



PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON THE TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS: 14-16 APRIL 2004

The Preparatory Meeting for the International Meeting on the Ten-year Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States opens today at UN headquarters in New York, and is scheduled to meet until 16 April 2004. The meeting will commence with the official opening of the 12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was tasked to undertake the three-day preparatory meeting leading to the International Meeting, scheduled to take place in Mauritius, from 30 August to 3 September 2004. Delegates are expected to adopt draft decisions on the provisional agenda and organization of work for the International Meeting and on the accreditation of NGOs to the meeting.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BPOA

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

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS: The UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS, which was held in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 25 April to 6 May 1994, was established by General Assembly resolution 47/189 in 1992. Some 125 States and territories participated in the conference, 46 of which were small island developing States and territories. The Conference adopted the Barbados Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of SIDS (BPOA), a 14-point programme that identifies priority areas and indicates specific actions necessary for addressing the special challenges faced by SIDS. The priority areas include: climate change and sea-level rise, natural and environmental disasters, management of wastes, coastal and marine resources, freshwater resources, land resources, energy resources,

tourism resources, biodiversity resources, national institutions and administrative capacity, regional institutions and technical cooperation, transport and communication, science and technology, and human resource development. The BPOA further identified several cross-sectoral areas that required attention: capacity building; institutional development at the national, regional and international levels; cooperation in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies; trade and economic diversification; and finance. The Conference also adopted the Barbados Declaration, a statement of political will underpinning the agreements contained in the BPOA. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was given the responsibility to follow up on the implementation of the BPOA.

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

UNGASS-22: In September 1999, five years following the Barbados Conference, the 22nd Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS-22) undertook a comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the BPOA. The Special Session adopted the "State of Progress and Initiatives for the Future Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS," which identified six problem areas in need of urgent attention: climate change, natural and environmental disasters and climate variability, freshwater resources, coastal and marine resources, energy, and tourism. In addition to these priority areas, the Special Session highlighted the need to focus on means of implementation through: sustainable development strategies, capacity building, resource mobilization and finance, globalization and trade liberalization, transfer of environmentally sound technology, a vulnerability index, information management through strengthening the SIDS Network, and international cooperation and partnership. UNGASS-22 also adopted a Declaration in which Member States, *inter alia*, reaffirmed the principles of and their commitments to sustainable development embodied in Agenda 21, the Barbados Declaration and the BPOA.

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

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

Non-negotiated partnerships/initiatives for sustainable development, also known as Type II outcomes proved to be an important outcome of the WSSD. Since the WSSD, over 260 such partnerships have been launched, 18 of which focus on addressing the challenges facing small islands.

UNGA-57: In December 2002, the 57th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA-57) adopted resolution 57/262, which decided to convene an international meeting in 2004 to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the BPOA, and welcomed the offer of the Government of Mauritius to host the meeting. The General Assembly also decided that the review should seek a renewed political commitment by all countries to, and focus on, practical and pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the BPOA, including through the mobilization of resources and assistance for SIDS. The resolution further decided to convene regional preparatory meetings and an inter-regional preparatory meeting in order to undertake the review of the BPOA at the national, subregional and regional levels, and invited the CSD at its 11th session (CSD-11) to consider its role in the review process. The resolution also requested strengthening of the SIDS Unit within the UN Division for Sustainable Development to enable it to assist in preparations for the review process.

CSD-11: During CSD-11, which convened in New York from 28 April to 9 May 2003, the Commission decided to undertake a three-day preparatory meeting during CSD-12 for an in-depth assessment and appraisal of the implementation of the BPOA, and finalize the preparations for the International Meeting, including its agenda. The CSD further decided to invite the international donor and development communities, and international organizations to provide information on their activities in support of the BPOA's implementation, and specified the dates and venues of the regional and inter-regional preparatory meetings. The CSD-11 decisions were adopted by the UN Economic and Social Council in resolution 2003/55.

REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS: From August to October 2003, three regional preparatory meetings were held for the: Pacific SIDS (4-8 August, Apia, Samoa); Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) SIDS (1-5 September, Praia, Cape Verde); and the Caribbean SIDS (6-10 October, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago). Each of these meetings finalized regional positions, which were presented as Regional Synthesis Reports during the inter-regional preparatory meeting in the Bahamas in January 2004.

EXPERT MEETINGS: In preparation for the inter-regional meeting, a series of four expert meetings were convened from July to December 2003. These meetings addressed: capacity building for renewable energy and energy efficiency; vulnerability of SIDS and enhancing resilience; waste management; and capacity building for sustainable development. The reports of these meetings together with the Regional Synthesis Reports comprised the background documents for the inter-regional meeting.

UNGA-58: In December 2003, the 58th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA-58), in resolution 58/213, decided that the International Meeting would be convened from 30 August to 3 September 2004, and include a high-level segment to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the BPOA. The General Assembly also decided to hold, if deemed necessary by an open-ended preparatory meeting and funded from

voluntary resources, two days of informal consultations in Mauritius, on 28 and 29 August 2004, to facilitate the effective preparation for the International Meeting.

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

INTER-REGIONAL SIDS PREPARATORY MEETING: The Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting for the Ten-year Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS took place from 26-30 January 2004, in Nassau, the Bahamas. At the conclusion of the meeting, the SIDS adopted the Nassau Declaration and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Strategy Paper for the Further Implementation of the BPOA. The AOSIS Strategy Paper was forwarded to the G-77/China for consideration in advance of the SIDS preparatory meeting. The Paper contains chapters on the priority areas of the BPOA and identifies new and emerging issues, including graduation of SIDS LDCs, trade, health, and culture.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT: The UN Secretary-General's report (E/CN.17/2004/8), produced to facilitate consideration of the implementation of the BPOA in preparation for the review to be undertaken at the International Meeting, was released in February 2004. The report offers an overall assessment of progress achieved in the implementation of the BPOA, and concludes that progress has been mixed. It states that SIDS still face major challenges to sustainable development, and accelerated implementation of the BPOA will require a renewal of political commitment by all States to the BPOA and to related international commitments and pledges.

CSD BUREAU MEETINGS: The CSD-12 Bureau met several times between September 2003 and March 2004, during which it considered preparations for the SIDS preparatory meeting. During its sixth meeting on 19 March, the Bureau announced that Don MacKay (New Zealand) would facilitate informal consultations on matters related to the SIDS preparatory meeting.

G-77/CHINA LETTER TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL: On 26 March 2004, the G-77/China transmitted a letter to the UN Secretary-General, stating that it has endorsed the AOSIS Strategy Paper as a basis for negotiation for the review process.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: Facilitated by Don MacKay, informal consultations on matters related to the SIDS preparatory meeting took place on 24 March and 8 April 2004. During the consultations, delegates expressed views on and conducted an informal reading of the Strategy Paper.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

OPENING PLENARY: CSD-12 will open at 10:00 am in the Conference Room 1 with the election of officers, adoption of the CSD-12 agenda, brief opening remarks and other organizational matters. The Commission will then consider issues regarding the preparations for the International Meeting. The UN Secretary-General's report on implementation of the BPOA will be introduced and other documentation, including the Strategy Paper, will be presented.

AFTERNOON SESSION: In the afternoon, delegates are expected to begin negotiations on the Strategy Paper.