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## GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: YEAR-END UPDATE

Even though the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States has come and gone, important work remains to be done in implementing the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference on 6 May 1994. In this regard, the 49th United Nations General Assembly reviewed the outcome of the Conference and adopted a resolution that addresses a number of issues, including the establishment of an office within the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development to support the system-wide implementation of the Programme of Action. The General Assembly also gave initial consideration to the UNDP feasibility studies for SIDS/NET and SIDS/TAP.

This special year-end issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* will review relevant activities that have taken place since the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which took place from 25 April - 6 May 1994, summarize the results of the General Assembly's consideration of the Conference, and highlight upcoming events. This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is published as part of a series of year-end issues intended to summarize the current state of play in the various sustainable development conferences and negotiations reported on by the *Bulletin* in 1994.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONFERENCE

The United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States has its roots in Chapter 17 of Agenda 21. UN General Assembly resolution 47/189, which established the Conference, set the following objectives: review current trends in the socio-economic development of small island developing States (SIDS); examine the nature and magnitude of the specific vulnerabilities of SIDS; define a number of specific actions and policies relating to environmental and development planning to be undertaken by these States, with help from the international community; identify elements that these States need to include in medium- and long-term sustainable development plans; recommend measures for enhancing the endogenous capacity of these States; and review whether institutional arrangements at the international level enable these States to give effect to the relevant provisions of Agenda 21.

The Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Conference held its organizational session in New York on 15-16 April 1993.

Penelope Wensley, Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and Ambassador for the Environment, was elected Chair of the PrepCom. The Committee also elected four Vice-Chairs: Takao Shibata (Japan), Ioan Barac (Romania), John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) and José Luis Jesus (Cape Verde). Barbados, as host country, was an *ex officio* member of the Bureau. The PrepCom adopted guidelines suggesting that its consideration of SIDS should include actions at the micro level aimed at environment and development planning, measures for enhancing local skills and expertise, and sustainable development planning.

## FIRST MEETING OF THE PREPCOM

The first session of the PrepCom was held in New York from 30 August - 10 September 1993. By the conclusion of the two-week session, the PrepCom had set the process in motion for the adoption of a programme of action for the sustainable development of SIDS. While delegates were able to reach agreement on the majority of the 15 chapters in the Programme of Action, the Preamble and the chapter on implementation, monitoring and review remained entirely in brackets. As a result, delegates called for an additional session of the PrepCom to be convened.

## RESUMED SESSION OF THE PREPCOM

The PrepCom met in a resumed session from 7-11 March 1994, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates spent most of the week in informal sessions where they painstakingly negotiated the remaining bracketed text in the Programme of Action. For the most part, delegates based their comments on a comprehensive informal paper prepared by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), "Suggested Amendments to the Draft Action Programme for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States." This document contained the AOSIS/G-77 amendments and other comments and facilitated the work of the Committee. While delegates spent the most time on Chapter XV, "Implementation, Monitoring and Review," and the Preamble, they also removed some of the brackets in the other 14 chapters, and commented on the Barbados Declaration.

At the conclusion of the resumed PrepCom, most of the bracketed text remained in the Preamble and Chapter XV. Sections of the Preamble that remained in brackets included: human beings as the center of concern for sustainable development; reference to environmental destruction caused by external interventions; despite population density, the small population size of SIDS inhibits them from generating economies of scale; the vulnerability of the economic performance of SIDS; women's critical contributions to sustainable development; the special situation and needs of the

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least developed countries; and references to the primary responsibility of national governments for implementing the Programme of Action.

In Chapter XV, issues that remained to be resolved included: reference to the international community's commitment to meeting Agenda 21 agreements on implementation; the role of the public in decision-making; reordering of economic priorities in the use of resources and increased use of economic instruments; the role of the private sector and the rights of resources owners and intellectual property rights; increasing public awareness and information dissemination; sharing financing responsibilities for sustainable development in SIDS; the role of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in monitoring implementation of the Programme of Action; and other institutional follow-up to the Conference.

