



INTER-REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: 26-30 JANUARY 2004

The Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting for the Ten-year Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) opens today at the Radisson Cable Beach Hotel in Nassau, Bahamas, and will meet until 30 January 2004. Delegates will engage in general debate and panel discussions, and are expected to consider and approve a draft Strategy for Further Implementation of the Programme of Action and agree on elements for a draft Political Declaration. The outcomes of the inter-regional meeting will be forwarded to an international preparatory meeting to be held from 14-16 April 2004 at UN Headquarters in New York, which will then make recommendations to the International Meeting for the Ten-year Review of the Programme of Action on SIDS scheduled to take place in Mauritius from 30 August to 3 September 2004.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REVIEW AND FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS

The vulnerability of islands and coastal areas was recognized at the 44th session of the United Nations General Assembly (GA) in 1989, when the GA passed resolution 44/206 on the possible adverse effects of sea-level rise on islands and coastal areas, particularly low-lying coastal areas. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in June 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, brought the special case of such areas to international attention when it adopted Agenda 21, a programme of action for sustainable development. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 on the protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, and coastal areas included a programme area on the sustainable development of small islands. Agenda 21 also called for convening a global conference on the sustainable development of SIDS.

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS: The UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS, which was held in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 25 April to 6 May 1994, was established by GA resolution 47/189 in 1992. Some 125 States and territories participated at the conference, 46 of which were small island developing States and territories. The Conference led to the adoption of the

Barbados Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of SIDS (BPOA), a 14-point programme that identifies priority areas and indicates specific actions that are necessary to address the special challenges faced by SIDS. The priority areas requiring action include: climate change and sea level rise, natural and environmental disasters, management of wastes, coastal and marine resources, freshwater resources, land resources, energy resources, tourism resources, biodiversity resources, national institutions and administrative capacity, regional institutions and technical cooperation, transport and communication, science and technology, and human resource development. The BPOA further identified several cross-sectoral areas requiring attention: capacity building; institutional development at the national, regional and international levels; cooperation in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies; trade and economic diversification; and finance. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was given the responsibility to follow up on the implementation of the BPOA.

The Conference also adopted the Barbados Declaration, a statement of the political will underpinning the agreements contained in the BPOA.

UNGASS-19: Five years after UNCED, the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS-19) met in June 1997 and addressed SIDS issues in relation to its general theme: "Review and Appraise the Implementation of Agenda 21." In that context, the Special Session requested that the CSD at its sixth session in 1998 undertake a review of all the outstanding chapters and issues of the BPOA. It was also decided that a two-day Special Session of the GA would be held in 1999 immediately preceding its 54th session to conduct a full review of the implementation of the BPOA. The CSD was requested to serve as a preparatory committee for that Special Session.

UNGASS-22: Five years following the Barbados Conference, the 22nd Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS-22) met in September 1999 and undertook a comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the BPOA. UNGASS-22 adopted the "State of Progress and Initiatives for the Future Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS," which identified the following six sectoral areas in need of urgent attention: climate change, natural and environmental disasters and climate variability, freshwater resources, coastal and marine resources, energy, and tourism. In addition to these areas, the review document further recommended the following means of implementation: sustainable development strategies, capacity building, resource mobilization

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and finance, globalization and trade liberalization, transfer of environmentally sound technology, vulnerability index, information management, and international cooperation and partnership. UNGASS-22 also adopted a Declaration in which member States, *inter alia*, reaffirmed the principles of and their commitments to sustainable development embodied in Agenda 21, the Barbados Declaration and the BPOA.

MILLENNIUM SUMMIT: In 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit at the UN Headquarters in New York, world leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration (A/Res/55/2) and in doing so, resolved to address the special needs of SIDS by implementing the BPOA and the outcome of UNGASS-22 rapidly and fully.

WSSD: The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) convened from 26 August to 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Summit negotiated and adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), which is an 11-chapter framework for action to implement the commitments agreed at UNCED, and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. The WSSD reaffirmed the special case of SIDS, and dedicated a chapter of the JPOI to the sustainable development of SIDS, which identified a set of priority actions, called for a full and comprehensive review of the BPOA in 2004, and requested the GA at its 57th session to consider convening an international meeting for the sustainable development of SIDS.

Non-negotiated partnerships/initiatives for sustainable development, also known as Type II outcomes, proved to be an important outcome of the WSSD. Over 300 such partnerships have been launched, 18 of which focus on SIDS.

