



HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN MIDDLE INCOME AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)

Praia - CABO VERDE | June 9 - 10 2015

DECLARATION

The conference was convened by the Government of Cabo Verde, in partnership with the United Nations, and brought together high level representatives from Comoros, Mauritius, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, as well as key United Nations officials, to discuss how to best work together to achieve sustainable development in the framework of the post 2015 agenda.

On SDG domestication

- The conference recognized the need to align national development plans and visions with the SDGs, and to integrate the goals into national and sub-national development plans and policy frameworks. Experiences from the MDG-based planning offer valuable lessons for the integration of SDGs into national and sub-national development planning, and for their implementation and monitoring. We recognize the critical role that citizens, parliaments, civil society and business can play in driving sustainable development and tracking progress.
- National and sub-national SDG-based development plans need to be adequately resourced, ensuring that ambition is matched by means. In translating the SDGs into national action in Cabo Verde and other African SIDS, greater investment is needed in youth and employment, fighting inequalities as well as in promoting gender equality and human development.

On monitoring SDGs

- We are proud of the development results that Cabo Verde and other African SIDS have achieved thus far, including on the MDGs, and we appreciate the universal nature of the new development agenda and its follow-up and review mechanism. We are committed to promoting equality in our societies and in developing the capacity of our institutions to collect disaggregated data to inform policy choices and monitor progress across all sections of society.
- The United Nations system is committed to providing support for the integration of the SDGs into national policies and plans, in providing advice for translating sustainable development strategies into policy frameworks, and in providing technical support for monitoring the SDGs.

On financing for development post-2015

- We acknowledge that SIDS that graduate from the “least developed country” category, such as Cabo Verde, face a very unique set of challenges, most notably linked to reduced access to a wide range of international support measures, including preferential market access, special and differential treatment under the WTO, concessional finance, and many others.
- We must think of addressing the criteria and graduation consequences for African middle income countries that can potentially become caught in the paradox of the “middle income trap” in which countries have not yet sufficiently developed to continue to progress independently while at the same time no longer qualifying for various forms of economic assistance previously available.



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- We expect that the 3rd International Conference on Financing for Development taking place this July will recognize the particular challenges faced by middle income SIDS and deliver firm commitments to strengthen global partnerships to ensure that these countries have the necessary means to implement the post-2015 development agenda.
- We also agree on the need to prioritise the EVI (economic vulnerability index) as a requirement for LDC graduation of SIDS. We expect firm and concrete commitments from development partners to scale up support in the areas of capacity development, trade, technology transfer and ODA.
- We recognize that greater effort should be made to regain control of Africa's own resources, including natural capital, as well as financial resources that leave our continent. We agree that leadership, vision, ownership, institutional capacity and the collective action of African leaders are critical to promote better frameworks for tax cooperation, to combat the illicit flight of African capital, to address corruption and to use our natural resources more sustainably, particularly ocean and marine resources, for Africa's sustainable development. We recognize that Africa's domestic resource mobilisation and enhanced tax base will be underpinned by Africa's structural transformation, economic diversification and employment for all.
- We are concerned about the high level of indebtedness of SIDS, and acknowledge that debt swaps could help to both relieve debt and invest in sustainable development, including biodiversity conservation, the sustainable use of ocean resources, and climate change adaptation. We also urge our partners to explore new debt relief initiatives, learning from the HIPC initiative.
- We acknowledge that the private sector is the engine of our economies and a key partner of government to achieve sustainable development. Providing the private sector with an enabling environment to flourish will enable it to create wealth, generate decent employment and help bring about Africa's economic transformation.
- Mindful of the particular vulnerabilities of SIDS, we need to think about financing in a longer term framework and invest in building resilience to natural disasters, as well as economic, health and other shocks and crises that threaten to roll back development gains.

On SIDS partnership

- We appreciate the work of country alliances such as the AOSIS in advocating for the special needs of the SIDS in international fora and in the context of intergovernmental processes. We also appreciate the initiative of the ACP Secretariat in establishing a SIDS forum that will advocate for the specific needs of the SIDS in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific with our European partners. It is necessary to strengthen the capacities of SIDS for implementing the already signed agendas, in particular the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action, the Mauritius strategy, and the Samoa Pathway. Building on this High Level Conference, we also acknowledge the need for the African SIDS to come together as a group, to advocate for the special needs of our countries in regional and global fora.
- We need to unleash the full potential of the many modalities of South-South cooperation in promoting development in SIDS based on equal horizontal relationships.
- We discussed the need to recognize the special status of the SIDS, both LDCs and MICs, for international support to more easily access concessional finance, trade, technology transfer, capacity development, and other areas.