### **THE BARBADOS CONFERENCE**

The Global Conference for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States met in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 25 April - 6 May 1994. During the course of the Conference, delegates reached agreement on the Programme of Action that sets out a series of recommended actions for the sustainable development of SIDS at the national, regional and international levels. Delegates also negotiated and adopted the Barbados Declaration, which was supposed to give the Programme of Action its political impetus. In addition, they listened as more than 40 Heads of State and Government, ministers and other high-level government officials participated in the High-Level Segment and roundtable discussion during the final days of the Conference. By the time the final session was gavelled to a close, this first post-Rio global Conference had succeeded in charting a new course for a group of countries whose needs have often been ignored by the international community.

Most of the substantive negotiations took place in the Main Committee, which was chaired by Amb. Penelope Wensley (Australia). The Main Committee's task was to finish what the PrepCom had begun and, thus, focused its work on reaching agreement on the draft Programme of Action. The Programme of Action includes a preamble and 15 chapters on: 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; human resource development; and implementation, monitoring and review.

The Programme of Action is significant in that SIDS are dealt with holistically and not, as has been traditionally the case, just "coral reefs and beaches." Unlike Chapter 17 of Agenda 21, which calls for national and international actions, this policy blueprint specifies measures to be taken at the national, regional and international levels. As such, it reflects accurately on the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities. Whereas no major new and additional financial resources are identified in the Programme of Action, there are specific recommendations on efficiency and re-prioritization of existing resources. This was reinforced in the statements of many of the donor countries during the High-Level Segment who signaled that SIDS should now receive greater proportions of existing aid.

The second document emanating from the Conference was the Declaration of Barbados, which was intended as a statement of the political will that underpins the precise agreements contained in the Programme of Action. The Declaration reaffirms the UNCED agreements, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Statement of Forest Principles, Agenda 21, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on

Biological Diversity. Casting itself in the spirit of those agreements, the Declaration contains two parts. In the first, the participants at the Conference affirm the importance of: human resources and cultural heritage; gender equity; the role of women and other major groups, including children, youth and indigenous people; the sovereign right of SIDS over their own natural resources; vulnerability to natural and environmental disasters; climate change and sea level rise; limited freshwater resources; special situation and needs of the least developed SIDS; economic vulnerability; capacity building; constraints to sustainable development; and partnership between Governments, IGOs, NGOs and other major groups in implementing Agenda 21 and this Programme of Action. In the second part, the participants declare the importance of national, regional and international implementation, including the reduction and elimination of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and the provision of effective means for the implementation of the Programme of Action, including adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources.

### **INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **UN SYSTEM ACTIVITIES**

The organizations and agencies of the UN system are already involved in implementing several aspects of the Programme of Action or are in the process of developing plans and programmes to do so. These activities have been outlined comprehensively in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly, "Action taken by the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (A/49/425). There are several substantive areas of the Programme of Action where the UN organizations do not appear to make specific contributions. These are the areas of transport and communications, tourism, and energy resources. Additional effort will need to be made by relevant organizations to formulate and undertake activities in these substantive areas if the aims and objectives of these parts of the Programme of Action are to be achieved.

A number of agencies, including FAO, UNCTAD, UNEP, Habitat, UNDP and the WMO, have established focal points and other mechanisms to ensure better coordination in the implementation of the Programme of Action. In addition to reviewing existing initiatives to ensure that they have an island component, there are several new initiatives. UNDP has proposed to implement two Capacity 21 projects in the Pacific and Caribbean regions aimed at promoting capacity building in both the governmental and non-governmental sectors. UNCTAD recently completed a paper that sets out a framework for action for island States to deal with the unique trade problems they confront. UNEP and Habitat have also jointly developed a number of new initiatives to support the Programme of Action, including case studies on the vulnerability of small island developing States to the effects and socio-economic implications of climate change and sealevel rise; technical assistance on waste management; and the establishment of national and sub-regional Geographical Information Systems.

