Vanuatu. It is the intention of both organisations to expand our approaches to more islands.

We will hear more about both approaches throughout this event. Both organisations understand that collaboration is essential to ensuring a global response to the SIDS challenges. Strengthening the resilience of SIDS is one area where our combined expertise can produce positive results.

With this in mind, we are pleased to have the Heads of State and Governments of the Pilot Countries. Accounts of the experiences in these islands, along with the presentations from the respective agencies, will give us all a greater understanding of where we stand today, and what is needed as we embark on the road ahead for strengthening the resilience of SIDS.

We understand that weather phenomena are inevitable, but they do not have to become disasters if we have the means to adjust to their occurrences. Likewise, the ebbs and flows of the international economic and trading systems should not have to disrupt the way of life of the islands. That is my hope, and minimizing of the vulnerabilities of SIDS will ensure that this vision of a sustainable future can be realized. The discussions today will contribute to that future.

I would like to commend the organisers for this initiative. The Third International Conference on SIDS is intended to focus on action-oriented strategies to prepare SIDS for the post-2015 development agenda. The strengthening of their resilience to economic and environmental shocks will ensure that SIDS can benefit fully from developments in the international community geared towards sustainable development.

UNDESA and the Commonwealth will continue to work together to ensure that vulnerability resilience in SIDS is achieved. We will partner with SIDS and continue our collaboration to make this a reality. I am confident that when we work together, we can accomplish all that we aspire to.

Thank you for your support of this initiative and I look forward to a productive event.

I thank you.

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