



INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: 10-14 JANUARY 2005

The International Meeting (IM) to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) opens today at the Swami Vivekananda International Convention Center in Port Louis, Mauritius, and is scheduled to meet until 14 January 2005. The opening of the IM was preceded by two days of informal consultations on Saturday and Sunday, 8-9 January, which were convened to facilitate preparations for the meeting, in particular to advance negotiations on the *Draft Strategy Paper for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (A/CONF.207/L.1)*.

From Monday to Wednesday (10-12 January), the IM will hold interactive panel discussions in plenary on the themes of: environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS; special challenges of SIDS in trade and economic development; role of culture in the sustainable development of SIDS; addressing emerging trends and social challenges for the sustainable development of SIDS; and building resilience in SIDS. During the first three days of the IM, a Main Committee will convene to, *inter alia*, further deliberations on the Strategy document.

The high-level segment of the IM will take place on Thursday and Friday, 13-14 January, comprising a general debate and two Roundtables. The general debate (13-14 January) is expected to address the "Comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS." The two Roundtables will consider the overall theme of "The Way Forward," with the first (13 January) discussing mobilization of resources, and the second (14 January) addressing capacity building.

Side events and partnership activities addressing a wide range of SIDS-related issues are also scheduled to take place throughout the meeting.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BPOA REVIEW PROCESS

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 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, brought the special case of small islands and coastal 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 oceans, all kinds of seas, and coastal areas included a programme area on the sustainable development of small islands. Agenda 21 also called for a global conference on the sustainable development of SIDS.

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS: Established by UN General Assembly resolution 47/189, the UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS was held in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 25 April to 6 May 1994. The Conference adopted the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (BPOA), a 14-point programme that identifies priority areas and 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 Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was given the responsibility to follow up on the implementation of the BPOA. The Conference also adopted the Barbados Declaration, a statement of political will underpinning the commitments contained in the BPOA.

UNGASS-22: In September 1999, 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. The Special Session also adopted a declaration in which Member States, *inter alia*, reaffirmed the principles of, and their commitment to, sustainable development embodied in Agenda 21, the Barbados Declaration and the BPOA.

MILLENNIUM SUMMIT: In September 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.

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

Non-negotiated partnerships for sustainable development, also known as Type II partnerships/initiatives, were also a key outcome of the WSSD. As of December 2004, 297 such partnerships had been registered with the CSD Secretariat, 53 of which focus on the sustainable development of SIDS.

UNGA-57: In December 2002, the 57th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA-57) adopted resolution 57/262, in which the Assembly 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 by 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 should 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 to undertake the review of the BPOA at the national, subregional and regional levels, and invited CSD-11 to consider its role in 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 preparations for the IM, including its agenda.

REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS: From August to October 2003, three regional preparatory meetings for the IM 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 prepared 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, 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.

UNGA-58: In December 2003, the 58th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA-58), in resolution 58/213, decided to convene the IM from 30 August to 3 September 2004 and approved the provisional rules of procedure of the meeting. In June 2004, the General Assembly, in resolution 58/213 B, decided to change the dates for the IM to 10-14 January 2005, with informal consultations to be held from 8-9 January, if deemed necessary.

INTER-REGIONAL SIDS PREPARATORY MEETING: The Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting for the BPOA review took place from 26-30 January 2004, in Nassau, 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 Strategy paper contains chapters on the priority areas of the BPOA and identifies new and emerging issues, including the graduation of relevant SIDS from least developed country (LDC) status, trade, health and culture.

INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING: The Preparatory Meeting for the BPOA review convened from 14-16 April 2004, at UN headquarters in New York, during CSD-12. Delegates conducted a first reading of the Strategy document and decided to use a compilation text as the basis for further intersessional informal consultations. Delegates also adopted draft decisions on the provisional agenda of, and the accreditation of NGOs to, the IM.

INFORMAL INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: Two rounds of informal consultations, facilitated by Don MacKay, New Zealand's Permanent Representative to the UN, were held from 17-19 May and 7, 8 and 11 October 2004 at UN headquarters in New York, to advance negotiations on the Strategy document. At the conclusion of the October round of informal consultations, delegates had:

- resolved chapters on: Natural and Environment Disasters, Energy Resources, Tourism Resources, Transport and Communication, Science and Technology, Sustainable Capacity Development and Education for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Production and Consumption, Health, Knowledge Management and Information for Decision Making, and Culture;
- reached partial resolution on: the introduction, Management of Wastes, Coastal and Marine Resources, Freshwater Resources, Land Resources, Biodiversity Resources, and Implementation;
- not resolved chapters on: Graduation from LDC Status, and Trade: Globalization and Trade Liberalization; and
- deferred discussions on Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise to the IM.



UNGA-59: In December 2004, the 59th session of the UN General Assembly, in resolution 59/229, decided to convene two days of informal consultations on 8-9 January to facilitate preparations for the IM.

