

UK Plenary statement, 3rd International SIDS conference

3 September, 2014

I'm very pleased to join you today as the new High Commissioner to New Zealand and High Commissioner Designate to the Independent State of Samoa. I am incredibly honoured that my attendance here is one of my first formal engagements in the region. We align ourselves with the EU statement made by Commissioner Piebalgs on 1 September.

This conference comes at a critical juncture for global decision making. 2015 will be a huge year for the international community, and for the planet.

Not only is 2015 the 70th anniversary of the UN, we will need to come together to agree a new global climate deal and a universal ambitious, measurable and compelling set of Sustainable Development Goals. Together, these decisions provide the unprecedented opportunity of eradicating extreme poverty for good, raising the profile of gender issues and putting the world on a more sustainable pathway. These are the foundations of creating a better world for everyone.

Climate change and development are two of the biggest issues facing SIDs. It is vital that your voices and views are heard in both of these negotiations.

I would like to take this opportunity to set out the UK's views on these important issues.

I will begin with the post-2015 development agenda. ^{For} ~~Which~~ as many of you know my Prime Minister and the UK Government, is heavily committed to securing an ambitious outcome ~~on~~.

So what would we like to see in a post-2015 development framework?

Our vision is that the post-2015 development agenda should work towards eradicating extreme poverty for good through sustainable development. We believe that it is possible to do this in a generation.

However, in order to do this, we need to get these new goals right. That means that the next goal framework must be simple, it must be compelling and it must be ambitious enough to galvanise the international community, to incentivise implementation, and to drive accountability. But most importantly, these new goals must be workable. I am sure that you would all agree that it is no good

asking world leaders to sign up to a set of goals which cannot be measured or implemented on the ground.

We must not forget the MDG's. The new goals must build on the successes we have already achieved with a practical focus on things like poverty, hunger, water, sanitation, education and healthcare. But we also need to address the gaps that the MDGs missed. We need to make sure these new goals include outcomes that address the root causes of poverty; we need sustainable growth that creates jobs, accountable and effective institutions and peaceful and open societies. We need goals that promote gender equality and critically that have climate and environmental sustainability are at their core. These are the issues that over 4 million people have said are important to them through the My World survey and we need to ensure that the new framework delivers for them.

Beyond this the new framework must be underpinned by a new global partnership, with all actors, from civil society and business, to governments working together towards a common goal. This partnership should take into account the specific circumstances of countries and provide a strong basis for effective, flexible and targeted cooperation.

We understand and recognise the unique and complex challenges faced by small island states. We have listened carefully to the concerns that you as SIDS have

raised about the appropriateness of GDP per capita as the sole measure for concessional finance. Indeed this was a key message that our Foreign Secretary took away from the UK/Caribbean Forum in London earlier this year. We remain committed to continuing this discussion with you and international partners.

Speaking here in Apia I want to highlight climate change for particular attention.

We believe that the eradication of extreme poverty is impossible without first addressing climate change and tackling ~~unsustainable development~~ the effects on our climate. The world's poorest people will suffer first and worst from the effects of climate change and the loss of natural resources. These concerns are of course very pertinent for SIDS whose direct reliance on natural resources, including oceans, and as homes to rich and often unique biodiversity is clear, but they affect us all. To give just one example, fisheries are an important source of income and food security for millions of people. With demand for fish protein set to rise dramatically as the global population grows and consumption patterns change, it is all the more important that fisheries practices become more sustainable. This means tackling issues such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as well as threats such as climate change, which increases ocean acidity, killing marine organisms and damaging ecosystems. Addressing these issues and putting the planet on the pathway to a more sustainable future is vital for protecting development gains and promoting sustainable economic

of unsustainable development

growth. This greatest of challenges faces all of us and we need to act together to meet it.

The UK is already playing its part to tackle these challenges. Let me provide you with a few examples.

First, on climate change, we are committed to agreeing an ambitious legally binding global climate deal in Paris next year. We all need this agreement to keep average temperature rises below 2 degrees. A fact that SIDS know only too well.