#### **UNDP'S FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR SIDS/NET**

The Barbados Programme of Action requested UNDP to undertake a study of the feasibility of developing SIDS/NET, an information-sharing network for SIDS. The results of this feasibility study were submitted to the General Assembly in document A/49/414.

SIDS/NET proposes linking SIDS using computer mediated communications technologies now in use around the world. UNDP recommends using a phased approach for implementing a flexible

solution to give SIDS full access to global computer networking as a tool to help them integrate within the world economy. SIDS/NET is based on catalytic donor funding, on cost sharing and cost recovery. It depends on user participation as a principle of implementation and as a principle of operation. SIDS/NET, which will rely heavily on entrepreneurship, will require capacity building to enhance the ability of SIDS to benefit from these computer communication technologies that will help overcome their relative isolation. The estimated cost for SIDS/NET is US\$30.9 million.

UNDP recommended that: the SIDS/NET programme should begin as soon as possible and no later than 1 July 1995; SIDS should take the initial steps to approach the donor community as soon as possible; SIDS should begin a programme to increase understanding and awareness of SIDS/NET; and feasibility studies need to be undertaken in SIDS to determine a solution specific to their local needs and circumstances.

### **UNDP'S FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR SIDS/TAP**

The Programme of Action also requested UNDP to prepare a feasibility study on a technical assistance programme for SIDS in order to promote inter- and intraregional cooperation. The feasibility study is contained in document A/49/459. UNDP held extensive consultations with SIDS, relevant subregional institutions, DPCSD and within UNDP to develop the content and orientation of SIDS/TAP. In essence, SIDS/TAP is seen as providing the framework for technical cooperation among the SIDS and as a mechanism for operationalizing the Programme of Action.

It was agreed that SIDS/TAP: should be managed by the SIDS themselves; should not duplicate existing technical assistance programmes but should build upon such programmes; and should not result in the creation of new institutions. The amount required to assist the SIDS in setting up SIDS/TAP is US\$915,000 for its main activities: identification and designation of national/subregional focal points; convening of a SIDS/TAP national focal points meeting; completion of a directory of institutions and experts/scholars; determination of specific technical cooperation requirements to implement the Programme of Action; assessment of the capacities of SIDS; assessment of the management and reporting arrangements for the SIDS/TAP Fund; and monitoring and evaluation. The cost of implementing the SIDS/TAP substantive activities is US\$5.6 million.

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS**

On Monday, 7 November 1994, the General Assembly began its consideration of Agenda Item 89(e), the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The General Assembly had before it the following documents: the report of the Conference (document A/CONF.167/9); the report of the Secretary-General on action taken to implement the programme of action (A/49/425 and Add.1); and studies by UNDP on the feasibility of developing SIDS/TAP, a technical assistance programme for SIDS to promote inter- and intra-regional cooperation for sustainable development (A/49/459), and on the feasibility of developing SIDS/NET, an information network for SIDS (A/49/414). The following are the highlights of this debate.

**ALGERIA:** On behalf of the G-77 and China, Amb. Ramtane Lamamra said that the SIDS Conference represents an important follow-up to UNCED. While it is clear that the specific implementation of the Programme of Action is the primary responsibility of SIDS, the efforts of these countries alone are insignificant without support from the international community, including the UN system. It is essential to establish within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) a qualified and competent entity that could provide secretariat services to intergovernmental and inter-agency coordination in implementation of the Programme of Action.

**GERMANY:** On behalf of the EU and Austria, Gerhard Walter Henze said that the EU hopes that the Programme of Action will assist SIDS on the path to sustainable development by enhancing their international competitiveness and reducing their economic instability and ecological fragility. The role of the private sector and NGOs in the implementation of the Programme of Action is important. Substantial financial and technical support is being provided by the EU and its member States. 620 million ECUs (US\$775 million) are being channeled through the Lomé Convention. He called for a lasting commitment on the part of all parties involved, improved regional cooperation and donor coordination to ensure effective implementation.

