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## SUMMARY OF THE UN GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES 25 APRIL - 6 MAY 1994

Amidst the sun, sea, corals and sand that draw hundreds of thousands of tourists to small islands every year, the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States met in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 25 April - 6 May 1994. Yet, during the course of the two-week meeting, delegates were constantly reminded that small island developing States (SIDS) are much more than vacation paradises. They also face numerous problems, including poverty, high unemployment, shortages of freshwater, sewage and waste disposal concerns, and the possibility of total annihilation due to climate change induced sea level rise.

During the course of the Conference, delegates negotiated the fifteen-chapter 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.

### 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.

### ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

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 medium- and long-term sustainable development planning.

### REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETINGS

As part of the preparatory process, two regional technical meetings were held. The first meeting for the Indian and Pacific Oceans was coordinated by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and was held from 31 May - 4 June 1993, in Vanuatu. The second meeting for the Atlantic/Caribbean/Mediterranean regions was held in Trinidad and Tobago from 28 June - 2 July 1993. The meeting was coordinated by the Caribbean Community (Caricom), with assistance from the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

### FIRST MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

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.

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#### 48TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

At its 48th session in the Fall of 1993, the UN General Assembly decided that the first session of the Preparatory Committee should be resumed for a period of five working days to complete the preparatory work assigned to it, including the review of the draft Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS. General Assembly Resolution 48/193, adopted on 21 December 1993, also decided to convene the Conference in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May 1994, including a high-level segment from 5-6 May. The resolution urged that representation at the Conference be at the highest possible level and decided to convene one day of pre-Conference consultations at the venue of the Conference on 24 April 1994. The resolution also: endorsed the decisions of the PrepCom regarding the participation of associate members of regional commissions and NGOs in the Conference and its preparatory process; endorsed the PrepCom's decisions regarding the provisional rules of procedure and the provisional agenda for the Conference; requested the Secretary-General to ensure the timely submission of the report of donor activities requested in Decision 11 of the PrepCom; requested the Secretary-General, through the Department of Public Information, to widely disseminate the goals and purposes of the Conference; and invited all member States and organizations to contribute to the voluntary funds.

#### RESUMED SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

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 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; the sharing of 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.

#### PRE-CONFERENCE CONSULTATIONS

Pre-Conference consultations were held Sunday, 24 April 1994, to reach agreement on several procedural and organizational matters. Amb. Besley Maycock, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the UN, was elected Chair of the pre-Conference consultations. The decisions taken were based on document A/CONF.167/3, "Organization of Work, including Establishment of the Main Committee of the Conference." The provisional rules of procedure, as contained in document A/CONF.167/2, were recommended for adoption by the Conference. Costa Rica, on behalf of the Latin American and the Caribbean Group, nominated the Prime Minister of Barbados, L. Erskine Sandiford, as the President of the Conference and Branford Taitt, the Barbados Minister of Foreign Affairs, as the *ex officio* Vice-President. Maycock announced that the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) had proposed New Zealand and Germany and the Asian Group proposed Samoa and China as Vice-Presidents. Nominations to complete the Bureau were postponed to allow the African and Eastern European regional groups to select their candidates.

The provisional agenda, as set out in document A/CONF.167/1, was approved for adoption. The proposals contained in document A/CONF.167/3 regarding the division of agenda items between the Plenary and the Main Committee, time limits for general debate, the establishment of the Main Committee of the Conference, the timetable for work, the organization of meetings, the High-Level Segment, the Credentials Committee, and procedures for the preparation of the report of the Conference, were adopted for recommendation to the Conference. The Chair announced that all efforts would be made to accommodate delegations who are not represented at the Head of State or ministerial level to participate in the High-Level Segment.

#### OPENING CEREMONY

On Monday, 25 April 1994, the Government of Barbados welcomed Conference participants to its country with a colorful National Welcoming Ceremony at the Sir Garfield Sobers Complex, amidst pomp and circumstance, music, dancing, and TV cameras that broadcast the event live throughout the region. In his opening address, the Prime Minister of Barbados welcomed all delegates and NGOs and invited everyone to mix business and pleasure within the limits of national laws. He described the many vulnerabilities of small island developing States. He added that Barbados is doing what it can to implement sustainable development policies.

The next speaker, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said that this Conference marks the first time that a UN global conference is held in a small island developing State. The UN strives to make development a national reality. Samuel R. Insanally, the President of the 48th UN General Assembly and Permanent Representative of Guyana to the UN, said that this Conference marks the first test of the commitments made by the international community at the Earth Summit in Rio two years ago. SIDS should use their great human potential to confront the environmental challenges before them.

Amb. Annette des Iles, the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the UN, said that AOSIS will do everything it can to ensure the Conference is a success. She invited all developed countries to join AOSIS in implementing the commitments they made in Agenda 21.

Following the speeches, there were a series of dance, cultural and musical presentations by the Royal Rarotongans from the Cook Islands and a number of



Caribbean dance companies. There was also a performance by the Barbados Combined Choirs and the Royal Barbados Police Force Band. Perhaps the most creative performance was given by the students of Barbados Secondary Schools, who danced themselves into a human reproduction of the logo of the Conference. At the conclusion of the dance, a 14-year old Barbadian girl gave an impassioned plea to everyone to work hard, using their hands and their heads, to achieve sustainable development.

### PLENARY

On Monday afternoon, 25 April 1994, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali welcomed the delegates and noted that this Conference marks an important moment in the history of development and it faces three special tasks: to draw attention to the special needs of SIDS; to address the particular issues that impact SIDS; and to add to the momentum generated in Rio. The international community as a whole, as well as SIDS themselves, will look to the Conference for leadership. Boutros-Ghali spoke of the unique characteristics of SIDS: distance from markets and supplies; scarcity of natural resources; small population size; lack of economies of scale; costs of communication and transport; and vulnerability to natural and man-made environmental damage. He noted that the development and destiny of SIDS are linked to coastal and marine resources. Too often poor coastal and marine management has undermined sustainable development. He cautioned that unless properly managed, tourism can degrade the environment upon which it depends. But more than anything else, people are an asset to SIDS. He urged the Conference to address the impact of population on the development of SIDS. The Conference must also ensure that the agreements reached in Barbados can be implemented. Developing countries need financial and technical resources to implement Agenda 21 and, despite the progress in many fields, developed countries need to provide an enabling economic environment for this to happen. The Secretary-General stressed the role of the UN -- where the General Assembly affords each member State, no matter how small, one vote -- as the forum for international cooperation on development.

