

**STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DR. DENZIL L.
DOUGLAS,
PRIME MINISTER OF ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
AT THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SMALL
ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)
APIA, SAMOA, 1 SEPTEMBER 2014**

Mr. President, it is indeed a signal honour for me to address this august body at the Third International Conference of Small Island Developing States in this tranquil environment, the Independent State of Samoa.

Let me start by extending my delegation's appreciation to the Government and people of Samoa for its warm hospitality which is so essential given the distance we have travelled to participate in this important Conference.

I would also like to congratulate you on your selection as President of this Conference. I am certain that through your able leadership, you will be able to guide the

sessions that fall under your purview in a manner which will ensure a high degree of success.

Mr. President, St. Kitts and Nevis is pleased to lend its voice to the call for a concerted effort by the international community to recognise the special circumstances of Small Island Developing States as we continue to forge ahead with our thrust to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions.

Indeed, Mr. President, my delegation is highly optimistic that this Conference will provide the appropriate environment for the strengthening of existing partnerships and the establishment of new meaningful ones to assist small states which I have the honour to lead to achieve its sustainable development goals and objectives.

Mr. President, we recognise on the sustained economic development front, it is necessary for SIDS to do all in our power to build their resilience to external economic shocks. We also recognise the importance of our development partners to conduct their macroeconomic

and trade policies in a manner that would facilitate opportunities of SIDS to promote economic growth, reduce the income gaps, reduce the levels of poverty and achieve our development aspirations.

St. Kitts and Nevis, in spite of its small size, has a lesson to share with the international community in our experience in engaging the international financial institutions to arrive at a position of debt sustainability. We would be happy to share these experiences at the appropriate forum facilitated by this Conference.

Mr. President, our tiny proud nation also has an important experience to share in youth engagement and employment through our national People's Employment Project initiative, which focuses on skills training through job attachment. This initiative has touched the lives of thousands of young persons, offering them life-long experiences. We have been able to mobilise funding through a national foundation which stimulates economic growth and development. Lessons from this experience we shall be delighted to share with the international community as well.

Mr. President, it would be remiss of me if I do not use this opportunity to call upon our development partners to assist SIDS to develop strategies fight the scourge of non-communicable diseases throughout our regions. It is widely accepted that the wealth of a nation lies in large measure in its health. It is therefore necessary for SIDS to focus on this important aspect in order to achieve sustainable development. We therefore call for meaningful partnerships in achieving this objective.

Mr. President, Climate Change for my country and region remains an existential challenge. Sea Level rise in particular is great concern to us given the historical pattern of settlement characterised by coastal communities. Such communities are most vulnerable to natural disaster and the more gradual yet real threat of sea level rise.

In this regard, Mr. President, I wish to reiterate the call for a stronger level of support from the international community for the development of climate change models which are appropriate to SIDS, and for

strengthening the region's capacity to conduct economic and social assessments for climate-proofing our development plans and programmes.

It is also critical, Mr. President, that SIDS underscore the importance of the implementation of the Loss and Damage framework under the meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This important mechanism will play a critical role in mitigating the impacts on loss and damage associated with climate change.

The threats for us are real. They include loss of livelihood, loss of territory, waves of migration, forced or voluntary displacement, planned relocation, and catastrophic impacts on food supplies and national food security. We therefore cannot afford to sit by idly and discuss these threats without putting in place the required mechanisms to ensure minimal disruption to the livelihood of our people.

In closing, Mr. President, I wish to reiterate my delegation's support to the organisers for a successful

outcome. We look forward to meetings that would seek to strengthen existing partnerships for sustainable development, and the forging of new partnerships which are meaningful in nature. This is very much consistent with the overarching theme of the Conference.

I thank you!