**BARBADOS:** Richard Cheltenham, Minister of Tourism, International Transport and the Environment, on behalf of the Caribbean Community, said that the Barbados Conference was significant because it was the first follow-up process to the Rio Summit and because it marked the first time that a full-fledged UN Conference has been held in so small a member State. He urged the international community to give its full endorsement to the Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration. It is vital that the UN Secretariat, through the DPCSD, be equipped to fulfill the monitoring and coordination mandate assigned to it in the Programme of Action. A complementary response capacity within the relevant operational organizations and programmes of the UN system must also be established. He also highlighted the role of the CSD for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Programme of Action, and the importance of inter-agency collaboration. He welcomed the reports submitted by UNDP on SIDS/NET and SIDS/TAP.

**ICELAND:** Amb. Gunnar Pálsson, on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the main accomplishment of the Conference was the adoption of the Programme of Action. It is both ambitious and comprehensive and focuses on practical steps at the national, regional and international levels to address crucial environmental and development concerns of SIDS. It identifies realistic means and measures for increasing the capacity of SIDS to cope effectively with their environment and development problems.

**INDIA:** M.P. Chandraseet Yadav said that India has set up an Island Development Authority to formulate policies and programmes for ecologically sound, suitable and integrated development of the relatively remote islands in India that sustain small communities. The creation of jobs for ecological restoration is a marginal investment with significant returns. Decentralization and involvement of local communities is an effective way of managing the process. The international community must determine how it can help reduce the vulnerabilities of SIDS to natural and economic uncertainties. The challenge is to integrate SIDS into the global economic system, while ensuring self-sustaining development.

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO:** On behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Amb. Annette des Iles said that the implementation of the Programme of Action must be pursued at three levels. At the national level, the collective efforts of governments and all groups in society, including women, youth and NGOs, must be harnessed. At the regional level, cooperation is needed within and between regions. However, actions taken by small islands will not guarantee the attainment of the objectives of sustainable development without assistance from the international community. With the full implementation of SIDS/TAP, each State will be able to devise strategies to address common problems. SIDS/NET could create a concrete and practical information sharing programme. These two programmes should be implemented before the 50th anniversary of the UN. She also called for the UN regional commissions to concretize their support to SIDS. Within the DPCSD, a clearly identifiable, qualified entity

should be put in place to provide secretariat support for activities emanating from the implementation of the Programme of Action.

**CHINA:** Amb. Wang Xuexian said that both the Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration called on the international community, especially the developed countries and the relevant international agencies, to provide necessary financial resources and technologies. Many of the problems that SIDS have to face in their economic development and environmental protection are not of their own making, nor can they be solved by these countries alone. Consequently, the international community should attach importance to this issue. The developed countries have a great responsibility in this respect.

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA:** The representative highlighted the role of the unique ecosystems of SIDS as both a source of income generation and a safeguard of biological diversity. The two major threats to the sustainable development of SIDS are internal development activities and the environmentally unsound activities of the external world. He added that the development of human resources should be given the highest priority since the long-term sustainable development of SIDS depends ultimately on the islands' inhabitants themselves.

**AUSTRALIA:** On behalf of the South Pacific Forum member States, Amb. Richard Butler said that the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action requires a partnership between governmental and non-governmental organizations and international and national communities. The island countries of the South Pacific have put into effect the commitments undertaken in the Programme of Action, including national environmental legislation and environmental management strategies. A regional mechanism to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the Programme of Action has now been established with the convening of an advisory committee of high officials, in conjunction with SPREP and ESCAP.