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM: An International Civil Society Forum met from 6-9 January 2005 in Port Louis to, *inter alia*, develop a civil society implementation strategy and a civil society statement for the IM.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

Chaired by Don MacKay, the informal consultations on the Strategy document commenced on Saturday with the observation of a minute of silence for the loss of life and devastation caused by the earthquake and resulting tsunami in South and Southeast Asia. Chair MacKay urged delegates to redouble their efforts to reach agreement on outstanding text and ensure a useful and valuable outcome for SIDS. Delegates continued deliberations on the Strategy document on Saturday and Sunday, and considered organizational matters in preparation for the IM on Sunday.

PROCEDURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:

On Sunday morning, Anwarul Chowdhury, Secretary-General of the IM, formally opened the informal consultations. Delegates elected by acclamation Jagdish Koonjul, Mauritius Ambassador to the UN, as the Chair of the informal pre-conference consultations on procedural and organizational matters.

During the informal consultations, delegates considered and approved recommendations to the IM on all organizational and procedural matters of the IM, including on the: agenda (A/CONF.207/1); rules of procedure (A/CONF.207/2); organization of work (A/CONF.207/4); election of officers; accreditation of intergovernmental organizations and major groups; credentials committee; and arrangements for the preparation of the report of the IM.

STRATEGY FOR THE FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS: Introduction:

Delegates addressed this section on Saturday. On the opening paragraph, Mauritius, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, proposed separating the text into two paragraphs, with the first focusing on the BPOA and the second on internationally agreed development goals. Luxembourg, on behalf of the EU, preferred maintaining both references in one paragraph. Delegates agreed to the G-77/China's proposal.

Regarding text on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the G-77/CHINA agreed to refer to the "Rio principles including, *inter alia*, principle 7 of the Rio Declaration." While agreeing to the language, the US noted its opposition to specifying elements of the Rio Declaration, and said it would submit an interpretation on this text to the IM.

On mobilization of resources, the US opposed a reference, contained in a reformulated text proposed by the G-77/China, noting a "significant decline" in overall ODA to SIDS. Chair MacKay recommended, and delegates agreed, to compromise text referring to an overall decline in ODA to SIDS "as noted in the Secretary-General's report" on SIDS (E/CN.17/2004/8).

Delegates agreed, with minor amendments, to the Chair's proposed text on enhancing coherence, governance and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems, which would facilitate SIDS' participation

in international financial decision-making processes and institutions.

On the paragraph concerning unilateral measures, the US stressed that the text was not relevant to SIDS, while the G-77/CHINA emphasized the importance of this issue. Chair MacKay suggested that delegates consult bilaterally on this issue.

Natural and environmental disasters: On Saturday, AUSTRALIA, supported by the G-77/CHINA, US and EU, proposed inserting new text on the effects of the recent tsunami on SIDS. Chair MacKay suggested that Australia draft additional text in consultation with interested delegates.

Management of wastes: This section was considered on Saturday. Regarding the chapeau, the G-77/CHINA proposed reformulated language on: SIDS financial and technical capacity for waste management; security and liability issues relating to the transport of radioactive material; and shipwrecks. The US opposed listing specific issues in the chapeau, following which the G-77/CHINA proposed describing these concerns as SIDS-specific. Chair MacKay underscored that the BPOA qualified them as international concerns, and suggested postponing discussion on the chapeau.

Delegates agreed, with minor discussion, to text on: SIDS regional partnerships on waste management and the need for international assistance; and the creation of appropriate national environmental trust funds as an innovative means of financing waste management infrastructure.

On the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, delegates agreed to text on strengthening work under the Basel Convention. The US proposed, and delegates agreed, to delete reference to the principles of prior informed agreement, liability, compensation, emergency fund, and support for Basel Regional Centers.

On the transportation of radioactive material, JAPAN and the US said there was an excellent safety record for such transports. Providing examples to the contrary, the G-77/CHINA said cessation of the transport of radioactive material and hazardous waste in SIDS regions is the "ultimate goal of SIDS," and stressed that dialogue with shipping States needs to address safety, disclosure, liability, security and compensation issues. An informal group met on Sunday afternoon to deliberate further on this issue.

Coastal and marine resources: Delegates concluded discussions on this chapter on Saturday. Regarding the regulation of vessel registrations, the G-77/CHINA proposed, and delegates agreed to, text from UN General Assembly resolution 58/240, which notes the need to build technological and financial capacities to enforce SIDS' responsibilities under international law, and urges SIDS flag States to, *inter alia*, consider declining the granting of the right to fly their flag to new vessels. Minor amendments proposed by the G-77/China on text encouraging distant water fishing nations to provide SIDS with technical and financial support for sustainable fishery management were also agreed based on JPOI language.

Freshwater resources: This section was addressed on Saturday. On text referring to saline intrusion, the US proposed, and the G-77/CHINA opposed, replacing text stating that climate change exacerbates saline intrusion with text noting that it is exacerbated by, *inter alia*, inadequate management of water resources. Chair MacKay suggested that this issue be further discussed in an informal group.



