

**Statement on behalf of New Zealand to the
Preparatory Committee for the third International Conference on
Small Island Developing States**

24 February 2014

**Delivered by
H.E. AMBASSADOR JIM MCLAY,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

Co-Chair,

As we meet here today, New Zealand looks ahead to the Third Conference on Small Island Developing States with great anticipation. We are a small country and an island state. Many of our closest neighbours and development partners are SIDS. Our long-standing support for SIDS reflects our own place in the world. And we are especially pleased that the Conference will be held in the South Pacific, which we together with many SIDS, call home.

The Conference on SIDS presents a highly significant opportunity to galvanise international action in support of SIDS and to focus on partnerships for their sustainable development, both between member states and with local and international NGOs. We must work together to shape a Conference that involves interactive, substantive discussion at the highest possible level and delivers tangible outcomes.

To support this, it is critical that the Conference produces a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented Outcome Document that builds on existing international commitments and provides a clear indication of SIDS priorities as we begin to elaborate a post-2015 development agenda.

Co-Chair,

Some aspects stand out as of particular importance in light of New Zealand's own experience and of working with SIDS' development partners.

In order to create a platform for sustainable growth and poverty eradication it is important to foster private sector-led investment and job creation. Critical building blocks for a competitive and productive economy include an efficient business environment, developing a skilled workforce, and openness to trade and investment. Sound macro-economic policies, effective management of the economy and sustainable debt management are essential. Agriculture is also a key driver of economic growth, and is critical to food security.

SIDS have the right to conserve and sustainably manage oceans and their resources, including fisheries, for the benefit of their populations. Oceans and fisheries must be given priority attention.

Secure and reliable access to energy, energy efficiency and wide diffusion of renewable energy will have significant benefits for economic, social and environmental sustainability.

It is critical to invest in disaster risk reduction and strengthen resilience. The impact of disasters can be significantly mitigated by addressing the root causes of vulnerability and by building resilience to natural hazards and shocks.

Climate change poses a significant threat to SIDS, putting at risk development gains, threatening food security, intensifying water scarcity and flooding and worsening sea-level rise. Urgent action is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Non-communicable diseases represent a major threat to SIDS' economies and the health of their people. They will be an even greater challenge in coming years unless urgent and widespread action is taken now.

An additional key challenge is to improve women's involvement in the economy, reduce violence against women, increase their participation in national legislative bodies, and improve access to quality education and health services.

Co-Chair,

New Zealand looks forward to a Conference which makes a practical contribution to the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships in these and other areas. New Zealand stands ready to support Samoa to achieve a great outcome for SIDS.