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The Public Sector: Central to the Delivery of Sustainable Development
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"*Public sector organisations are central to the delivery of sustainable development. Every aspect of their role – from education to environmental services, and from planning to social care – shapes how people live their lives. If public sector bodies do not take on this leadership challenge, citizens may find themselves cut off from sustainable lifestyles.*"[1]

2014 is the international year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and this conference marks an important chapter as the world focuses on this special group of countries. The theme of the conference, "*The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*", emphasises one key principle that must guide any and all plans aimed at achieving sustainable development. These partnerships must be backed by sound public policy, rooted in the principles of decent work, social justice and social dialogue and must be inclusive.

The special circumstances and unique vulnerabilities of Caribbean SIDS call for a coordinated approach to achieve sustainable development and especially the post-2015 sustainable development goals. Caribbean integration – both economic and social - is a key platform on which such an approach stands. This approach must highly value the role of workers and trade unions in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating efforts to achieve sustainable development.

In a special thematic session at the United Nations on Water and Disasters in March 2013, PSI's general secretary, Rosa Pavanelli made a call for "*a more systematic inclusion of workers and trade unions in UN and national and local programmes. We stand for Decent Work, it is a prerequisite for the post-2015 agenda. We must recognise that the best way out of poverty is a decent job. Quality public services, accessible to all, are the basic building blocks of all prosperous societies.*"[2]

In Caribbean SIDS, increased vulnerability because of climate change means annual losses of millions of dollars. There is more than enough evidence to show the negative impacts on food security, public health, road and infrastructure, fisheries, tourism, livelihoods. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has recommended immediate policy and investment shifts towards renewable energy and green economic growth. Some Caribbean governments have already made these shifts. These are all linked to the priority areas for the multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues during the Samoa conference and beyond. Discussion and action on these priority areas must be people-centred and inclusive. Quality public services play a key role in the just transition to environmentally sustainable economies.

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[1] "Stepping up: a framework for public sector leadership on sustainability", Birney, Ann et al, February 2010

[2] http://www.world-psi.org/en/speech-psi-general-secretary-un-special-thematic-session-water-and-disasters

The 2012 ILC resolution concerning [sustainable development](#), decent work and green jobs included a number of key actions to be taken by constituents. In addition to the work at country level, the ILO Caribbean's Decent work team must now give *practical application* to work at the regional level – a *genuine and durable partnership* between the regional governments (CARICOM) and the regional employer and regional workers' organisations. At the same time, there must be immediate action to work with tripartite partners in the Caribbean to build their capacity in the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy and the world we want.

Public Services International (PSI) is a global trade union federation representing 20 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in over 150 countries. PSI champions human rights, advocates for social justice and promotes universal access to quality public services. PSI works with the United Nations system and in partnership with labour, civil society and other organisations.