

# **Lessons from Samoa for Marine Science and Management in Caribbean Small Island Developing States**

## **Lecciones de Samoa para las Ciencias Marinas y la Gestión en los Pequeños Estados Insulares en Desarrollo de las Islas del Caribe**

### **Leçons de Samoa pour les Sciences Marines et la Gestion dans les Petits États Insulaires Caribéens**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was held in Apia, Samoa, in September 2014. The topic of Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity was one of the prominent areas for multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue. The outcome document of the conference is the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. In addition to the paragraphs under the section on Oceans and Seas in the SAMOA Pathway, the discussions that took place at the conference provide lessons for marine science and management in the Caribbean. We examine some of these lessons in the context of an emerging agenda for sustainable development.

KEY WORDS: SIDS, Samoa, marine, science, lessons

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (referred to here as the SIDS Conference) took place in Apia, Samoa from 1- 4 September 2014 (UN 2014a). The roots of the SIDS conference are firmly planted in the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States that was held in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May in 1994. It is fitting and timely therefore for this annual meeting of the GCFI, held in Barbados, to have as its theme *Small islands, big issues: applying fisheries and marine science to solve problems and create opportunities*. This recognizes the history behind the SIDS Conference and that the United Nations General Assembly designated 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States.

This GCFI will focus on applying fisheries and marine science to solve problems and create opportunities in SIDS as well as larger countries. My presentation contributes to this by drawing a few key links between lessons from the SIDS Conference and emerging issues in marine science and management in the Wider Caribbean, the region of the world that contains the largest number of SIDS. To do this I first review the SIDS Conference theme and general outcomes. I probe how these may translate to improvements in SIDS, and then set out some partnership opportunities for GCFI members that lie ahead.

#### **SIDS Conference Outcomes**

The conference concerned “The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships” as reflected in the outcome document on the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (UN 2014b). There was thus a strong focus in the outcomes on partnership development with particular emphasis on:

- i) Climate change
- ii) Biodiversity
- iii) Oceans

The Caribbean registered both new and existing partnerships, the majority concerning climate change followed by biodiversity and then oceans and seas. Several Caribbean countries and the CARICOM Secretariat were in the top 50 in terms of the number of partnerships in which they appeared.

The Samoa Pathway, endorsed by a resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 14 November 2014, reaffirms several previous achievements in the global process towards sustainable development. Obtaining practical benefits for Caribbean SIDS will depend much on the national and regional leadership required to extract them from the various partnership agreements. The Samoa Pathway provides only the framework for this, but marine scientists can use it as context and leverage in formulating their research projects.

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### **Ocean Acidification**

Prominent among the emerging areas of attention and partnership at the SIDS Conference was the issue of ocean acidification (OA). The following points are noted for discussion:

- i) Some work has been accomplished in the Caribbean,
- ii) Overall, it is globally a fledgling area of marine science,
- iii) New Caribbean players are committed to OA monitoring,
- iv) Implications for fisheries and tourism are potentially significant, and
- v) Partnerships were formed particularly with USA and New Zealand.

The Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON) exemplifies the goals of OA partnership. GOA-ON is a collaborative international approach to document the status and progress of ocean acidification in open-ocean, coastal, and estuarine environments, to understand the drivers and impacts of ocean acidification on marine ecosystems, and to provide spatially and temporally resolved biogeochemical data necessary to optimize modeling for ocean acidification (<http://www.goa-on.org>). Marine scientists in Caribbean SIDS may wish to pay attention to its following new partnership opportunities with GOA-ON:

- i) Improving our understanding of global OA conditions,
- ii) Improving our understanding of ecosystem response to OA,
- iii) Acquiring and exchanging the data and knowledge necessary to optimize modeling for OA and its impacts,
- iv) Aligning with Mission Blue (<http://mission-blue.org>) – for SIDS Hotspots,
- v) Designating hotspots within EEZs, and
- vi) Linking with essential fish habitat protection.

### **CONCLUSION**

This was only the briefest of introductions to the outcomes of the SIDS Conferences and the many ways in which they may connect to marine science and management in the Wider Caribbean Region. Durable partnerships are equally critical within the Caribbean to achieve the outcomes envisaged in the Samoa Pathway.

### **LITERATURE CITED**

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