On a paragraph regarding the 4th World Water Forum, JAPAN proposed text stating that this process presents an opportunity to continue to enhance self-reliance in SIDS. The G-77/CHINA suggested, and delegates agreed to, text noting that the Forum will be an opportunity for SIDS to continue to seek international support to build self-reliance and implement their agreed priority actions, as submitted to the 3rd World Water Forum's Portfolio of Water Actions.

Land resources: Delegates concluded deliberations on this chapter on Saturday. On a paragraph regarding the challenges faced by SIDS from land degradation, the G-77/CHINA proposed language that directly links land degradation with the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and calls upon SIDS to use GEF resources to address land degradation through the GEF's operational programme on Sustainable Land Management. The US and EU opposed the reference to the CBD, and clarified that the GEF is not the only financial mechanism of the CCD. Following discussions, delegates agreed to delete text referencing the CBD and supported text that SIDS should fully utilize available GEF resources to develop and implement projects to address land degradation.

On sustainable forest management, delegates agreed to a subparagraph on ensuring adherence to national forest policies that have been developed to safeguard the rights of owners, as well as licensed and other legitimate users.

Biodiversity resources: This chapter was addressed on Saturday. Delegates agreed, with minor discussion, to text on: enhancing national efforts in the implementation of the CBD programme of work on protected areas, including the establishment of marine protected areas; and developing capacity for protecting and developing traditional knowledge of indigenous groups for access and benefit sharing. Delegates also agreed, with a minor amendment, to text on developing human and institutional research capacity for biodiversity research.

On access and benefit sharing, delegates could not reach agreement on a proposal by the G-77/China to refer expressly to unauthorized access and misappropriation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. Chair MacKay suggested that delegations consult bilaterally on this text.

Graduation from LDC status: This chapter was discussed on Saturday and Sunday. In a preliminary exchange of views, the G-77/CHINA said the issue of graduation should be reconsidered in light of the recent tsunami disaster and its impacts on the Maldives, which is a graduating LDC. He proposed new text welcoming the ECOSOC resolution E/2004/L.56 to define a "smooth transition strategy" for countries graduating from LDC status and stating that it is critical that smooth transitions take into account vulnerabilities and do not adversely affect long-term sustainable development.

On Sunday, the US said the ECOSOC/General Assembly resolutions do not define the smooth transition as a strategy but as a process, and after suggestions from the Chair, delegates agreed to reflect the title of the ECOSOC resolution instead.

The US said the vulnerabilities of all countries, not just SIDS, should be noted in the text. The G-77/CHINA underlined the need: for more differentiated treatment for countries that face challenges, like SIDS; to focus on both the implementation and the elaboration of national smooth transition strategies; and

to highlight the involvement of development partners in the formulation of strategies.

Delegates agreed to text noting that recently graduated countries and all States that are currently potential candidates for graduation are SIDS, and that it is critical that the elaboration and implementation of national smooth transition strategies formulated with development partners take into consideration the specific vulnerabilities of graduating States and ensure that graduation does not disrupt their development plans, programmes and projects aimed at achieving sustainable development.

Trade: The informal group of experts, established at the previous round of informals, continued discussions on trade issues throughout the weekend. Delegates discussed trade-related paragraphs in the implementation section of the Strategy document, focusing, *inter alia*, on: WTO accession; trade-related technical assistance and capacity building; completion of the Doha negotiations; trade preferences; post-Doha trade liberalization; and financial flows.

Implementation: Introduction: On Sunday, delegates agreed to revised formulations proposed by the G-77/China regarding substantially increasing the flow of financial and other relevant resources, and national country-driven and country-owned plans for sustainable development, including poverty reduction and resilience building.

Access to and the provision of financial resources: In this section, delegates agreed to a subparagraph outlining the responsibilities of developed and developing countries regarding the provision and use of ODA, which builds on agreed language from paragraph 42 of the Monterrey Consensus. Delegates also discussed reformulated text proposed by the G-77/China on the GEF, which urges, *inter alia*, the simplification of the access, effectiveness and efficiency of the GEF's disbursement procedures. The EU proposed text inviting GEF to consider ways of improving such procedures. The US called for a reference to the role of GEF Implementing Agencies. This text remains unresolved.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While many delegates were pleased with the pace of negotiations during the informal consultations, some noted that the contentious issue of climate change has yet to be discussed and that the implementation and trade chapters remain largely unresolved. As delegates toured the island on a fieldtrip on Sunday afternoon, the bulk of their work remains unconcluded.

Given the recent tsunami disaster, and the expected arrival of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan during the high-level segment, several delegates are anticipating an increased profile of issues concerning island vulnerability and the need for increased international support for SIDS to prepare for, and respond to, such events. Some have suggested, with the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) taking place just after the IM, the Secretary-General's visit will help to build the political momentum necessary to establish an early warning system for the Indian Ocean. Delegates expressed hope that the IM will conclude with broad political support for such an initiative, and expect that the WCDR will address the specific modalities of the initiative.