The newly-elected President of the Conference, Erskine Sandiford, told the delegates that the international community had done Barbados a great honor by convening this meeting. The Conference has its roots in the UNCED process and is the clear indication that SIDS represent a distinctive category of States that deserve special attention. He added that it has been agreed at the highest level that all States need to act in concert to achieve sustainable development. It is important to put an end to the vicious circle in which a vast majority of countries are locked and that threatens their continued survival. This resolve to change must be translated into concrete action. Sustainable development should be the ultimate goal. It is not an arcane concept, but a matter of survival, which involves a change in values and attitudes toward people. He also called for a greater flow of assistance and more cooperation among SIDS. NGOs will play a crucial role and greater participation needs to take place at the national, regional and international levels.

Sandiford then moved to Item 3 of the agenda (A/CONF.167/1), the adoption of the rules of procedure, as contained in A/CONF.167/2. Item 4 was the adoption of the agenda, followed by the election of officers. Sandiford announced that after the pre-Conference consultations officers had been selected from the following groups: Asia -- Samoa and China; Western European and Others Group -- New Zealand and Germany. The African Group announced

the nomination of Mauritius and Niger and the Eastern Europeans nominated Hungary, with the other seat to be filled after further consultations. Cuba was selected from the Latin America and Caribbean region. Branford M. Taitt, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Barbados, was elected as the *ex officio* member of the bureau. The Conference then elected Amb. Penelope Wensley (Australia) as the Chair of the Main Committee. The President then moved to Item 6 of the Agenda, organization of work, including establishment of the Main Committee of the Conference (A/CONF.167/3). Together with the comments in paragraphs 12-15 of A/CONF.167/L.3, delegates adopted the programme of work. The Conference also took note of the other issues discussed in the pre-Conference consultations, including agreements reached on the High-Level Segment. Item 7(a) on the agenda, the election of the Credentials Committee, saw Austria, Bahamas, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, the Russian Federation and the US elected by acclamation.

Dame Nita Barrow, Governor-General of Barbados, then presented the report of the meeting of the Group of Eminent Persons on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/CONF.167/5). She said that the report contained interesting conclusions on the special vulnerabilities of SIDS that are now more widely understood. While awareness has increased, there is still a lack of appreciation of the value of island ecosystems. SIDS exercise jurisdiction over one-sixth of the Earth's surface and they should seek to use their strengths. The report contains 18 recommendations that are neither expensive nor difficult to implement and that should be followed if Governments are to live up to their commitments in Rio.

During the five days that followed, the general debate was conducted in Plenary. There were a total of 112 speakers, including 67 UN member States, 4 UN observer States, 17 UN agencies, programmes and funds, 12 intergovernmental organizations, and 12 non-governmental organizations. Delegates also heard reports of case studies on tourism and sustainable development, natural disasters, sustainable development of small island developing States, alternative energy sources, coastal management, and early warning systems.

### PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Most of the substantive negotiations took place in the Main Committee, which met continuously from Tuesday, 26 April, through Wednesday, 4 May, under the chairmanship of Amb. Penelope Wensley. The Main Committee's task was to finish what the PrepCom had begun and, thus, focussed its work on reaching agreement on the draft Programme of Action, as contained in document A/CONF.167/L.1. While there was already agreement on six of the 15 chapters, there were still a number of square brackets in the Preamble and eight chapters, including Chapter XV, which contains the vital issues of finance, technology transfer and institutional follow-up to the Conference. The Main Committee also entertained several new proposals, which were deemed to be non-controversial, and incorporated them into the document. During the course of the week, the corridors and small conference rooms were host to numerous small informal-informal consultations on many of the contentious paragraphs as delegates sought consensus. On the night before the Main Committee was due to complete its work, a small contact group met until 3:30 am when participants finally reached agreement on the paragraphs related to finance -- the issue that was, predictably, the most difficult to resolve.

The following is a summary of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

**PREAMBLE:** At the beginning of the Conference a number of the paragraphs in the Preamble were still in brackets, including such concepts as: acknowledgement that this Conference is the first global conference on sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21; identification of human beings as the center of concerns for sustainable development; environmental destruction caused by external interventions; the small population size of SIDS inhibits them from generating economies of scale; the vulnerability of the economic performance of SIDS; reaffirmation of women's critical contributions to sustainable development; the special situation and needs of the least developed countries; and references to national governments as being primarily responsible for the implementation and financing of the Programme of Action.

The issue of reference to Agenda 21 was resolved in the first two paragraphs by adding the following phrase: "Agenda 21 represents a comprehensive document and wherever referred to in this document should be referred to as a whole." Paragraph 3 states that "The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development identifies human beings as being at the center of concerns for sustainable development. Development initiatives in small island developing States should be seen in relation to the needs and aspirations of human beings, and their responsibility towards present and future generations."

The fourth paragraph emphasizes SIDS vulnerabilities due to their small size. Reference to environmental destruction caused by external interventions in the fifth paragraph, now reads: "Recent human history contains examples of entire islands rendered uninhabitable through environmental destruction owing to external causes."

Reference to the concept of SIDS' custodianship over a large part of the world's marine environment was deleted in a demonstration of flexibility by AOSIS.

In paragraph 7, the reference to linking population and economies of scale was resolved as follows: "Although their population density may be high, many small island developing States have small populations in absolute terms, insufficient to generate economies of scale in several areas, and thus limited scope for the full utilization of certain types of highly specialized expertise."

Paragraph 10 references the fact that since per capita income of many SIDS tends to be higher than that of developing countries as a group, they often have limited access to concessionary resources. AOSIS was successful in incorporating a reference to the instability of SIDS incomes over time into this paragraph. Paragraph 12 references the critical contribution that women and youth make to the long term success of Agenda 21 in SIDS.

Paragraph 14 notes that States have acknowledged their common, but differentiated, responsibilities for global environmental degradation, as stated in Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration. The paragraph also notes that in Principle 6 it was stated that the special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those most environmentally vulnerable, should be given special priority.

Paragraphs 16 and 17 introduce the substantive chapters of the Programme of Action and specify national, regional and international responsibilities for its implementation.

