



Statement by Mr. Jeem Lippwe
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia
On behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

At the Plenary Session on “Land”
of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting
for the 17th Meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development
25 February 2009

Chairperson,

I am honored to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). I would first like to associate myself with the statement delivered by Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Chairperson,

Land is scarce and central to the economic and cultural well-being of Small Island States. It connects to all the topics under consideration in this year’s CSD. It forms the basis of agriculture and rural development and is challenged by drought and desertification.

Land in Small Island States is often characterized by a traditional distribution structure which can result in excessive fragmentation of already small parcels and unclear ownership and insecure tenure. Land surveys can be a good starting point to give an adequate picture, and where appropriate registration and titles should be implemented, taking into account traditional forms of land ownership.

Chairperson,

Land erosion is a visible and growing problem for small island states, which is aggravated by the adverse impact of climate change. It is especially felt in the coastal areas where most of our fertile land lies. This problem can be addressed by climate adaptation strategies, which will strengthen the resilience of communities affected by land erosion. However, these strategies should take into account the needs of the community and the conservation of our biodiversity.

Gathering information on the efficient use of land, erosion and rural and urban planning is essential for our sustainable development. However, many small island states lack the technical capability, capacity and resources to do so. In order to improve our information gathering, we require assistance and technology transfer. We also need to engage our local communities. Furthermore, it is essential for Small Island States to share knowledge and best practices on data collection.

Chairperson,

At this juncture, the pressures of urbanization are increasingly felt by Small Island States. While we need to meet the demand for housing and services in the urban areas, we also have to be mindful of the impact on the environment, especially sewage and waste disposal. In this regard, it is important that our states are equipped with the capacity to minimize the negative impacts of urbanization. We therefore invite our development partners to assist us in this area.

Chairperson,

We are mindful that our land, coastal-zone and ocean management need to incorporate climate change adaptation strategies. Climate change adaptation should form the basis for our national land policies. These policies should be comprehensive, incorporating social, cultural, traditional and environmental factors. At the same time we must not neglect the interests of our communities when developing and implementing these policies.

Small Island States also need an improved management of natural resources to support agricultural development. Fiscal measures to encourage better land use and financial instruments to provide access to credit for small farmers would help to optimize our land use.

Thank you, Chairperson.