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AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 18th SESSION

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SIDS DAY

Ambassador Gary Quinlan
of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

Thank you Mr Chairman

This review comes at a critical point in the global battle against sustainable development. Between now and September we have the opportunity to renew political commitment to the vision conceived in Rio, consolidated in Doha, and reaffirmed in Mauritius. Now is the time to assess what progress has been made and what barriers remain.

Australia has a long standing and expanding commitment to partnership with the SIDS. Of course, many of our Pacific friends and neighbours are SIDS too. We are working closely with them to implement the Mauritius Strategy, and we are providing \$350,000 to support the 5 year review of the WU.

The SIDS face a range of challenges but among them, the most sustainable development goals, increasing temperatures and sea level rise are a reality, food scarcity is a reality. For the SIDS, these realities threaten their very survival. Declining fisheries, limited availability of freshwater, and high cost of food imports are just some of the decisive challenges SIDS face daily.

Many of these challenges differ from those of other developing regions. And it is essential that this is recognized and understood, and that the SIDS have a voice in determining their priorities for action.

Australia will continue to work with the SIDS to develop flexible and practical actions to meet their sustainable development goals and ensure their voice is heard in international forums.

A major threat to the SIDS is that from climate change - a threat that could be existential. In many of them, Australia understands the imperative for climate change action. We have invested \$1.5 billion in our Pacific countries in our region to adapt, and we are now starting to work with countries in the Caribbean to respond to these threats.

For Australia, building greater links between the SIDS is especially important. Through our new trade agreement with the Pacific, we will aim to build stronger linkages between the Pacific, where Australia has a long-established and major role, and the Caribbean. Of course, to do this, we need the SIDS themselves to come first, they see their sustainable future. This is their forum. Australia is here to listen, learn and support you.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.