**I. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE:** This chapter highlights the possible impact that climate change and sea level rise might have on SIDS. Recommendations for national action include: ratify the Climate Change

Convention and Montreal Protocol; collect data on climate change and sea level rise; assess the effects and socio-economic implications of the impact of climate change; formulate comprehensive strategies and measures on adaptation to climate change; and promote more efficient use of energy resources. Recommended regional actions include: monitor and improve predictive capacity for climate change; strengthen information exchange mechanisms; and support national efforts. Recommendations for international action include: implementation of the prompt-start resolution of the Climate Change Convention; development of adaptive response measures to the impact of climate change and sea level rise; improved access to financial and technical resources for monitoring climate variability and sea level rise; and providing access to environmentally sound and energy efficient technologies.

**II. NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS:** This chapter emphasizes the need for SIDS to increase their preparedness and response capacities to natural and environmental disasters. This can best be achieved through the promotion of early warning systems, strengthening broadcast capacity and telecommunications links, sharing of experience, and integrating natural disaster considerations in development planning. Recommended national action includes: strengthening disaster preparedness and management, including the capacity of local broadcasting, and establishment of a national disaster emergency fund. Regional action includes: establishment and strengthening of regional institutions to support national efforts in disaster mitigation, preparedness and management; sharing experience, information and resources between SIDS; increasing access to telecommunications links; and support for the operation of national disaster emergency funds. International actions include: assisting SIDS in establishing and/or strengthening mechanisms and policies to reduce the impact of natural disasters; improve access to technology and relevant training; provide and facilitate support and training for disaster preparedness and relief programmes; and support the dissemination of information useful in pre-disaster planning.

**III. MANAGEMENT OF WASTES:** The special vulnerability of SIDS to waste management problems was highlighted, particularly in view of limited land surface in these countries. In paragraph 23 (transboundary movement of wastes), there was disagreement on who should bear the burden of the impact of passage of ships transporting toxic and radioactive wastes through oceans and seas. Agreement was not reached until the last day. The sentence in question now reads: "The passage of ships carrying toxic and hazardous wastes, chemicals and radioactive materials is of international concern and of priority concern to small island developing States."

Agreement was also reached on the new paragraph 24.A(viii), which reads: "In conformity with the Basel Convention and relevant decisions taken by the Parties to that Convention, the small island developing States should formulate and enforce national laws and/or regulations that ban the importation from OECD countries of hazardous wastes and other wastes subject to the Basel Convention, including hazardous wastes and other wastes destined for recycling and recovery operations."

Other recommended actions in this chapter include: use of products with low waste or degradable waste content; development and implementation of emission discharge and pollution standards; ratification and implementation of relevant conventions; formulation and implementation of public awareness and education campaigns; introduction of clean technologies; development of regional pollution prevention programmes; establishment of regional



mechanisms to protect the oceans, seas and coastal areas from ship-generated oil spills; and the provision of improved access to financial and technical resources to assist SIDS in establishing regional centers for training and transfer of clean production technologies and management of hazardous wastes.

**IV. COASTAL AND MARINE RESOURCES:** This chapter aims at developing SIDS' management capacities both in the coastal area and in their exclusive economic zones (EEZs). Recommendations for national action include: establishing and/or strengthening institutional, administrative and legislative arrangements for the development of integrated coastal zone management plans; designing comprehensive monitoring programmes for coastal and marine resources; and developing and/or strengthening national capabilities for the sustainable harvesting and processing of fishery resources. Regional and international actions include: strengthening the capacity of regional organizations to undertake activities in coastal and marine areas; gathering and sharing of information and expertise; cooperation in facilitative fishing agreements between SIDS and foreign fishing groups; monitoring of EEZs; use of the relevant results of the 1993 World Coast Conference and the work carried out within the UNEP regional seas programme and the results from other relevant intergovernmental conferences to prevent further marine and coastal degradation.

**V. FRESHWATER RESOURCES:** The importance of freshwater resources for SIDS and the limits they impose on sustainable development are highlighted in this chapter. The last paragraph to be resolved addresses the need to safeguard watershed areas. After much negotiation, the final version of paragraph 28 contains reference to safeguarding watershed areas and groundwater resources, including treatment and distribution of limited water supplies, and protection against contamination from human and agricultural wastes.

Recommendations for national action include: the development, maintenance and protection of watershed areas; irrigation systems; distribution networks and appropriate catchment systems; adoption of appropriate standards for the management of freshwater resources; monitoring and responding to the impacts of natural and environmental hazards; encouraging the development and acquisition of appropriate technology and training for cost-effective sewage disposal; and desalination and rainwater collection.

Recommendations for regional and international action include: regional cooperation in training and research to assist Governments in the development and implementation of integrated water resource plans; improved access to technologies for freshwater catchment, production, conservation and delivery; enhancing the capacity to develop and implement integrated water resource plans; training and awareness campaigns for water conservation; and assessing the impact of climate change on freshwater resources.

**VI. LAND RESOURCES:** This chapter focuses on the need to elaborate land management plans in conjunction with other uses and policies. Recommendations for national action include: preparation and review of land-use plans; encouragement of appropriate forms of land tenure; formulation and enforcement of laws, regulations and economic pricing and incentives to encourage the sustainable and integrated use, management and conservation of land and its natural resources; support for appropriate afforestation and reforestation programmes; and increased attention to national physical planning in both urban and rural environments. Recommendations for regional and international action include: training and

capacity-building opportunities; collection, synthesizing and sharing of information, knowledge and experience among SIDS; support for the improved availability of shelter; and the development and improvement of national databases.

**VII. ENERGY RESOURCES:** In view of SIDS' dependency on energy imports, energy conservation and the development of renewable sources of energy need to be encouraged. Recommendations for national action include: implement appropriate public education and awareness programmes to promote energy conservation; promote the efficient use of energy and the development of environmentally sound sources of energy and energy efficient technologies; and establish and/or strengthen research and development of new and renewable sources of energy. Recommendations for regional and international action include: establish or strengthen research and policy capabilities in the development of new and renewable sources of energy; promote regional cooperation between SIDS on energy sector issues; develop effective mechanisms for the transfer of energy technology; and encourage international institutions and agencies to incorporate environmental efficiency and conservation principles into energy-sector-related projects, training and technical assistance.