**NEW ZEALAND:** Amb. Colin Keating said the Barbados Conference was widely viewed as a test of post-UNCED acceptance of global responsibility. The successful adoption of the Programme of Action represents an enormous achievement, but the international community must ensure that the effort put into Barbados is carried forward. Although the primary responsibility for implementation of the Programme of Action rests with SIDS themselves, they need regional and international support to make it happen. Development assistance should be managed in partnership with recipient governments. Strong regional cooperation and robust regional institutions are essential. He called on the UN system to give higher priority to developing implementation strategies for the Programme of Action.

**CANADA:** Amb. Louise Fréchette welcomed the successful conclusion of the Barbados Conference and said that it is a model for operationalizing Agenda 21 and adapting it to a particular set of circumstances. SIDS face a unique environmental and development situation and the Programme of Action and the Declaration provide road maps for securing their future. To get there, however, the international community will need to follow through and carry out the actions envisaged, and Canada is ready to continue its assistance aimed at environmental management and protection, and to help build capacity in enhancing economic cooperation.

**SAMOA:** Amb. Tuiloma Neroni Slade said that the Programme of Action is a blueprint for a global effort and incorporates a realistic and practical tripartite approach of national, regional and international actions. Effective implementation will be the true test of commitment and he warned against the severe blow to the post-Rio optimism that he feared would be induced by the absence of concrete commitments from the international community. While SIDS have been encouraged to explore "existing financial resources," they do not know what "existing financial resources" are there, how they should tap into them, and how the UN should

address the question of development resources management and effective programme delivery and implementation.

**PHILIPPINES:** The representative noted that the Philippines contains over 7,100 small islands and understands the concerns of SIDS. The SIDS Conference was the first test of the commitments made in Rio. He noted the vulnerabilities of SIDS to the international economic climate, natural disasters and tourism. He stressed the need to establish vulnerability indices. Important follow-up issues include the provision of financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technology.

**FIJI:** Graham E. Leung said that there is a real sense that when all the rhetoric is analyzed, little new financial assistance is available for the SIDS. The sincerity towards fulfilling the commitments of the Earth Summit are now being called into question. While Fiji welcomes the acknowledgment of the unique characteristics of SIDS, recognition itself will not solve all the problems. The Barbados Conference did have valuable and constructive outcomes, such as UNDP's preparation of the feasibility studies for SIDS/TAP and SIDS/NET. The Declaration and Programme of Action are also significant achievements that can serve as a blueprint for SIDS to realize the goals of sustainable development.

**SINGAPORE:** Amb. Chew Tai Soo highlighted the special vulnerability factors confronting SIDS, which illustrate the special problems faced in the pursuit of economic and social development. It is crucial for the international community to implement the Programme of Action since the problems of developed countries pale in comparison to those of developing countries. He emphasized the importance of the speedy establishment of an entity within the DPCSD and to ensure that sufficient resources are made available for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA:** Amb. Lionel Hurst addressed the formulation of a range of indicators of economic and ecological vulnerability that are needed to measure sustainable development in a way that the "crude" GNP per capita device cannot. This device does not reflect the dis-economy of scale caused by the small size of SIDS. The emerging Vulnerability Index is not intended for use as a yardstick of poverty or wealth, rather it will be a measurement device for the lack of economic resilience arising from the relative inability of a country to shelter itself from forces outside its control.

**MARSHALL ISLANDS:** Amb. Laurence N. Edwards expressed his disappointment at the low level of turn-out from the developed countries in Barbados, since this was, after all, supposed to be a Conference on, and not of, SIDS. The goals of the Programme of Action cannot be implemented without the assistance of the international community and the funding aspects are an entirely inadequate section of the Programme. He urged the developed countries to extend some of their ODA to SIDS and supported the call by the G-77 to ensure that the target of 0.7% of GNP for ODA is achieved. He commended the work carried out by the UNDP on SIDS/NET and SIDS/TAP and called for the creation of an appropriate entity within the DPCSD.

**FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA:** The representative said that a lot of effort had been put in the negotiation of the Programme of Action, but its implementation will be a tremendous task and will require the assistance of the international community, particularly the developed States. Many of the mechanisms for UNCED implementation are in place and the DPCSD should be home to the focal point for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The work of the CSD should effectively integrate the outcomes of the Conference.

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA:** The representative said that the Conference represents a milestone for the promises of Rio, but that the survival of SIDS depends on the cooperation of the international community. He welcomed the work of UNDP on SIDS/NET and SIDS/TAP, as well as the joint effort of UNDP, the

UN Commission on Human Settlements and the World Bank on urban settlements. Papua New Guinea is strongly involved in the preparations of a regional convention on the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and other efforts relating to inter-island transportation. He said he looked forward to the report of the CSD and encouraged UN agencies to give greater consideration to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

**JAPAN:** Amb. Shunji Maruyama said that the Barbados Programme of Action and Declaration are landmarks on the road from Rio and provide fresh impetus to the work of the international community on the sustainable development of SIDS. Now it is time for implementation. The Programme of Action emphasizes the importance of human resources development and the need to enhance institutional and administrative capacity. This is an orientation that is in accord with Japanese development assistance policy. He thanked the Secretary-General and UNDP for their reports. It is vital to conduct a continuing review of plans and programmes. Japan also supports SIDS/NET and SIDS/TAP as a means of achieving South-South cooperation.

**MALTA:** Walter Balzan said that the SIDS Conference was the first concrete step in the implementation of the results of Rio. Investment in the human resources of SIDS has consistently yielded high dividends. Malta welcomes the inclusion in the Programme of Action of its proposal to set up a vulnerability index. Barbados does not mark the end of an exercise. It signals the commencement of an on-going process that monitors and ensures that the results obtained are consolidated and enhanced.

**GUYANA:** Neil Pierre said that UNCED was unequivocal in its emphasis on the unique nature and vulnerability of small island States and those of low-lying coastal regions. The task is now to pursue, with vigor and enthusiasm, the full and urgent implementation of the agreements and decisions of the Conference. But important as they are, these agreements will amount to very little unless appropriate mechanisms are established for effective monitoring and implementation on a system-wide basis. This responsibility should be appropriately located within the DPCSD, as provided for in the Programme of Action.

**BAHAMAS:** Amb. Harcourt Turnquest said that the Programme of Action represents a blueprint for a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable development, but that its successful implementation will need the full support of the DPCSD. In this regard, the necessary resources must be provided to the Secretariat so that it may fulfill the functions outlined in paragraph 123 of the Programme of Action. He welcomed the quick response of UNDP on SIDS/NET and SIDS/TAP, but he highlighted the fact that SIDS themselves should be the primary generators of information for the network. He was particularly pleased with the manner in which the feasibility studies were prepared, in association with the members of AOSIS themselves.

**CYPRUS:** Amb. Alecos Shambos said that the Conference can be characterized as a success, however, recognition and awareness alone do not suffice to cure the acute problems faced by SIDS. Degradation of the environment, vulnerabilities to climate change and sea-level rise, and threats to unique ecosystems emerge as issues of great concern. Their mostly single product markets, small size and remoteness, small scale economies, lack of adequate endogenous capacity, and exposure to pollution and natural disasters further aggravate the overall challenges confronting SIDS. He urged the international community to work jointly to fulfill its obligations to present and future generations.

**BRAZIL:** Amb. Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg said that the characteristics of SIDS have made the international community recognize their significance to our planet. He noted that the international community is apparently still unwilling to meet the financial obligations of both Rio and Bridgetown. Less than 10% of the funding for environment-related programmes and projects

agreed at UNCED have been honored. He welcomed the UNDP feasibility studies and expressed confidence that similar studies will be prepared so that effective action can be taken to implement the Barbados Programme of Action. Given appropriate assistance from the international community, SIDS can and will implement relevant plans and programmes to support their development.

