

**Thank you very much Mr Chairman....let me first of all join the many others before me in extending my sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality afforded to the Dominican delegation since our arrival here on your beautiful island and to also take the opportunity to congratulate the government and people of Samoa on the hosting of such a historic conference and I would like to commend the United Nations and our host country, Samoa, for the opportunity to participate in this Third International Conference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We are never stronger than when we unite across the seas to come together to create the future we want. As member countries of the UN, SIDS have more influence and impact on the agenda for our common future when we meet to agree upon certain principles and strategies of action to move forward.**

**The threat of climate change has heightened the need to act together. For many of our countries, we see climate change as an existential threat, while all of us will need to build more resilient infrastructure if we are to prosper in a world with more hurricanes and typhoons, greater storm surges, rising seas, acidifying oceans, more extreme weather events resulting in droughts and floods, and the interaction of all these impacts which will degrade our beaches, our fresh water, and other environmental resources.**

**Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, my country Dominica, has been declared as one of the most vulnerable countries in the world and we have not been spared the ravages nor the threat of climate change. On this note, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the World Bank and CIF for partnering with us in our recently signed US 38 million dollar Disaster risk reduction and Climate resilient package.. comprising of grant and highly concessionary loan fundin**

**g towards building resistance against the effects of climate change, which in recent years have seen a tremendous portion of our national budget going towards restoration efforts after these now erratic and more intense weather events.**

**A comprehensive package of projects that will include infrastructural initiatives, capacity building one, water resource management, food security amongst others...and we look forward to the timely and successful implementation of these projects.**

**Simultaneously, our economies can never grow as they should so long as we are dependent on imported fossil fuels. These fossil fuel imports are incredibly expensive and businesses and industries are heavily burdened with outrageous bills to pay for energy.....the tourism industry is destabilized by the cost of power, and every aspect of our society is suffering. It is often said that when one is bleeding, the very first thing that one ought to do is to stop the hemorrhage. Well this is exactly what as SIDS we need to do if we are to become truly healthy, strong, and growing economies. Once we stop sending so much of our precious foreign exchange out of our countries, we can stop the bleeding and begin creating the jobs we want and a cost of power that is not so onerous and one that does not handicap our private sector.**

**Fortunately, we have a choice. In the final analysis, every government must ultimately decide on its approach to governance. Either the government can choose the path of the status quo and play the politics of blame, or it can choose to follow a vision for a better future and exert the political will to accomplish its objectives. In the Commonwealth of Do**

**minica, our Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and government have chosen to take advantage of our natural resources and make the great transition to clean energy. In any of our SIDS, it will always be the case that you need a powerful combination of vision and courage to undertake such huge changes for the people, yet the leaders can be strengthened in their quest by the knowledge that it is the only way to lift their economies.**

**We are known as the Nature Island because of the plentiful bounty of our environment, a source of enormous pride to our people. All of our development plans are carefully structured to ensure that our natural resources are not degraded nor abused. We live by the principle of sustainable development. We have already developed our hydropower and we have undertaken to develop our geothermal potential. So how did we proceed and what obstacles did we need to overcome? Our first step was to use our own resources to get the transition to clean energy underway. We have so far invested \$50 million EC of our funds, a significant sum of money when for a small fragile economy such as ours ...in fact this sum represents approximately 10 % of our last national budget...Some people wondered why we should make this much money available to a project that was difficult to achieve, but we knew that such change was imperative. We proceeded with a real attitude of openness and transparency, making clear to**

the communities what each step would entail. While this brought more questions and sometimes seemed to be more cumbersome, it is a vital necessity to make the communities a key part of the development process. We also sought out partners to advise us, such as SIDS DOCK who has provided expert advice and support to so many of the SIDS. In addition, we signed a MOU with the Clinton Climate Initiative – Clean Energy who has proved to be an invaluable partner in helping us at every stage, particularly in the complex negotiations that we have had with the developer. We then sought out and attracted companies with a track record of success. The scientific studies have recently shown that our geothermal resource is strong enough to not only allow us to build a plant for our domestic market that will fundamentally shift the destiny of Dominica to a more sustainable path, but also allow us to build another geothermal power plant that will be able connect through undersea cable to our island neighbors, providing them with green power and bringing needed foreign exchange towards our national development plans.

As SIDS, each of our countries will find out how to use its renewable energy resources, as so many of you are reporting during this conference. We need to use the full spectrum of renewable resources--- sun, wind, geothermal, waste to energy, biomass, hydropower, and even look to the resources of the future that can come from the ocean l

like ocean thermal electric current, wave and tide power, and other innovative technologies emerge. In fact, the sheer variety of resources at our fingertips will offer us the opportunity to be the laboratories of new ideas, implemented first in SIDS and later spreading to continental countries. As the vanguard of the great transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, we can show the world that it can be done, but let me make this point clearly. The great transition will not happen automatically, even when renewable energy costs are competitive or cheaper than fossil fuels. You will need a comprehensive strategy that appreciates the need to attract different kinds of funds, development, concessionary, and commercial. In addition, the utilities will need to support the transition to make sure that the grid is stable and that assets of the past are properly considered in the new way forward. These are complex issues, but that is why finding trustworthy partners is so vital. I have already mentioned two of our prime partners, SIDS DOCK and the Clinton Climate Initiative, but we have also been forming new ones with such outstanding organizations as UNIDO with support from the Austrian government for all of our SIDS. UNIDO will soon be setting up a regional office in the Caribbean and one in the Pacific. SIDS DOCK is helping us explore a partnership with new allies like the Government of Kazakhstan.

**As SIDS implement renewable energy projects, we need to**

**make a truly major push to install as much energy efficiency capacity as possible in our government buildings, our hospitals, our hotels and businesses, our schools and other buildings. Energy efficiency is the best bang for the buck and there are firms that will pay the upfront costs and share the savings.**

**So the Commonwealth of Dominica sees a bright future for SIDS. This belief is justified by the efforts we are making to take charge of our own destiny in energy and environmentally sustainable development. At the same time, we should underscore that SIDS DOCK, an organization of the SIDS, for the SIDS, and by the SIDS, has prepared for a true transformation of our status in the eyes of the world. Here, at this Third International Conference of SIDS, we will open for signature the Statute establishing SIDS DOCK as a trans-regional organization, vested with the legal personality of an international organization, and with the full rights, privileges, and immunities of an international organization. This SIDS DOCK statute will constitute a historic milestone for the SIDS and offer us a new position of leverage, helping us access financial and technical services and making our voices heard and respected on the climate change negotiations. SIDS are a large bloc within the General Assembly of the UN and now we will have an intergovernmental organization united around a common agenda of climate resilience and renewable energy. I know that the Alliance of S**

**Small Island States has done an exceedingly good job of navigating this new organization through the UN and each of the SIDS has reason to be pleased that we created AOSIS so many years ago.**

**In closing, let me say again, we can take charge of our own destinies as SIDS if we stand together. Thank you United Nations, for making this the Year of the SIDS and thank you participants in this Third International Conference for courage to make the changes that will create the future we want.**