**VIII. TOURISM RESOURCES:** This chapter focuses on tourism as both an opportunity for SIDS development and an activity that must be integrated with environmental and cultural concerns. This chapter was the source of little debate. A new paragraph on combatting illicit drug trafficking and money laundering was proposed, led to some debate and was eventually moved to Chapter X. Recommendations for national action include: ensure that tourism development and environmental management are mutually supportive; adopt integrated planning and policies to ensure sustainable tourism development; and adopt measures to protect the cultural integrity of SIDS. Recommendations for regional and international action include: encourage joint marketing and training programmes between SIDS; promote recognition of the value of tourism in SIDS to the international community; facilitate efforts at the national and regional levels to assess the overall impact of tourism, to plan sustainable tourism and develop eco- and cultural tourism.

**IX. BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES:** This chapter emphasizes the importance of biodiversity, particularly of marine and coastal species, to SIDS. The paragraph that proved to be the most contentious addressed the rights of those whose indigenous knowledge and know-how of biodiversity are overtaken by commercial exploitation of the resources. After a lengthy debate that began at the PrepCom, the paragraph now reads: "Ensure that the ownership of intellectual property rights is adequately and effectively protected. Ensure, subject to national legislation and policies, that technology, knowledge and customary and traditional practices of local and indigenous people, including resource owners and custodians, are adequately and effectively protected and that they thereby benefit directly, on an equitable basis and on mutually agreed terms, from any utilization of such technologies, knowledge and practices or from any technological development directly derived therefrom."

Other recommendations for national action include: formulate and implement integrated strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biodiversity; ratify and implement the Convention on Biological Diversity; promote the designation of protected areas; generate and maintain gene banks of biogenetic resources; conduct detailed inventories of existing flora, fauna and ecosystems; and support the involvement of NGOs, women, indigenous people, and other major groups in

the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and biotechnology.

Recommendations for regional and international action include: regional studies of the socio-economic and cultural value of biodiversity; establishment of regional gene-bank centers; coordinated information exchange, training and technical assistance; development of adequate and effective legal mechanisms for the protection of intellectual property rights; provision of improved access to financial and technical resources for the conservation of biodiversity; greater use of import restrictions under the CITES Convention; and protection of SIDS from the introduction of non-indigenous species.

**X. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY:** This chapter addresses the need to integrate environmental concerns into national institutions and administrative arrangements, specifically in terms of economic and development planning. Recommendations for national action include: strengthen institutional arrangements and administrative capacity to integrate environment and economic policy in national planning; develop implementation strategies and schedules; establish or strengthen environmental agencies; increase the involvement of NGOs, local communities and other major groups; improve public education; develop national, provincial/State and local environmental regulations; and enact domestic legislation required for the implementation of the wide range of international environmental conventions and agreements relevant to SIDS.

Regional and international action should include: improve access to financial and technical assistance to strengthen national institutions and administrative capacity; support the development of a small islands sustainable development information network; assist in providing training and capacity-building services; and promote closer cooperation to improve national and international measures to combat illicit drug trafficking and money laundering.

**XI. REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION:** This chapter concentrates on the role that UN and non-UN regional organizations can play in assisting SIDS at the national level in instituting and implementing regional programmes, and coordinating projects and assistance. Most of the recommendations are for regional action, and these include: improve coordination among regional bodies for the sustainable development of SIDS; formulate regional programmes and strategies jointly between regional bodies and national authorities; develop a SIDS technical assistance programme; establish and support regional sustainable development centers; draft model environmental provisions as a guide for countries; prepare environmental law training manuals; and conduct regional and in-country workshops on environmental law and the implications of international environmental instruments.

**XII. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION:** The focus of this chapter is the lifeline provided to SIDS by transport and communication. The most difficult paragraph in this chapter addressed international telecommunications costs to SIDS. AOSIS advocated lowering international telecommunications costs to SIDS while some of the developed countries argued that this was not within their mandate. It was only on the final day of negotiations that text was agreed to. It reads: "Promote improved international telecommunications at the lowest possible cost for small island developing States, while recognizing the need to create an environment conducive to the investment in telecommunications infrastructure and service to benefit local business and people." Other recommended international actions include: develop innovative energy-efficient transport solutions; cooperate with national and regional bodies in designing and enforcing

effective quarantine systems; and promote research and development in telecommunications and transportation relevant to the sustainable development of SIDS.

Recommended national and regional action includes: strengthening transport services; upgrading domestic communication facilities; addressing quarantine problems; and increasing cooperation in civil aviation, shipping and telecommunications.

**XIII. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:** As well as emphasizing the important role of science and technology in building SIDS' capacity for sustainable development, this chapter examines the need to increase the use and availability of environmentally-friendly technologies. Recommendations for national action include: promote greater emphasis on research, development and training in science and technology; encourage the use of endogenous environmentally-friendly technologies; develop or ensure access to databases on environmentally-sound technologies; and promote and strengthen the role of women in science and technology. Regional and international action should: assist SIDS in accomplishing the national action, policies and measures listed above; develop and strengthen regional ocean sciences networks; facilitate access to and the development of environmentally-sound technologies; take into account the needs of SIDS for training in integrated coastal zone management; facilitate the full involvement of scientists and other experts from SIDS in marine scientific research; and accelerate development of the coastal module of the Global Ocean Observing System.

**XIV. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT:** This chapter looks at mechanisms to improve the quality of life in SIDS. The issue that proved to be the most difficult to resolve was the reference to family planning, which appears three times in the chapter. In a discussion that resembled the recent PrepCom for the International Conference on Population and Development, the Holy See and Malta wanted to ensure that if reference to family planning had to be included in the Programme of Action, the understanding should be clear that it could not be interpreted as condoning abortion or forms of contraception that are not sanctioned by the Catholic Church. After six hours of intense negotiation in a small contact group, consensus was reached. The second sentence of paragraph 61 now reads: "Poor health and social services and nutrition and housing, low levels of female participation in development, current insufficiency of education, information and means, as appropriate, for the responsible planning of family size, and inadequate family planning services demonstrate the need for attention to human resource development issues."

Paragraphs 64.A(iii) still contains reference to family planning and health care and (iv) still contains reference to maternal and child health care and the responsible planning of family size. However, a new paragraph 65 was added, which reads: "The recommendations and language contained in this chapter should in no way prejudice discussions at the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo in September 1994." This is similar language to that used in Chapter 5.66 of Agenda 21.

