

**Statement by Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji,  
Permanent Representative, at the United Nations Security Council Open  
Debate on “Peace and Security Challenges facing Small Island Developing  
States (SIDS)” on 30 July 2015**

**Mr. President,**

Thank you for giving me the floor and for organizing this important discussion.

India shares traditional and strong bonds of friendship and kinship with the SIDS.

With a coastline of over 7500 kms and several groups of islands located far away from the mainland, India is deeply conscious of the special challenges faced by the SIDS.

As part of South-South Cooperation, India has been privileged to share its developmental experience and expertise as well as technological resources with SIDS. Our cooperation with SIDS has emphasized human and institutional capacity building, infrastructure development, climate change adaptation, agriculture, food security etc.

In line with its time honored commitment to mutually beneficial cooperation with the SIDS, during his meeting with the leaders of the Pacific Small Island Developing States, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the launch of a Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) to enable regular dialogue and interaction between the two sides. The next meeting of the FIPIC is being hosted in India in August 2015 and will provide a further momentum to our excellent ties of cooperation and friendship with our SIDS partners.

**Mr President,**

Given their small size, remote location, vulnerability to sea-level rise, high costs for energy and transportation, not to mention small resource base and high dependence on external markets, SIDS face disproportionate challenges to their social and economic development, which in turn exacerbates challenges to their peace and security. The financial, energy and food crises of recent years have only served to accentuate these vulnerabilities.

**Mr President,**

The very useful concept note circulated by New Zealand for this debate disaggregates the topic into four broad headings. By doing so, the concept note effectively focuses on how and where these concerns can be most effectively raised and resolved. In all these areas, it is clear effective international cooperation on the concerns has been most viable outside the UN Security Council, which has enabled a democratic, inclusive and transparent approach to be formulated on each area. By allowing each member state, especially those belonging to the SIDS, to raise their specific concerns, and then agreeing on an agreed way

or platform to deal with these concerns, the UN General Assembly has played the role in these areas given to it by the UN Charter, whose 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary we celebrate this year.

We would only illustrate this assertion by specifically noting in each of the four areas how we must look beyond the Security Council in redressing the concerns outlined in the concept note. Though piracy was taken up the 15-member Security Council in Resolutions 1851 and 1918, it has been through a much wider grouping, the 60-member Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia, that the security and economic concerns related to piracy have actually been addressed. This democratic and transparent approach has given results, which would commend consideration of broadening effective international cooperation to tackle piracy in a wider context, under the framework of the General Assembly, taking into account the concerns expressed by the SIDS.

**Mr President,**

The General Assembly devoted decades of discussion and negotiation to enable the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) in 1982. This has been a major achievement of the Assembly, and UNCLOS today is the platform from which issues of concern to member states, including the SIDS, on the illicit exploitation of natural resources, including illicit fishing, is most effectively addressed. We need to provide more attention in the General Assembly on how to enable the SIDS from using the provisions of this Convention more effectively.

**Mr President,**

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment of 1972 provided the impetus for the broad-ranging consideration of climate change issues by the universal membership of the General Assembly. As the Framework Convention on this issue, the UNFCCC, is poised to conclude its current negotiations in Paris in December 2015, we advocate that the concerns of the SIDS on climate change must be reflected in the outcome document which will be adopted at Paris. The SIDS are at the frontline of the threat from climate change and sea level rise, the worst sufferers of a global problem they did not contribute to. Adaptation to climate change remains one of the highest priorities for SIDS, an imperative that must be supported through more meaningful support from the international community. Long promised financial support under UNFCCC from developed countries must reach the SIDS expeditiously. The Green Climate Fund must also prioritize disbursement of funds to SIDS for their urgent adaptation priorities.

**Mr President,**

Development, too, is an overarching issue, which has been in the General Assembly for more than four decades. We are poised at the forthcoming Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 to adopt the post-2015 Development Agenda. It is worth emphasizing the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in the

context of this debate. SDG 14 reflects the active participation of many member states, and especially the SIDS, in both identifying and addressing the concerns related to development in the area of Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources. Indeed, the unique sustainable development challenges faced by the SIDS have been long recognized by the international community. The United Nations Conferences on SIDS, the latest of which was held in Samoa in September 2014, have provided an avenue to address these challenges in a holistic and balanced manner and to ensure the continued provision of assistance to SIDS from the international community.

Therefore, my delegation would propose to the members of this Council to use this debate as a valuable input into each of the broader, more transparent processes or platforms that we have just mentioned, in order to assist the SIDS to tackle these challenges.

**Mr. President,**

Before concluding, I must thank your delegation for pointing out in the concept note that as many as 37 UN member states are Small Island Developing States. While the SIDS have participated effectively in the universal platform provided by the General Assembly to address their specific concerns, it is a pity that the restricted and undemocratic nature of the Security Council has so far prevented the SIDS from contributing their unique perspective, as developing countries, into the Council's deliberations.

This situation cannot be sustained for much longer, especially if the Council has to ensure a stable and supportive international political environment for the successful implementation of the post-2015 Development Agenda. We therefore call on you to include in your proposed non-paper a strong endorsement of the call of a majority of UN member states for urgent and early reforms of the structure of the UN Security Council, expanding the membership in both categories in order to allow the voices of developing countries to be heard, and acted upon, more regularly in the Council Chamber.

I thank you **Mr. President.**

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