To achieve this all countries must intensify domestic preparations for the 2015 climate deal, and as many countries as possible to put forward contributions to reduce emissions by the first quarter of 2015. I am heartened that some SIDS are leading the way on this.

The Alliance of Small Islands States has a crucial role to play in securing an effective deal. We want to work closely with AOSIS as we head towards Paris to encourage greater ambition from the biggest emitters.

Second, at this conference we are showcasing British companies who specialise in energy and climate change solutions that can assist in renewable energy industries. And we have showcased our current projects in Samoa. Working with an NGO we are bringing Biogas, an alternative energy direct to local communities.

In the UK, we are working hard to cut our carbon emissions, Parliament has just reconfirmed that UK emissions will reduce to 50% of 1990 levels by 2027.

Third, we are supporting the poorest and most climate vulnerable adapt to climate change. From 2011 to 2016, the UK has committed £3.87 billion to tackling climate change through the International Climate Fund.

And we are working with others to ensure a successful round of initial contributions to the Green Climate Fund ahead of the Lima COP. SIDS are a key recipient of UK climate finance including through our contributions to multilateral climate funds. We reach Pacific SIDS, Caribbean SIDS and Indian Ocean SIDS.

As such we see that this conference will help us build momentum ahead of UNGA and ahead of the UN Secretary General's ^{Climate} ~~Leader's~~ Summit later this month. The British Prime Minister is strongly considering attending and I encourage all leaders to go. We must grasp this opportunity to build political momentum on both tracks

- the global climate deal in 2015 and the Post-2015 framework which meets the needs of the worlds' poorest, *and most vulnerable.*

Ban Ki Moon's Summit is a moment for world leaders to demonstrate the practical action they are taking, to showcase green business, new and innovative technologies and highlight global partnerships in areas such as forests and agriculture.

Fourth, we want to help countries tackle biodiversity loss. To do this the UK set up the Darwin Initiative. This UK Government-funded grants scheme helps to protect biodiversity and the natural environment in developing countries and the UK's Overseas Territories. Darwin-funded projects aim to help preserve biodiversity and support the local communities that live alongside and often depend on it. The Darwin Initiative has funded 38 projects on islands at a total value of almost £8 million since 2005. Based on this success we have gone further. In 2012 we established the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund (also known as Darwin Plus) specifically for UK Overseas Territories, which are mostly small geographically-isolated islands. Since Darwin Plus was established we have funded 29 projects at a total value of £3.7million.

Finally, I want to talk about gender equality. We have an opportunity to ensure that the post 2015 framework demonstrates a strong commitment to achieve

gender equality and the empowerment and the realization of the human rights of women and girls. This is why the UK has argued consistently for a dedicated goal on gender and the integration of gender throughout the framework. We need to ensure that we address the critical issues that will transform the lives of girls and women by tackling the underlying causes of gender inequality including violence against girls and women, FGM and child marriage and women's economic empowerment.

We should continue to ensure that universal sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are prominent in the Post 2015 Framework.

Every day approximately 800 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. We know that 99% of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries. The results of this year's twenty year review of the International Conference on Population and Development has been a stark reminder of the progress we as an international community still have to make on this agenda.

The inclusion of these rights in the post-2015 framework is crucial to finishing the job of the MDGs, to achieving gender equality, and ultimately to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights not only saves lives but empowers women and girls to make decisions over their lives and future.

In July this year, my Prime Minister co- hosted an international Girl Summit, with UNICEF, aimed at mobilising domestic and international efforts to end female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage within a generation. Ministers from around almost 30 countries around the world attended the Summit, along with a number of high level representatives from UN agencies and the Foreign Secretary hosted an international Conference on tackling sexual violence in conflict. These issues are something which the UK is passionate about tackling internationally.

I was therefore very pleased to host with the EU, the Stage of Change project at the SIDS conference. This successful project which started in the Solomon Islands not only empowers and celebrates women, but manages to discuss violence in a way which engages communities.

So, to sum up. If we can create and strengthen genuine partnerships across this crucial range of issues – climate change, the post-2015 development agenda, renewable energy and gender equality – then we will make real strides towards a more sustainable future for all.