Other recommendations for national action include: infuse sustainable development ideas into education curricula; improve urban/rural settlements, including through the promotion of projects aimed at the elimination of poverty; promote and strengthen the role of major groups; seek to improve the quality of education, training and human resource development; and encourage the use of traditional knowledge and skills in environment, resource management and health. Recommended regional action includes support for the national actions and enhancement of regional cooperation on these issues. Recommended



international action includes support for the national actions as well as support for: an integrated approach to drug-abuse control; environmental education programmes specific to islands; and scientific and technical training.

#### **XV. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW:**

This lengthy chapter addresses the essential requirements for the implementation of the Programme of Action. As expected, this chapter was the most difficult to negotiate and delegates spent considerable time on it, both during the two sessions of the PrepCom and at the Conference itself. The most contentious paragraphs were those on finance. The Chair eventually had to put together an extended bureau, which met over the mid-Conference weekend and during the evenings to work out the necessary compromises. Agreement was finally reached at 3:30 am on Wednesday, 4 May -- less than 10 hours before the Main Committee was scheduled to come to a close.

While recognizing that Governments will be primarily responsible for the implementation of the Programme of Action, international cooperation will be essential to support and complement such efforts. With this in mind, the chapter is divided into four sections -- national implementation, regional implementation, international implementation, and institutional arrangements, monitoring and review.

**A. National implementation:** The implementation of the Programme of Action will require adequate resources from both the public and private sectors. Resources should be further increased to meet the sustainable goals and priorities articulated by optimizing the impact of available resources and by exploring increased use of economic instruments, promotion of private sector investment and the use of innovative financial mechanisms. With regard to trade, SIDS should seek to develop a more diversified production structure for goods and services. SIDS should also encourage measures enhancing the capacity for the development of indigenous technology and utilizing appropriate and environmentally-sound technology, while adequately and effectively protecting intellectual property rights. There are also recommendations on the adoption of legislation to support sustainable development; national institutional development; information dissemination; participation of NGOs and major groups; and human resource development.

**B. Regional implementation:** On the regional level, coordinated approaches should be developed for the mobilization of financial resources for national and regional efforts to implement sustainable development. Regional development banks and other regional and sub-regional organizations should also be encouraged to increase their technical and financial assistance. Other recommendations include: cooperative development and sharing of appropriate technology through regional organizations; support for national efforts to develop comprehensive legislation in support of sustainable development; support for national efforts to implement effective institutional models; and support for national efforts at capacity building through human resource development.

**C. International implementation:** The section on finance states that the implementation of the Programme of Action will require the provision of effective means, including "adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources in accordance with Chapter 33 of Agenda 21" to reflect the increased significance attached to sustainable development considerations in SIDS. Other financial recommendations include: honoring financial commitments contained in Agenda 21, including better and more efficient use of ODA and other existing external sources of finance; the provision of concessional financial and technical assistance, and grant assistance; use of the restructured

Global Environment Facility (GEF) as an important channel of assistance; and improved attention to the needs and priorities of SIDS within international institutions. With regard to trade, the Programme of Action calls for an open and non-discriminatory trading system and enhancing access to markets for the exports of SIDS. Special effort is needed to assist SIDS to increase their production and exports, and to develop better functioning and transparent international commodity markets. Recommendations for action by the international community on technology transfer include: promoting of, and access to, environmentally-sound technologies; dissemination of information regarding available technology; improving the endogenous capacity of SIDS to absorb and manage environmentally-sound technologies; financing access to and the transfer of environmentally-sound technologies; and protecting intellectual property rights. Other recommendations are on the subjects of information, capacity-building, and legislation and training. SIDS and the international community are also urged to continue work on the development of vulnerability indices and other indicators that reflect the status of SIDS and integrate ecological fragility and economic vulnerability.

#### **D. Institutional arrangements, monitoring and review:**

This was a new section introduced by AOSIS at the start of the Conference and based, to a large degree, on the consultations undertaken by Canada and Argentina at the resumed PrepCom. In the first sub-section on intergovernmental follow-up, the Commission on Sustainable Development is urged to monitor and review the implementation of the Programme of Action within the context of its multi-year thematic programme of work. The UN General Assembly should also review implementation. In the sub-section on reporting, the Secretary-General is urged to prepare analytical reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action in preparation for CSD reviews in 1996 and 1999. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) should also make the necessary provision to consider system-wide coordination in the implementation of Conference outcomes at the inter-agency level. At the UN Secretariat level, a "clearly identifiable, qualified and competent entity" within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development should be put in place. There are also recommendations for action at the regional and sub-regional levels.

### **BARBADOS DECLARATION**

The second document emanating from this Conference was the Declaration of Barbados (A/CONF.167/L.4/Rev.1). The Declaration is 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.

The final version of the Declaration reveals the extent of the edits that had to be made by the UN Secretariat after the Plenary had reached agreement in principle. The Declaration made tortuous progress through a number of drafts and formats, and emerged in the end as a relatively clear statement of the contradictory nature of life in the small island developing States and the recognition now accorded to their specific plight within the international community.

### HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

On 5-6 May 1994, 45 Heads of State and Government, special representatives and ministers participated in the Conference's High-Level Segment. The High-Level Segment focused on the theme of "Forging Partnerships for Sustainable Development," which lies at the heart of the commitments made by the international community at Rio. This theme was adopted because it was felt that the unique characteristics of SIDS -- their small size and populations, limited resources and isolation from markets, high transport and infrastructure costs, vulnerability to natural disasters and to the vagaries of the international economy -- call for the forging of new types of partnerships to achieve sustainable development. Each dignitary was given seven minutes to address the theme, but inevitably the average length of statements was twice that. Speakers included the prime ministers of Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas, Vanuatu, Tonga, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Niue; the presidents of Nauru, Cuba, Kiribati, Micronesia, and Guyana; the Governor General of Papua New Guinea; ministers from Iceland, Australia, Cyprus, Venezuela, Jamaica, Mauritius, Brazil, Maldives, Fiji, Malaysia, Germany, the Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Seychelles, Samoa, the Cook Islands, Pakistan, Belize, Haiti, Grenada, and New Zealand; deputy ministers from China, the United States and Colombia; and ministerial representatives and special envoys from the Marshall Islands, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Japan, India and Italy.

