



PRESS RELEASE

Major UN Treaty comes into force - small island leaders say they “will not be left behind”

UNITED NATIONS (UN) HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK CITY, 5 October 2015: The 30 September 2015 is etched in the history books of the United Nations (UN), observing the triumphant announcement of the entry into force of the SIDS DOCK Treaty, and the legal recognition of this historic intergovernmental sustainable energy and climate resilience organisation established by Heads of State and Government of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in 2009, in order to help finance climate change adaptation through the transformation of their countries to low carbon economies. Against the background of the Ceremony of the Establishment of SIDS DOCK, and uppermost in the minds of the hundreds of people who packed the 500-seat Conference Room 4, of the UN’s North Lawn Building, was the terrible devastation in the Caribbean island of the Commonwealth of Dominica, caused by Tropical Storm Erika in August 2015, which was also a historic and unprecedented hydro-metrological event for Dominica and SIDS.

The obvious absence of the Chair of the SIDS DOCK Steering Committee, H.E. Roosevelt Skerit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was noted in the opening remarks by The Honourable Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Acting Chair of the SIDS DOCK Steering Committee, as well as those of all the speakers who opened with condolences and solidarity on behalf of their governments and organisations. At its most dangerous period, Erika lashed and ripped apart the island for five (5) hours, and dumped more than 13 inches of rain in less than 12 hours, and wiped out 82 percent of Dominica’s gross domestic product (GDP). The deaths – up to 30 people killed on the island of 70,000; and destruction - infrastructure damage estimated at more half-a-billion United States (U.S.) dollars, are more signals of the projected ferocity ahead and as noted by His Excellency Peter M. Christian, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, small islands are “sitting ducks,” and events like these are a demonstration of the need for an organisation like SIDS DOCK.

Building climate resilience by transforming the SIDS energy sector has attracted a group of genuine and committed partners whose combined support contributed to the successful establishment of SIDS DOCK, now vested with full powers of a UN organisation. Denmark, credited with showing high confidence in providing the first start-up support for the SIDS DOCK organisation in 2010, followed by the governments of Japan, Austria and most recently, Sweden, along with the SIDS DOCK Institutional Partner, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the SIDS DOCK Strategic Partner the Clinton Climate Initiative (CCI), lauded the Heads of State and Government of SIDS for leading by example and expressed their full and continued support.

One of the major highlights of the ceremony included the symbolic handover of instruments of ratification to the Office of the UN Secretary-General, from the first 11 ratifying countries: The Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cook Islands, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Independent State of Samoa, Republic of the Seychelles, and Tuvalu. Another major highlight of the ceremony was the unanimous Adoption of the *Declaration of the Heads of State and Government, and High Representatives of Small Island Developing States on the work programme of the SIDS DOCK Steering Committee in preparation of the convening of the first Assembly of the SIDS DOCK*, which meant that by 2016, SIDS DOCK should be

positioned to begin providing services to its members including facilitating technology transfer and matchmaking, public-private partnerships and linking countries with the global carbon market. The SIDS DOCK USD 2.5 billion indicative project pipeline is seen as an attractive investment opportunity, especially for public-private partnerships.

The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC/5Cs) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme (SPREP) were recognised for their pioneering work in creating SIDS DOCK, in particular the CCCCC, for its leadership and supportive role as the Interim SIDS DOCK Secretariat. H.E. Mr. Vince Henderson, Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of Dominica was recognised for his outstanding contribution and exceptional leadership in representing his country, in its capacity as Chair of the Steering Committee. Statements by State Parties, Signatories, and other SIDS States were delivered by H.E. Hon. Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa; H.E. Peter M. Christian, President of the Federated States of Micronesia; H.E. Hon. Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda; H.E. Hon. Clarice Modeste, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Grenada; H.E. Hon. Francine Baron, Minister of Foreign Affairs and CARICOM Affairs, Commonwealth of Dominica; and H.E. Hon. Thoriq Ibrahim, Minister of Environment and Energy, Republic of the Maldives.

Prime Minister Gonsalves also announced the 28 September launch of the SIDS DOCK Blue Guardian Initiative, a strategic partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative, the Global Environment Facility, GRID-Arendal, the World Bank; private sector geospatial technology companies Digital Globe, Esri, Google Ocean, Geographic Planning Collaborative, along with GLISPA, and leading environmental groups such as Conservation International, the IUCN, Mission Blue and National Geographic. He said the Blue Guardian Initiative “will focus on new opportunities for developing the vast energy resources of our oceans in order to build climate resilient island economies, and represents the last best hope to save the life of the seas, and ourselves.” The partners have committed to raising USD 100 million for the initiative.

Participating in the ceremony were the UN Secretary-General’s representative, Ms. Susana Malcorra, Chef de Cabinet to the Executive Office, Senior Management Group, UN; H.E. Honourable Wilfred Peter Elrington, LLB. CLE.SC, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belize (SIDS DOCK Depositary); Dr. Kenrick Leslie, CBE, Executive Director, CCCCC/Interim SIDS DOCK Secretariat; His Excellency Martin Bille Hermann, State Secretary for Development Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark; His Excellency Peter Launsky, Director General for Development Cooperation at the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria; His Excellency Mr. Hiroshi Minami, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN; H.E. Mr. Taizo Nishikawa, Deputy Director General, UNIDO; and Ms. Dymphna van der Lans, Chief Executive Officer, CCI. Also celebrating at the event were several Heads of State and Government, members of staff from UN Missions, international development agencies, partners and friends.

The ceremony closed with a presentation of the first SIDS DOCK Island Women Open Network (IWON) Excellence In Leadership Award to Marguerite St. John-Sebastian, from Grenada, who played an instrumental role in the establishment and registration of SIDS DOCK. In her acceptance speech, she implored SIDS leaders to implement SIDS DOCK to ensure that, “we will not be the ones left behind” in reference to, ‘Leave no one behind,’ the rallying call of the post-2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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For more information:

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Photo Caption: UNITED NATIONS (UN) HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK CITY, 5 October 2015: On 30 September 2015, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Sustainable Energy and Climate Resilience Initiative - SIDS DOCK – celebrated the entry into force of the SIDS DOCK Treaty, recognising the establishment of the historic intergovernmental organisation vested with the full powers of the United Nations (UN). The Ceremony of the Establishment of SIDS DOCK was chaired by Dr. The Hon. Ralph Everard Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Acting Chair of the SIDS DOCK Steering Committee, in the absence of the Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica and Chair of the SIDS DOCK Steering Committee, who was unavoidably absent due to the destructive impacts of Tropical Storm Erika, in August 2015. From left to right: His Excellency Mr. Elliston Rahming, Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to the United Nations; Hon. Wilfred Peter Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize; Hon. Francine Baron, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica; Dr. The Hon. Ralph Everard Gonsalves; Hon. Clarise Modeste, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Grenada; Hon. Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Sailed Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa; Hon. Taukelina Finikaso, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tuvalu; and His Excellency Mr. Ronald Jean Jumeau, Ambassador with responsibility for Climate Change and SIDS Issues of the Republic of Seychelles.