UNGA-57: In December 2002, the 57th session of the GA adopted resolution 57/262, which decides to convene an international meeting in 2004 to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the BPOA, and welcomed the offer of the Government of Mauritius to host the meeting. The GA also decided that the review should seek a renewed political commitment by all countries to, and focus on, practical and pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the BPOA, including through the mobilization of resources and assistance for SIDS. The resolution further decided to convene regional preparatory meetings, as well as an inter-regional preparatory meeting in order to undertake the review of the BPOA at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. The resolution also requested strengthening of the SIDS Unit within the UN Division for Sustainable Development to enable it to assist in preparations for the review process.

CSD-11: During the 11th session of the CSD, which convened from 28 April to 9 May 2003, the Commission took a decision on SIDS and agreed to hold a three-day preparatory meeting during CSD-12. The decision further invites the international donor and development communities, and international organizations to provide information on their activities in support of implementation of the BPOA, and specifies the dates and venues of the regional and inter-regional preparatory meetings. The decision also requests the UN Secretary-General to work within existing resources, and to use budgetary savings and voluntary contributions, as necessary, for the preparatory process.

REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS: From August to October 2003, three regional preparatory meetings were held for: Pacific SIDS (4-8 August, Apia, Samoa); Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) SIDS (1-5 September, Praia, Cape Verde); and Caribbean SIDS (6-10 October, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago). Each of these meetings sought to prepare a regional position for the International Meeting, and high-

lighted the achievements, key issues, challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the BPOA in each region. The meetings reaffirmed the validity of the BPOA as a guideline for the sustainable development of SIDS, and recognized the need to streamline the implementation and reporting of the BPOA with the relevant outcomes of the Millennium Summit and the WSSD. The meetings held in-depth discussions on SIDS vulnerability and raised issues such as climate change, trade dependence, small-scale economies, lack of freshwater resources, biodiversity, energy dependence, waste management, limited institutional capacity, and access to technologies. The potential for development of renewable energy, ecotourism and partnerships were noted as opportunities for all regions. The meetings also underscored the importance of civil society participation in the SIDS review process and identified new and emerging issues, such as security, health, trade and poverty. Each region is expected to finalize and present its Regional Synthesis Report during the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting.

EXPERT MEETINGS: In preparation for the International Meeting, a series of expert meetings were convened in 2003, in conjunction with the UN Development Programme, which addressed: capacity building for renewable energy and energy efficiency (Niue, 7-11 July); vulnerability of SIDS and enhancing resilience: the role of the private sector, civil society and trade in the sustainable development of SIDS (Dominica, 29 September to 3 October); and waste management (Cuba, 27 October to 1 November).

UNGA-58: In December 2003, the 58th session of the GA in resolution 58/213 decided that the International Meeting would be convened from 30 August to 3 September 2004, and include a high-level segment to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the BPOA. The resolution also decided to hold, if deemed necessary by an open-ended preparatory meeting and funded from voluntary resources, two days of informal consultations in Mauritius, on 28 and 29 August 2004, to facilitate the effective preparation for the International Meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING: On 9 December 2003, UN Under-Secretary-General Anwarul Chowdhury was appointed the Secretary-General of the International Meeting. Chowdhury is also the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and SIDS.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

OPENING CEREMONY: The opening of the meeting will take place from 9:30–10:30 am in Salon C. Participants will hear a welcome address by Minister Marcus Bethel (Bahamas), opening statements by Secretary-General of the International Meeting Anwarul Chowdhury, Under-Secretary-General of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Jose-Antonio Ocampo, Minister Rajesh Bhagwan (Mauritius), Minister Julian Hunte (Saint Lucia), and a keynote address by Prime Minister Perry Christie (Bahamas).

PLENARY: Participants will convene in Plenary from 11:00 am to noon to elect the Chair and the Bureau, and hear statements by Ministers and Heads of Delegations.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS: A panel discussion on “New challenges and emerging issues: integrating human and social development imperatives” will take place at 1:00 pm, and a panel on “Implementing National Sustainable Development Strategies” will convene at 4:00 pm. Both panels will be followed by discussions on recommendations for the further implementation of the BPOA.

DRAFTING GROUP: A drafting group will be elected to begin work on finalizing the preparation of the draft SIDS Strategy for Further Implementation of the BPOA.