**VENEZUELA:** The representative highlighted the need for more funding for the implementation of the Programme of Action. He added that Venezuela is committed to the Barbados Declaration and considers itself bound by the Programme of Action. Human resources are the greatest assets of SIDS.

**MALAYSIA:** Amb. Razali Ismail said that it was urgent to address the issue of the survival of SIDS. The Programme of Action provides a blueprint for their sustainable development and while all the countries need to make the transition to sustainable development, the bulk of the burden of change should not be placed on the developing countries, including SIDS. Developed countries already possess and enjoy competitive advantages, compared with the severe handicaps of SIDS. The security of small States has been discussed in other fora and the economic, ecological and security challenges confronting SIDS must be effectively addressed to ensure their continued well-being.

**UNITED STATES:** Herman Gallegos said the Barbados Conference established an agenda to which the US is committed. The US is working to ensure the participation of developed and developing countries, international and non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector in this effort. It is the private sector that will ultimately determine the failure or success of a policy. In addition to its coral reef initiative, the US will follow up the Conference through bilateral programmes and multilateral assistance agencies, and ensure that the CSD undertakes the important reviews that will be necessary to monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action.

**PAKISTAN:** The representative said that although Pakistan is not a small island, it shares many of the problems confronting SIDS. Pakistan is convinced that the implementation of the recommendations of the Barbados Conference will go a long way towards achieving sustainable development objectives. Since Rio, however, environmental degradation has continued unabated. Pakistan is committed to making sustainable development a reality. The developed countries have an important role to play in the implementation of the Programme of Action and in assisting SIDS.

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION:** The representative said that the Programme of Action has a practical significance for preserving the ecosystems and stimulating the economies of SIDS. He also highlighted the importance of developing the human resources potential. He said his country was ready to establish cooperation with the small island States. He hoped that the Programme of Action will be accompanied by the necessary political will for effective implementation.

**GRENADA:** The representative said that the adoption of a Programme of Action is not a guarantee of success, but that political will and funding will be determinant factors. The global interdependence manifested at Rio gave reason for hope, but failure of the process could lead to a void that would be detrimental to SIDS. A new and special partnership is needed. SIDS have been made to understand that many developed countries now suffer from donor fatigue and they realize that too much reliance on aid would be detrimental.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION

A draft resolution on the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/C.2/49/L.37) was first tabled by Algeria, on behalf of the G-77 and China, on 22 November 1994. After additional consultations, a revised version of the draft (A/C.2/49/L.37/Rev.1) was tabled on 1 December

1994, with the additional co-sponsorship of: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The Second Committee took action on L.37/Rev.1 on Friday, 9 December 1994. A number of countries questioned the programme budget implications (PBI) of the resolution, as contained in document A/C.2/49/L.60. Algeria, on behalf of the G-77, said that the posts requested to carry out the responsibilities of the SIDS unit within the DPCSD (two professional-level positions (one P-5 and one P-4) and one general service position) are not on a par with the importance of the tasks to be allocated. He proposed that a director-level position (D-1) be called for to fulfill the functions of the post. Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of AOSIS, echoed this concern. Germany, on behalf of the EU, said that adoption of this resolution will be a step forward in the implementation of the Programme of Action, however, all activities must be cost-effective. The PBI should be reconsidered because it is not sufficiently cost-effective. The Chair noted that this matter would be taken up by the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, which is responsible for budgetary matters.

Before the resolution was adopted, the US commented that with implementation of the Conference barely underway, it is premature to discuss another follow-up Conference. As a result, the US cannot co-sponsor this resolution. Nevertheless, the US will continue to pursue its coral reef initiative and other efforts aimed at implementing the Programme of Action. After the Committee adopted the resolution, Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of AOSIS, thanked delegates for adopting this resolution by consensus and reiterated AOSIS's commitment to implementing the Programme of Action. He called for continued support from the international community. The resolution and the PBI are expected to be adopted by the Plenary of the General Assembly after the Fifth Committee approves the PBI. Although the PBI may be amended, the resolution (L.37/Rev.1) should not change.

