

International Year of  
Small Island  
Developing States  
2014

# Small Island Matters

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www.sidsnet.org

## Global Launch of the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

The United Nations launched the first ever International Year of Small Island Developing States on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The year is expected to raise the profile of the SIDS and build momentum towards the Third International Conference on SIDS in Samoa, 1-4 September. The Year was launched with addresses by the President of the Republic of Nauru, the Prime Minister of Samoa, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the UN, and the Secretary General of the Third International Conference. The addresses focused on SIDS sustainable development challenges and the expected benefits of the International Year for SIDS. H.E. John Ashe, President of the General Assembly stated that “we must seize the opportunity for the creation of a new vision and the harnessing of fresh commitment and energy for the tasks that lie ahead. The launch of this International Year provides us all with exactly such a pivotal moment.” There is need to recognise the unparalleled ecological and cultural diversity of the world’s small islands developing

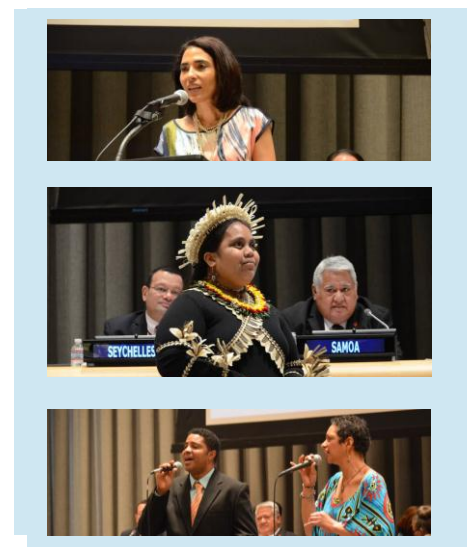


*Dignitaries at the Launching Ceremony of the International Year of Small Island Developing States. L-R: Ambassador of Seychelles, Prime Minister of Samoa, President of the UN General Assembly, UN Secretary-General, President of Nauru, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Barbados and Secretary General of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on SIDS.*

states and honour the remarkable contributions their people have made as global citizens. “Islands have left an indelible mark on history - Island people have forever enriched the tapestry of the human experience, in recognition of their legacy, let’s remember them this year and always.” added the President of the Republic of Nauru. This sentiment was echoed by the other speakers in their address. In his address, the Prime Minister of Samoa expressed the need of urgency in addressing SIDS vulnerabilities. For islands like his own, these vulnerabilities impede development efforts and countries continue to be at great risk. “This International Year comes as the United Nations leads a global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, prepare a new long-term vision for sustainable development, and elaborate a global legal climate agreement - all for 2015,” remarked Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, “Today’s launch offers great possibilities to raise further awareness and generate action over the course of this year”, he continued. The Secretary-General, affirming that climate change represents a grave threat to the survival and viability of a number of low-lying nations, added that he has brought the

call for global environmental stewardship to officials at the UN and in capitals around the world. To galvanize support for addressing climate change, the SG will convene a Climate Summit on 23 September 2014 in New York. Remarks from dignitaries were succeeded by cultural performances from the three regions. Information on activities regarding the international year will be shared via the following website;

<http://www.un.org/en/events/islands2014/index.shtml#&panel1-1>



*Performers at SIDS International Year Launch*

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Delegates at the global launch of the International Year of Small Island Developing States, held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014, at the United Nations Trusteeship Council Chambers. Photo courtesy, UN/McIwaine

## 1<sup>st</sup> PrepCom of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on SIDS

The first meeting of the preparatory committee (PrepCom) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on SIDS was held from 24<sup>th</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup> February at the UN headquarters in New York. The Bureau of the PrepCom was elected with the composition of countries as follows; Mauritius, Seychelles, Japan, Singapore (Co-chair), Romania, Ukraine, Barbados, Mexico, New Zealand (Co-chair) and Spain. The PrepCom had an exchange of views on the theme and objectives of the Conference and informal consultations on the rules of procedure and NGO accreditation. The Outcome Document of the SIDS Barbados Interregional Meeting, written inputs received by the secretariat as well as statements made at the PrepCom, will be used to develop the zero-draft, which will be circulated by the co-chairs by March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The second PrepCom will be on 23-27 June 2014, with an intersessional meeting to be held on 21-25 April 2014.



## Signing Ceremony of Host Country Agreement



Prime Minister of Samoa and Under-Secretary General of UNDESA signs Host Country Agreement. Photo Courtesy DESA

The signing ceremony of the Host Country Agreement for the Third International Conference on SIDS, by the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, H.E. Mr. Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, and Mr. Wu Hongbo, UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General and Secretary-General of the Conference, was held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

## Preparations underway in Samoa

The Samoan government provided a logistical briefing for the Conference on 25<sup>th</sup> February at the margin of the first PrepCom. The host country has launched a website that will serve as a centralised booking system for local accommodation for the Conference. Member States were encouraged to finalise accommodation by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Accreditation will be done in Samoa and will follow the UN protocol. There will be a series of pre-conference events from 28-31 August 2014, such as the Youth, NGO, Renewable Energy and Private Sector Forum. For more information on the host country preparations, logistics and other relevant information, please visit [www.sidssamoa2014.ws](http://www.sidssamoa2014.ws).



Aquatic centre, venue for accreditation for the Conference

## Launch of UNESCO SIDS Youth Network

The global Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Youth Network was officially launched at a ceremony held in New York to kick off the International Year of SIDS. The SIDS Youth Network brings together young people from over 40 SIDS member states, giving them a voice in devising sustainable development strategies for their countries as well as a forum through which they can take collective action.



The SIDS Youth Network was developed to support youth participation in the SIDS process through collaboration between UN agencies. The network's input will be essential going into the Third International Conference for SIDS, scheduled to be held in September in Apia, Samoa. For more information about SIDS Youth Network, Join the SIDS Youth Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/SIDSYouth>, follow SIDS Youth on twitter @SIDSYOUTH, and check out what other young people are doing on [www.sidsyouth.org](http://www.sidsyouth.org).