



**GENERAL COMMENTS**  
**ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)**  
**BY H.E. DR. DESSIMA M. WILLIAMS, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GRENADA TO THE**  
**UN, ON THE CHAIRMAN'S DRAFT NEGOTIATING DOCUMENT AT THE CSD-17**  
**4<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009**

**Madam Chair,**

- CSD-17 is taking place during a period characterised by unprecedented turmoil and volatility in the global economic system as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis which is unraveling at a dizzying speed. It is therefore unfortunate and regrettable that the text has largely failed to capture this reality and take into account the impact of the fallout on developing countries, in particular Small Island Developing States (SIDS) whose heightened vulnerability makes them a special case for sustainable development.
- Against this background and as stated a few months ago during the IPM, there is need for a separate section on SIDS to underscore the critical needs of, and key policy options required to assist our countries as they apply to the respective thematic clusters, given that CSD is the primary intergovernmental mechanism for follow-up to commitments to SIDS.

**Cross-cutting issues/Means of implementation**

- More substantive reference to the Mauritius Strategy and its importance to SIDS are required.
- Food security should be addressed as a cross-cutting issue for SIDS.
- Climate change threatens the territorial existence of SIDS evidenced by inter alia sea-level rise and the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. The text should therefore reflect this reality.
- The need for an integrated approach to address the challenges posed by climate change to agriculture, biodiversity, land and ecosystem management in SIDS as well as the urgent need for measures to address adaptation in SIDS, ought to be reflected in the text.
- The need for increased investment in capacity-building and transfer of appropriate technologies specific to SIDS to implement adaptation measures to address challenges such as salinisation from sea-level rise should be highlighted.
- Availability of and accessibility to funding from GEF and other sources, should be addressed.
- Finance, technology and capacity building are required to support SIDS in their efforts to promote the long-term development of efficient agricultural industries including the scope and potential for diversification and value-added activities to ensure agricultural competitiveness, research and development, diversification and food security.
- There is need for access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to SIDS on a concessional or preferential basis.

- The need for a rules-based, non-discriminatory, equitable multilateral trading system should be emphasized.
- In the light of the erosion of trade preferences in the agricultural sector in SIDS which has severely impacted our already fragile economies, social stability, health and education and our potential to attract investment and pursue appropriate trade and development policies, the text should:
  - recognize the importance of addressing the issue of preference erosion and compensation mechanisms to offset erosion of trade preferences in the agricultural sector,
  - call for expeditious completion by the WTO of the Work Programme on Small, vulnerable economies and simplification and acceleration of accession procedures for SIDS in the WTO.

The following are a few key concerns of particular importance to SIDS on the respective themes which AOSIS believes should be underlined in the text:

#### **Agriculture/Rural development**

- The text should have a reference to crop insurance to assist SIDS whose agricultural sectors are decimated in the wake of natural disasters.
- The need for enhanced assistance in implementing policies linking tourism and agriculture in SIDS, to promote rural development and to increase the contribution of indigenous products to the tourism industry, thus promoting agricultural diversification and the development of value-added agriculture products.

#### **Land**

- Measures to combat land degradation, including the restoration and rehabilitation of mangroves and reefs, must be underlined.
- Coastal erosion and land losses as a result of sea-level rise in the context of land scarcity constitute a critical challenge to SIDS.

#### **Drought**

- There is need for adaptation strategies focused on drought mitigation in light of changing rainfall patterns as a result of climate change, thus creating serious water scarcity in SIDS.

#### **Desertification**

- Addressing desertification is critical to adaptation to and mitigation of climate change as well as mitigation of global biodiversity losses in SIDS. This needs to be referenced in the text.

#### **Africa**

- SIDS support the need for a green revolution in Africa.