The operative section of the resolution notes the report of the Conference and the summary of the high-level segment and endorses the Declaration of Barbados and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The resolution calls upon Governments, as well as the UN system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to implement all commitments reached and recommendations made at the Conference and to take the necessary action to give effective follow-up to the Programme of Action, including ensuring the necessary means of implementation.

With regard to the activities of the UN system, the resolution:

- welcomes the progress made by the FAO, UNCTAD, UNEP, the UN Centre for Human Settlements, UNDP and the WMO in identifying focal points and other similar mechanisms to coordinate the action they are taking to implement the Programme of Action;
- invites UNDP to continue to carry out its mandate as the lead agency in organizing the efforts of the UN system towards capacity-building at the local, national and regional levels;
- invites UNDP to initiate the implementation of the technical assistance programme (SIDS/TAP) by preparing a directory and to undertake further consultation with SIDS and other interested parties to determine the most effective means of implementation of SIDS/TAP; and
- invites UNDP to coordinate further inter- and intraregional consultations between technical experts of SIDS and other interested States, agencies and organizations to further elaborate the information network (SIDS/NET) and determine the most effective means of implementing it, taking into account SIDS/TAP and the Programme of Action.

The resolution also calls on the Commission on Sustainable Development to:

- make arrangements for monitoring and reviewing, in a distinct and identifiable manner, and in the context of its multi-year thematic programme of work, the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action;
- carry out in 1996 an initial review of the progress achieved and steps taken to implement the Programme of Action; and
- recommend, in the context of the overall review of Agenda 21 in 1997, specific modalities for a full review of the Programme of Action in 1999, including the question of convening a second global conference.

The resolution also requests the Secretary-General to enable relevant regional commissions and UNCTAD to support activities to coordinate the implementation of the Conference outcomes. The Secretary-General is also asked to ensure the wide and effective dissemination of the Programme of Action.

Finally, the resolution requests the Secretary-General to establish within the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development a "clearly identifiable, qualified and competent entity with the resources and number of professionals and support staff that are necessary to undertake its broad range of functions in support of the system-wide implementation of the Programme of Action, relying on the most efficient and cost-effective use of resources, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 123 of the Programme of Action."

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN 1995

**SIDS/NET AND SIDS/TAP:** The General Assembly invited UNDP to initiate the implementation of SIDS/TAP by preparing a directory and consulting with SIDS and other interested parties to determine the most effective means of implementation. The General Assembly also asked UNDP to coordinate further interregional and intraregional consultations between relevant technical experts of SIDS and other interested States, agencies and relevant organizations to further elaborate SIDS/NET. While AOSIS had hoped that these two programmes would be underway by the 50th session of the General Assembly in 1995, the resolution did not give UNDP any deadlines for implementation. Look for UNDP to continue consultations and development of these two programmes in 1995.

**COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** Look for the CSD to begin to incorporate the review of the SIDS Programme of Action in the context of its multi-year thematic programme of work for monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21. The next meeting of the CSD is scheduled for 11-28 April 1995 in New York. The CSD will focus its work on the following chapters of Agenda 21: poverty, demographics, integrating environment and development in decision-making; biotechnology; major groups; information; financial resources and mechanisms; technology transfer; science, education; land management; forests; desertification; mountains; sustainable agriculture; and biodiversity.

**SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES UNIT:** Look for the establishment of this new unit within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in 1995. Three posts have been recommended: a Unit Chief, who will be responsible for supervising and coordinating the work of the Unit under the Programme of Action; an economics affairs officer, who will assist the Chief of the Unit in organizing support and servicing of the intergovernmental and inter-agency meetings on issues relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action, maintain liaison with relevant agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and contribute to the preparation of their respective reports; and a general services support person.