

24 September 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the High-level Review of the Mauritius Strategy**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to take the floor on the occasion of the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy.

This week has already seen a rich variety of discussions and meetings on environmental questions. I should like to stress in particular the appeal, made during the high-level meeting on biodiversity, for concrete actions to slow the alarming rate of loss of biological diversity in the world. This objective is important for the small island developing States, whose economies are heavily dependent on such industries as fisheries and tourism.

Today, we wish to focus in particular upon the difficulties faced by small-island developing States: their small size, remoteness and lack of resources.

These States are also increasingly exposed to global ecological crises. Tsunamis, earthquakes and other natural catastrophes affect them in a completely disproportionate manner; wiping out years or even decades of economic development. Nor can anyone remain complacent in the face of the threat to low-lying atolls presented by rising sea levels.

In the face of these challenges, the international community adopted, in 1994 in Barbados, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In 2005, that programme was strengthened by the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy.

Since that time, significant progress has been made on environmental preservation in those countries. I note with satisfaction that the Millennium Development Goal relating to the environment is well on the way to being achieved.

The overall record, however, is less reassuring. Indeed, for other goals, for example the reduction of poverty, we are still a long way from victory.

Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We shall devote the next two days to examining the progress made and the difficulties encountered in implementing the Mauritius Strategy. This will allow us to move forward. I hope that our discussions will result in a strengthened political will to reduce the vulnerabilities of the small island developing States.

I invite you to consider ways to promote coordinated international support and to build partnerships. For in the family of nations, it is the most vulnerable that deserve particular attention.

May your discussions be productive ones.

[Translated from French]