



# Embassy of the United States Samoa

## SEPTEMBER 3, 2014 - U.S. ENGAGEMENT WITH PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (INCLUDES SIDS 2014 FACT SHEET)

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*U.S. EMBASSY APIA*

*For Immediate Release*

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**MEDIA NOTE**

*U.S. Engagement with Pacific Small Island Developing States*

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A Pacific nation itself, the United States not only shares the same values as its neighbors, it understands their hopes and aspirations and seeks to assist the peoples and nations of the Pacific as they strive to realize them. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Conference in Apia, Samoa marks our continuous engagement with the Pacific region and demonstrates our commitment to partnering with the Pacific SIDS to address local and global challenges, such as ocean and environmental conservation, climate change, renewable energy, sustainable development, and health. Secretary of State John Kerry's "Our Ocean"

Conference in Washington, D.C. and the Pacific Islands Forum and Post-Forum Dialogue Meetings in Koror, Palau have also strengthened our Pacific partnerships. Through a variety of programs, the United States government is increasing and better targeting its foreign assistance to jointly address these topics.

The United States Delegation to the SIDS Conference is headed by Dr. John Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, with Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Judith G. Garber as Deputy Head of Delegation.

### **Protecting the Ocean:**

The United States, in partnership with New Zealand and the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), convened an ocean acidification workshop in

Samoa prior to the SIDS conference. Marine researchers, policy makers, and ocean acidification experts from 16 countries in all SIDS regions discussed the latest scientific developments in monitoring ocean acidification, and investigated ways to build SIDS' observation capacities, including through the formation of a SIDS network on ocean acidification. The United States will bring the outcomes of this workshop to the attention of stakeholders in all SIDS regions in the coming months, including through relevant Regional Seas programs.

The workshop is one of several initiatives following U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's "Our Ocean" Conference in June this year. The Conference outlined an Action Plan of policy goals and targets to address challenges facing the world's oceans. The "Our Ocean" Action Plan seeks to end overfishing in the ocean by 2020; prevent illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing; reduce nutrient pollution and marine debris; stem the increase in ocean acidification; and develop worldwide capability to monitor ocean acidification, create more marine protected areas, and protect coastal ecosystems.

The Department of State is advancing the "Our Ocean" Action Plan through bilateral engagements with foreign governments and participating in key international meetings throughout the Pacific and worldwide. The Obama Administration plans to expand protections for ocean habitats under U.S. jurisdiction in the Pacific and to deter illegal fishing through a new national program that will address seafood fraud and prevent illegally caught fish from entering the U.S. marketplace.

The Department of State will partner with The International Diaspora Engagement Alliance (IdEA), a public-private partnership, and Fish 2.0, a sustainable seafood business competition, to leverage the power of the diaspora to support and develop Pacific island entrepreneurs in the sustainable seafood sector. Fish 2.0 is year-long business competition that will be held in 2015 that connects sustainable fishing and aquaculture businesses with potential investors.

The United States will also provide a \$55,000 grant to SPREP to support ongoing waste management in Samoa, in support of Secretary Kerry's policy priority to address marine pollution. SPREP is working with the Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to conduct waste management audits and to implement action plans. These funds and efforts are directed toward management of waste that would help prevent marine debris and discharges of wastewater into coastal waters.

### **Climate Change and Renewable Energy:**

Since the 2010 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the U.S. has announced nearly \$60 million in multiyear programs to help Pacific islands adapt to climate change.

### **These programs include:**

The Pacific American Climate Fund (PACAM), announced at the 2013 PIF, is a \$24 million USAID program focused on providing grants to civil society organizations to help

communities in twelve Pacific countries achieve sustainable, climate-resilient development at the community level and to reduce long-term vulnerabilities associated with climate change. The United States announced the first round of successful PACAM grantees this week at the SIDS Conference.

Grants to these applicants will support climate resilience projects with “co-benefits” or solutions to other development challenges, such as livelihood enhancement; improved health, food security, and water availability; ecosystem conservation; and better governance.

To support the Pacific SIDS in reducing emissions and transitioning to more sustainable sources of energy, the United States announced at the SIDS Conference a Renewable Energy Workshop for Pacific Islands with senior energy utility officials, energy regulators, and private sector energy representatives. This workshop will review the policy frameworks and technical assistance needed to increase renewable energy use throughout the Pacific islands. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) will be the implementing agency.

### **Support to the SIDS Conference:**

The U.S. Army Reserve provided a team of 25 medical personnel in support of the government of Samoa hosting the SIDS Conference. This team augmented the Samoa National Health Service (NHS) and Ministry of Health (MOH) capabilities throughout the SIDS conference. Team members were paired with local medical personnel to enable the NHS to meet the increased demand for medical services without sacrificing regular care to the national populace. Prior to the SIDS Conference, the team conducted training with Samoa Red Cross and conducted Subject Matter Expert Exchanges with local medical professionals. The U.S. Coast Guard conducted an extended port security capabilities exercise with the Samoan maritime police and ports authority in the run-up to the SIDS conference. The United States also provided an airport screening X-ray machine to the Samoa Airport Authority for both the SIDS conference and general use in the future.

### **Health:**

While most United States health assistance in the Pacific targets communicable threats such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, seventy-five percent of Pacific islanders die from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), a rate much higher than the global mortality rate of 63 percent. The United States continues to work with its partners in the Pacific to address health-related issues through a variety of development, outreach, and educational programs.

The United States is announcing two new efforts targeting NCDs. The Pacific Partnership for Non-Communicable Diseases is supported through a State Department grant to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). In partnership with other donors, this effort will advance a comprehensive and sustainable approach for prevention and control of NCDs and ensure that regional and international commitments and resources are

implemented and mobilized. We are also supporting the Regional Non-Communicable Diseases Control (RNCDC) Project to build Pacific SIDS' sustainable capacity to address NCDs with funding from the United States Pacific Command (PACOM.) The project will assist Pacific SIDS in developing and implementing the country NCD roadmaps as endorsed at the Joint Economic and Health Ministers Meeting in the Solomon Islands in July 2014.

PACOM will also support a new Regional Public Health Emergency Management (RPHEM) Project, partnering with others to assist Pacific SIDS in building sustainable capacity to prevent, mitigate, respond, and recover from public health emergencies through policy development and increased training, surveillance, and diagnostic capacity.

### **October 1, 2014 Start of New Pacific Tsunami Alert Products:**

Seventy-five percent of the world's fatal tsunamis were in the Pacific Ocean, with 99 percent of fatalities resulting from tsunamis that struck land within minutes.

Starting October 1, 2014, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Pacific Tsunami Warning Center will commence issuance of new enhanced tsunami products for Pacific countries, culminating a seven-year intergovernmental process coordinated by the UNESCO IOC through its Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System.

The center will retire its current warning and watch services, and begin issuing wave height threat forecasts to national tsunami warning centers. The U.S. International Tsunami Information Center has been working with Pacific SIDS to build their warning decision-making capacity. The new tsunami products cater to 46 countries, covering the Pacific Ocean.



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