



**Intervention by Major Group of Children and Youth at
Final Preparatory Committee Meeting of the 3rd International
Conference on Small Island Developing States
23 - 27 Jun 2014, New York**

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates and friends,

The 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) represents a decisive landmark for young people of all three SIDS regions, on behalf of whom I take the floor today.

Youth have strong hopes and valid apprehensions of the Samoa meeting: Hopes, because of the theme of the meeting - partnerships. We are all stakeholders to sustainable development process, and in this respect youth demand a seat at the table. As we speak, my friends from the Major Group of Children and Youth are actively contributing to delivering the advocacy for a sustainable and productive world at the historic 1st Session of the UN Environmental Assembly halfway across the world in Nairobi and the Disaster Risk Reduction meeting in Thailand, along with preparing for the High Level Political Forum next week. Apprehensions, because we are not moving fast enough. SIDS, in particular, come with a dangerously small time stamp. Environmental degradation and rising sea levels are already wrecking havoc on our livelihoods and economies.

The Major Group of Children and Youth is a bit concerned by the absence of any regards to youth during the discussions today. Nevertheless, we are here to stay, and contribute, and we will continue to be engaged in this process.

First of all, in the spirit of partnerships, we request that the latest negotiating text, namely the Compilations Revision 1 text, is made available to all Major Groups and other stakeholders in order for the process to be inclusive and truly multilateral. This will allow us to support the process and make informed propositions.

The Major Group Children and Youth, by its sheer numbers, is not an insignificant grouping. Meaningful youth participation therefore serves as an undeniable right as it provides mechanisms to enable young people to articulate about their aspirations for the future, but also safeguard their present. If this SIDS process is to truly to be inclusive of young SIDS

citizens, then it has the potential to be one of the most important development initiatives ever devised.

With regards to the negotiations happening today, we would like to highlight the following youth priorities for the specific areas:

We can see clearly that our natural wealth is declining and is almost at the point of no return. Yet, decisive leadership is not being shown in addressing key issues such as climate change, ocean degradation, pollution and various other ills which are likely to destroy our resource base, and leave us youth with a legacy of destruction. This in itself presents the issue of intergenerational inequity; therefore we wish to express our desire to have better engagement through intergenerational dialogue and solidarity as effectiveness and efficiency are sought in a 'future we all want'.

We have also closely followed the discussions this afternoon on paragraph 3 and affirm the call to include Cairo and Beijing international agreements on gender equality and human rights.

We echo the contributions of our fellow youth that were discussed in the 12th Session of the Open Working Group last week in keeping a stand-alone goal on climate change. The climate goal is essential to mobilise the critical mass and ensure action for immediate progress towards a climate-resilient and low-carbon SIDS and the world as a whole.

Proposed Goal 13: Effectively address climate change at all levels

- hold the increase in global average temperature below a x 1.5°C rise in accordance with international agreements and ensure greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions peak before 2020 and then rapidly decline in accordance with equity and the principle of CBDR
- by 2020 develop and implement gender-responsive actions for integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies and integrate into existing policy frameworks, local and national sustainable development plans and poverty reduction strategies
- by 2020 introduce operationalize instruments and incentives for to rapidly reduce investment in fossil fuels and to increase public financing, transfer of and domestic support for socially and ecologically sound technology and investments in low-carbon solutions in all relevant sectors

We want all decision makers to actively involve and engage young Caribbean, AIMS and Pacific nationals in the effort to mitigate the effects of climate change.

We affirm the attention paid towards our oceans. The goal should be to-

Proposed goal 14. Attain conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, oceans and seas

14.10 By 2020, increase the economic returns to SIDS and LDCs from the sustainable development of coastal and marine resources within their jurisdiction , as well as equitable access to and benefit sharing from resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

14.11 As of 2015 implement integrated and participatory coastal management plans under a gender equality and human rights framework, in order to increase resilience of coastal ecosystems

14.7 By 2020, eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices

- Establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in order to protect our marine resources and provide an oversight of marine extractive industries.

Furthermore, much of SIDS heavily relies on the tourism industry, and as such, more stringent regulations should be enforced in order to address unsustainable and destructive tourism. It is also important to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystems which are crucial to the development of ocean-based economies.

Given the theme of ‘partnerships’: The purpose of partnerships need to focus on practical and achievable goals where specific emphasis is placed on the: beneficiaries, the people of the SIDS; priorities to meet the needs of these beneficiaries (the people); effective implementation, measurement and management for results. Partnerships cannot be the private sector placing profits before people and planet.

Finally, we fully believe that the Samoa conference should deliver not only on rhetoric, but on concrete, actionable points. For this reason, youth call for a set of time-bound goals within the text which will give the necessary energy and impetus to the text, and ensure that we are not complacent with regards to the implementation of the framework which the Samoa meeting will create. It is a necessary imperative that the voices of SIDS is placed at the centre of every decision making process.

We thank you.