The recurring themes included: the new partnership that must be forged to achieve sustainable development for SIDS, including transfer of technology; the end of the traditional donor-recipient relationship; implementation of the relevant conventions that can further the sustainable development of SIDS; the impacts of marine pollution and of sea level rise; improving the status of women; the redistribution of wealth within and between countries; and common, but differentiated, responsibilities between developed countries and SIDS.

In the summary report of the debate, the participants identified the major assets of SIDS as being their coastal and marine resources, their natural beauty and their people. They also highlighted the inadequacies of GNP per capita criteria as a measure of economic development and called for the adoption of a vulnerability index that would take into account environmental considerations and would give the small islands more equitable access to international assistance, including financial assistance. Appropriate partnerships must be formed between national governments and the people they serve. International cooperation should include, but not be limited to, access to technical and

financial resources, since there is much that the developed countries can provide that could benefit SIDS. Examples included the need for developed countries to increase their efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, ocean dumping and transboundary movement of hazardous and toxic wastes.

On Friday, 6 May 1994, high-level participants gathered for a roundtable discussion. Upon the recommendation of the preparatory Committee for the Conference, the roundtable was open to participation at the Head of State or Government and ministerial level. The roundtable heard presentations by: the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Patrick Manning, on the AOSIS perspective of the sustainable development of small island developing States; the Premier of Niue, Frank F. Lui, on regional and international cooperation; Henrique Brandao Cavalcanti, Brazilian Minister for the Environment and the Amazon, on the theme "From Rio to Bridgetown: Regaining the UNCED Momentum;" and Klaus Töpfer, Germany's Minister for the Environment, on international support for the sustainable development of SIDS. In his report to the Conference, Barbados Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford said that the roundtable provided an important opportunity for an open and frank exchange of views at a high political level on issues of sustainable development for SIDS and the challenges the international community and SIDS themselves face in this area.

### CLOSING SESSION

The final session of the Plenary for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was convened on Friday afternoon, 6 May 1994. The first item on the agenda was the adoption of the report of the Conference (A/CONF.167/L.5). Rapporteur-General Kinza Clodumar (Nauru) introduced the report of the Conference and Takao Shibata, the rapporteur of Main Committee, introduced his report in A/CONF.167/L.6 and addenda 1-16. Both reports were adopted.

Algeria, on behalf of the G-77 and China, then introduced a short resolution on adoption of texts on the sustainable development of small island developing States (A/CONF.167/L.8), which adopts both the Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration. At this point, the Secretariat also introduced a statement on the programme budget implications (PBI) of the draft Programme of Action (A/CONF.167/L.1/Add.1). The PBI calls for the addition of one new professional staff member and one general staff member to coordinate Conference follow-up within the UN Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD). Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of AOSIS, stated that they are not sure that the programme budget implications are adequately laid out. She proposed that this issue be revisited during the 49th General Assembly later this year. The US welcomed the PBI and said it was looking forward to refining and implementing these arrangements within the context of UN reform and budgetary policy. Australia and Algeria, on behalf of the G-77, supported AOSIS and said further discussion is necessary. Greece, on behalf of the EU, reserved his group's position on the PBI until they had time to examine it more closely. After those comments, the resolution was adopted.

After adoption, several delegations made comments for the record. The Holy See confirmed that its acceptance of the paragraphs that reference family planning in Chapter XIV does not constitute a change in its position on the family planning methods that the Catholic Church considers unacceptable and the services that do not respect the rights of those concerned. Malta underlined its understanding of family planning, namely that the interpretation in this



Programme of Action is in accordance with the International Conference on Population held in Mexico City in 1984.

The President of the Conference, Erskine Sandiford, then delivered a presidential summary of the results of the High-Level Segment and the roundtable. He said that the roundtable provided an important opportunity for an open and frank exchange of views at a high political level on issues related to sustainable development for SIDS and the challenges that the international community and SIDS themselves face in this area.

Sandiford then introduced a draft resolution on the elections in South Africa (A/CONF.167/L.9). He said that coinciding with this Conference, Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa. This resolution, which congratulates the people of South Africa on the historic elections, was adopted by acclamation and will be transmitted to the newly-elected government in South Africa. Sandiford also congratulated the Israeli and Palestinian people for the agreement that they have just signed and wished them every success.

Algeria, on behalf of the G-77 and China, then introduced a draft resolution expressing gratitude to the people and Government of Barbados (A/CONF.167/L.7). This resolution was also adopted and then delegations took the floor to express their thanks. Speakers included: Nauru, on behalf of the South Pacific Forum; Algeria, on behalf of the G-77; Greece, on behalf of the EU; Romania, on behalf of the Eastern European States; Germany, on behalf of the Western European and Others Group; Mauritius, on behalf of the Indian Ocean islands; the US; and Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of AOSIS. In her statement, AOSIS Chair Annette des Iles said that now that we have adopted the Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration it is clear that the human will to cooperate for the greater good has triumphed and we have achieved the primary objectives of this global Conference, of which we can all be justifiably satisfied. This is a practical programme that will yield concrete benefits. However, the Programme of Action is as yet only a document. She said that members of the international community need to maintain the spirit of tenacity and cooperation with which this Conference has been imbued to ensure the successful implementation of the Programme of Action.

After concluding statements by Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development Nitin Desai and Conference President Sandiford, the Conference was gavelled to a close and participants went out into the lobby of the Sherbourne Center to dance the calypso and enjoy the food, drink and music of the small island developing State of Barbados.

## ANALYSIS OF THE CONFERENCE

The UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States is now history. The Sherbourne Center, which was constructed in record time and proved to be an excellent non-smoking conference facility, is no longer buzzing with activity. The NGO Global Forum and SUSTECH '94 have packed up and moved out. Life in Barbados continues on as before delegates from over 130 countries descended on this small island State in the Caribbean. Now, as participants and observers have a chance to look back on the Conference, it is time to assess the Conference's accomplishments, short-comings and follow-up.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Conference and its preparatory process proved to be a success with regard to the adoption of the Programme of

Action for the sustainable development of small island developing States (SIDS), the maturation of AOSIS, the conduct of the high-level segment and the positive impact of NGO participation.

