



**3rd Conference on Small Island Developing States
Multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogue on Sustainable Energy
Apia, 3 September 2014**

**Statement by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many thanks go to the organizers for hosting this Third Conference on Small Island Developing States and for hosting this Multi-stakeholder Partnership Dialogue on Sustainable Energy. I am honored to be here and excited for the great potential this dialogue holds.

This potential excites me because the transformational change to sustainable energy, energy from renewable sources that is efficiently delivered and used, means so much to so many.

Immediately, it means affordable and abundant energy produced at home for those who have historically had to import fuel at great cost. It means clean air and water that protects pristine places and public health. It means a path to meet the internationally agreed goal of limiting warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius.

It means that in the long term we hand a healthy planet, with minimum climate change and maximum development potential, to our children and grandchildren.

Every dialogue that takes us one step closer to seizing this great opportunity is good, and this dialogue is even better as it promotes partnership and cooperation that scales up and speeds up this global shift.

As this dialogue advances, I ask that you consider two lessons learned in the international process to address climate change that may make it easier for each of you to achieve your desired outcomes from this dialogue.

First, we have learned that a “you go first” mindset hinders progress and a “let me lead” attitude accelerates progress. And second, we have learned that partnering is a catalyst for getting the best results for both partners.

So in the pursuit of sustainable energy, widespread access and energy independence, it is the early adopters and those who seek strong partnerships that have the most to gain as the world moves towards clean, sustainable energy.

This is certainly true for investment and industry leaders already reaping the reward of installing renewables such as solar and wind, seeing bottom line gains from energy efficiency and profiting from partnerships that change the energy paradigm.

And it is increasingly true for governments of the world. In particular, it is true for Small Island Developing States, which have emerged as leaders willing to act first at home and forge partnerships abroad to improve results.

The examples of this are abundant. From Tokelau becoming the first state wholly run on renewables, to the Marshall Islands plan to electrify outer islands using solar and the world’s largest solar-powered hospital opening in Haiti, islands states are showing that ambition now benefits communities in cost, energy access and access to social services.

And they are not doing it alone. The Majuro Declaration from last year’s Pacific Islands Forum is an example of the political partnership that points policy towards climate neutrality and away from the danger zone. The 10 Island Renewable Challenge in the Caribbean is an example of a practical partnership that attracts investors eager to capitalize on islands’ shift from expensive diesel to solar, wind and geothermal energy.

These actions political and practical stand to make islands incubators of energy innovation, where natural resources—beaches and forests, land and sea ecosystems—are safeguarded for generations, even as island communities develop and grow.

The concurrent activation of the SIDS DOCK, the Green Climate Fund and the Climate Technology Centre and Network make this an opportune moment to put in place domestic policy and multilateral partnerships that open the door for sustainable energy.

With the Secretary General’s Climate Summit later this month, a draft new, universal climate change agreement on the table in Lima later this year and the commitment to enact that agreement in Paris in 2015, this is our opportune moment to build on the strong foundation that small islands have laid to date.

It is the moment for islands to set ambitious sustainable energy goals, to seek partners that help accomplish those goals and to bring those goals to the world stage so that the benefits of development powered by clean, sustainable energy are visible to all.

In this context, the aggregate results from this dialogue hold great potential to bring the ambition from islands to all lands the world over. It is exciting, yes, but it will only happen if you, the participants and stakeholders in today's dialogue, listen, learn and leave here today with the resolve to bring these results to the wider world.

Each of us has a role in meeting the great challenge of climate change, and this means each of us has a role in making sustainable energy a key part of the path to sustainable development – whether you are a government looking to attract investment, an investor looking for new markets or an energy consumer looking for a responsible choice.

I ask you to recognize your role, seize this opportunity and do your part to bring clean and efficient energy to every island and every country in the world. Let's do it so the islands that are here today are here to stay.

Thank you.

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