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ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
OPENING OF THE MAJOR GROUPS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS
FORUM

Apia, Samoa, 28 August 2014

Major Groups representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to join you this evening at the opening session of the pre-Conference forum for major groups and other stakeholders.

I applaud your efforts to bring major groups voices to the SIDS Conference and help set the tone for an enriching and collaborative dialogue between all stakeholders.

The international community is now focused on putting both people and the planet at the center of development. In that regard, there is no doubt that empowering broad participation in decision making will be an essential ingredient for a successful post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

As you know, the Conference will focus on genuine and durable partnerships for SIDS. In many SIDS, partnerships have always been the driving force behind progress and resilience, where the role of governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, and traditional community leaders has been interwoven in a unique and important way.

This Conference will also look for concrete, innovative and new partnerships to guide SIDS along sustainable pathways. We are hoping that your discussions will reinforce the groundwork for forming these partnerships, as well as considering how major groups will be part of meaningful follow-up.

I am greatly encouraged to see civil society representatives here from all over the world. The major groups have been so important to sustainable development since the Earth Summit in 1992. This shows the determination and awareness of major groups in following up on the progress of SIDS since Barbados, and fulfilling their commitments as partners in implementation.

We are very grateful to the Host Country for supporting this Forum, as well as to our UN system and major groups partners who work side by side with SIDS governments and local communities.

Before I conclude, let me just share with you a few suggestions on your role in advancing the sustainable development of SIDS.

First, make your voices heard, which is something many of you have been doing. I encourage you to continue doing so to champion the cause of SIDS.

Second, be active in the field. Many of you operate at the grassroots level and you feel the pulse of local communities. I urge you to redouble your efforts and help bring tangible benefits to SIDS communities.

Third, share your knowledge. A large number of Major Groups have been supporting SIDS and have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and practical experiences. I invite you to disseminate this knowledge, in collaboration with governments and the United Nations. UN system organizations are doing a lot of capacity building activities in SIDS; so please work with us.

I will do my part and request my colleagues in the UN system to reach out to you and to engage you in partnerships and in capacity building activities in support of SIDS.

These are just a few ideas for your consideration. I would like to wish you a most productive Forum, and I look forward to hearing your views, and receiving your commitments and partnerships at the Conference.

Thank you.