**PROGRAMME OF ACTION:** The major accomplishment of the Conference was the agreement on a comprehensive Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS. 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. This Programme of Action has not only filled the regional gap, but has gone on to elaborate specific strategies for enhancing regional and sub-regional cooperation on each of the fourteen subject areas covered by the Programme of Action in such a way that it is not just a repetition, but builds on Agenda 21. 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 successful negotiation of this Programme of Action is also a tribute to the array of diplomatic skills on display from Amb. Penelope Wensley, who chaired both the Preparatory Committee and the Main Committee at the Conference. Her deployment of small contact groups during the Conference was effective in diffusing potential tensions and allowing agreements to be struck on such contentious issues as finance, intellectual property rights, transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and family planning.

**AOSIS:** Another accomplishment of the negotiating process was the maturation of AOSIS over the past nine months into a full-fledged group within the UN system, with its own strengths, weaknesses, divisions and personalities. When AOSIS was first conceived, its purpose was to unite small islands States and increase their impact on the climate change negotiations. They worked together to ensure that the risks they face as a result of climate change and related sea level rise were taken into account in the Convention. In the UNCED process, SIDS were successful in achieving special recognition of their plight in Agenda 21 and managed to have language included that called for the first global Conference on the sustainable development of SIDS.

However, as the preparations for this Conference got underway, AOSIS stumbled in its transition from a single issue pressure group on the sidelines to the coordinating body for SIDS and all of their interests. This change posed political, logistical and strategic problems. The political problems involved the difference in approach between the Pacific and the Caribbean. Pacific islands face markedly different situations than the islands in the Caribbean. The difficulties in incorporating both sets of concerns, not to mention the concerns of islands in other regions, into a common position were not always easy to resolve. The logistical problems involved bringing experts from all of these often remote islands together. Pacific island representatives who do not have permanent missions in New York often felt left out during the many intersessional consultations. The strategic problems faced by AOSIS involved learning to push their own agenda, delegating responsibility within the group, and mastering their collective negotiating skills. To complicate matters further, there was a change in the

Chairmanship of AOSIS midway through the preparations for the Conference -- from Vanuatu to Trinidad and Tobago. With all of this as background, it is surprising that AOSIS did not completely lose its focus. By the time AOSIS arrived in Barbados, however, the Alliance was focused like a "laser beam" under the "steady, quiet and tenacious" diplomatic skills of Trinidad and Tobago. As a result, AOSIS successfully represented its members' interests and delivered a strong Programme of Action to guide the sustainable development of SIDS into the future.

**HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT:** The High-Level Segment was also one of the major accomplishments of the Conference. Aside from Fidel Castro, his ubiquitous security and his paparazzi, the Conference also brought together a significant number of Heads of State and Government, ministers and decision makers from small islands, other developing countries and the developed world. Although there were complaints about the level of participation from the donor countries (see below), both the debate and the roundtable discussion proved to be useful fora for sharing experiences and communicating concerns among islands, between islands and regions as well as between donors and recipients.

**NGO INFLUENCE:** Throughout the process there has been steady participation and influence by NGOs. The active group of NGOs, while international, was predominantly from the islands themselves. The few Northern-based international NGOs played a support role while their island counterparts took the lead. During the PrepCom, NGOs were critical of AOSIS for not taking up their concerns. At the end of the resumed session in March, NGOs issued a set of specific amendments to the draft Programme of Action. AOSIS reviewed these amendments and during the Conference proposed that many of them be included in the text. Issues that bear the mark of NGO input include Chapter III on waste management; Chapter XIV on human resource development; and language on partnerships with women, youth, indigenous people and other major groups that appears throughout the text. During the Conference itself, many NGOs were included on both island and non-island delegations. Others worked the floor in both the Main Committee and the Barbados Declaration contact group to good effect. Without NGO input, many believe that the Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration would have been less people-centered.

Within the NGO community, the new partnership between island NGOs and others reinforced many of the lessons learned during the UNCED process, namely that the most effective role of Northern NGOs is information dissemination, support and advocacy directed at their own governments. Despite organizational and financial problems, the NGO Islands Forum proved to be a source of great energy and unity within the NGO community and offered a place to strategize and develop the means for future inter-regional cooperation between NGOs. NGOs also were the driving force behind the SUSTECH '94 exhibition of sustainable technologies for island development and the Village of Hope, which became the interface between the Conference, the issues and the people of Barbados. Without the efforts of NGOs, the Conference might have been seen solely as an exercise in diplomatic rhetoric rather than an event that may benefit small islands and their people.

#### **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES**

In spite of the many accomplishments of the Conference, there were still a number of missed opportunities that could be construed as failures, including the Barbados Declaration, the AOSIS Summit, lack of global media attention and certain aspects of the High-Level Segment.

**BARBADOS DECLARATION:** One of the greatest missed opportunities of the Conference was the Barbados Declaration, irreverently referred to by some participants as the "Barbados Whimper." Originally intended as a statement of political will to accompany the Programme of Action in order for SIDS and their concerns to stay at or near the top of the international agenda, the Declaration is in fact little more than a glorified UN resolution. Due to the unstinting efforts of a handful of delegates and NGOs, the Declaration is considerably better than the original drafts presented at both the resumed PrepCom and the Conference itself.

The drafting process was tightly controlled by the Barbadian hosts. It often appeared as though the Chair of the negotiations of this document, Barbados' Ambassador to the United Nations, Besley Maycock, wanted to receive input from other delegations, but draft the document himself. At a press conference following the conclusion of the drafting, he lamented the fact that the "UN approach crept in from time to time," and he seemed to blame his disappointment with the Declaration on the fact that "most developed countries were not represented at a very high level" and that "delegates were here to see that no new language creeps in." The Declaration also suffered from a lack of a cogent sense of what was desired or required and from an embarrassing lack of attention from a number of key players. This is exemplified by Australia's lone OECD stance on issues of partnership with NGOs and gender equity in development, the US ignorance of issues such as the right to development and ecological corridors, and the scarcity of seasoned drafters and negotiators among those few delegations -- developed and developing -- who participated in the three days of contact group meetings.

While many comments were made about the lack of strong vision coming from the Chair and his lack of facilitation, it was also true that those delegations who bothered to participate in the drafting were not particularly inspired either, with one or two notable exceptions. The UNCED experience taught us that leaving discussion of principles or political statements to the end is a risk. It is never the straightforward task that the host country always hopes for domestic political reasons. Leaving the drafting of the Barbados Declaration to the last moment was naive at best.

**AOSIS SUMMIT:** The next missed opportunity was the AOSIS Summit. Although not an official part of the Conference, the Summit was supposed to take advantage of the presence of the many high-level representatives from AOSIS member States to chart the future direction of the Alliance. However, due to the lack of a clear agenda, lack of sufficient preparation and the absence of some important figures, the Summit achieved much less than was hoped and expected. Rather than set a pointed direction for the future, the Summit, which lasted for less than two hours, marked time by noting what AOSIS had accomplished at the Conference. There clearly remain differences in vision between the Pacific and the Caribbean, the former being less concerned with UN-related issues since many are not members of the world body. In spite of the Alliance's accomplishments at this Conference, it will not be all smooth sailing for AOSIS in the future.

**LACK OF GLOBAL MEDIA ATTENTION:** One of the goals of this Conference was to raise global awareness of the situation faced by small island developing States and the interconnectedness of their plight with the rest of the world. Although awareness appears to have been raised within the UN and the diplomatic community, the message may not have gotten out to the rest of the world. While the Conference did receive widespread coverage by the local and Caribbean media, there was a noticeable absence of print



and electronic media from further abroad. With the exceptions of CNN, a couple of British and Australian newspapers and a few radio networks, the Northern media was nowhere to be seen. Part of the problem lies in the lack of a stronger public relations campaign surrounding this Conference on the part of both AOSIS and the UN Secretariat, particularly the Department of Public Information. Despite some clever marketing, the global message of this Conference was not taken up and delivered by the media. As is often the case with SIDS, other international and national events took priority.

**HIGH-LEVEL PARTICIPATION:** The Barbadian hosts and AOSIS alike were disappointed by both the degree to which the donor countries were represented at the High-Level Segment and the low level of their representation. A number of key OECD countries, some with long, historical ties to islands, including France and the Netherlands, were not represented at all during the High-Level Segment. Furthermore, a number of islands did not even send their Prime Ministers or Presidents to the Conference. Nevertheless, the presence of Fidel Castro provided the High-Level Segment with a suitable diversion. Politically, the lack of high-level representation at this meeting, when coupled with the inadequacy of the Barbados Declaration, leaves room for uncertainty as to the international community's political will to implement the Programme of Action and work towards the sustainable development of SIDS. Obviously, there still remains a need for high-level consciousness raising and greater political commitment at the international level.

#### LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Now that the Conference is over, all eyes turn to implementation of the Programme of Action and ensuring that the momentum is not lost. To accomplish this, AOSIS, the donor community, the rest of the Group of 77, and the UN system must confront the challenges that lay ahead.

**AOSIS:** The emergence of AOSIS as a force on all aspects of issues affecting SIDS has the potential to influence other ongoing and future UN conferences and negotiations. These include, in particular, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit on Social Development, the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Biological Diversity Convention, the Climate Change Convention, the entry into force of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and other marine- and waste-related conventions and negotiations. AOSIS can give the islands greater political leverage in these processes in several ways. First, as an alliance, AOSIS can have greater influence on the issues that affect its members and it can ensure that these interests are reflected adequately in the resulting agreements. Second, they have the potential for trade-offs with other regional and interest groups on a variety of issues. For example, the presence of a significant number of Sudano-Sahelian countries suffering from desertification at this Conference is a precursor of the support they will expect from SIDS at the forthcoming conclusion of the INCD negotiations. SIDS can also offer their support to other regional and interest groups in exchange for political support for the follow-up of this Conference.

**DONOR COUNTRIES:** This Conference revealed a need for donor countries to restructure the way in which they deal

with SIDS. To date, most developed countries address islands' concerns under the jurisdiction of departments within departments on oceans or other single issue bureaus. To adequately implement the international action sections in the Programme of Action, donor countries must ensure greater coordination and integration of SIDS-related programmes and policies on a cross-sectoral basis.

**UN SYSTEM:** A similar structural challenge faces the UN system, which has already begun the process of regionalization, but has yet to orient its agencies and programmes to the needs of SIDS. To accomplish this, the Programme of Action calls for a special SIDS unit within the UN Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) to coordinate UN follow-up to the Conference. Certain donor countries, including the US, did not feel such a unit was necessary and supported, instead, a focal point within the DPCSD that would have no additional budgetary implications. The agreed text in the Programme of Action, which is the product of a vague consensus, states that "a clearly identifiable, qualified and competent entity within the DPCSD of the UN should be put in place to provide Secretariat support for both intergovernmental and inter-agency coordination mechanisms." The Secretariat interpreted this in its programme budget implications (PBI) statement (A/CONF.167/L.1.Add.1) as the inclusion of one professional and one general service post in New York and one professional post in each of the three regional economic commissions that deal with SIDS. Judging from the way the PBI was introduced and the reaction to it on the floor of the final Plenary meeting, there are still widely differing opinions on what this "entity" entails. This issue will be the subject of additional consultations over the summer before being resolved by the General Assembly this fall.

**GROUP OF 77:** During the preparatory process, AOSIS and the G-77 came to an agreement, whereby the Chair of AOSIS spoke on behalf of the G-77 and China during the negotiations. This remained the case throughout the Conference itself, even through the long informal-informal night sessions on financial resources. This delegation of authority and coordination to one sub-group, may hold precedence for G-77 activities in the future. The G-77 itself is now not only divided into "level of development" groups, such as the G-27 and the LDCs, but also into cross-regional groups. Together with the G-77's difficulties during the early phases of the desertification negotiations (where preference to one regional group, Africa, led to a regional breakdown of the G-77), this Conference adds further nuances to the coordination of such a large, disparate group. It will be interesting to see how this Conference and its follow-up affects the future unity and effectiveness of this group of developing countries.

**CONFERENCE FOLLOW-UP:** Finally, it must be remembered that the follow-up to the Conference and effective implementation of the Programme of Action will not only take place at the diplomatic level in the United Nations. The small island developing States themselves must ensure that they reorient their programmes and policies towards sustainable development. Governments must ensure that local communities, NGOs, women, youth, indigenous people and others play a key role in implementing the Programme of Action. Without active participation of people at all levels -- local, national, regional and international -- the Programme of Action will not be worth more than the paper it is written on.