



Permanent Mission of
the Federal Republic of Germany
to the United Nations

EU 2007 DE

**Commission on Sustainable Development
Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting**

26 February to 02 March 2007

Sustainable Development of SIDS

**Statement
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on behalf of the European Union**

New York, 26 February 2007

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I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia align themselves with this declaration.

- The EU highly welcomes this session of the IPM to consider implementation of the Programme of action for sustainable development of SIDS. This session will remind us of the special circumstances and the vulnerabilities that especially Small Island Developing States are facing. The interrelated cluster of issues CSD will formulate policy options for – energy for sustainable development, air pollution/ atmosphere, climate change and industrial development – are key factors to reduce the economic, social and environmental vulnerability of these states.
- We are determined to continue to support SIDS in addressing their most vital challenges: adaptation to climate change, increasing access to cleaner energy among the poor, promoting renewable energies, protection of fragile ecosystems, more market access, (making tourism more sustainable, fighting diseases like HIV/AIDS or malaria, a shift to more sustainable agriculture) and overcoming isolation and vulnerabilities.

Climate Change

- **Climate change** is the greatest challenge facing the international community this century. As we all know, especially SIDS are very critically affected by the global warming process. Tropical storms and rising sea levels continue to threaten to completely submerge islands like the Maldives, Tuvalu or Nauru. In order for development to be sustainable, climate change issues should be fully integrated within national and international development policy and planning, including the need for mitigation and adaptation measures.
- **Adaptation** to climate change is an area in which urgent action is needed. The timely development of strategies for adapting to the impacts of climate change is of extreme importance for countries with the highest exposure like the SIDS. In this regards the EU very much welcomes the decision on the establishment of the adaptation fund at the 12th session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC in Nairobi and urges its entering into the operational phase as soon as practicable.
- Concretely, the EU has already taken several steps in order to support SIDS in their efforts to reduce their vulnerability and improve their adaptation capacities. For example, the SIDS strategies under the new European Development Fund 10 are currently under preparation and will include specific actions in this field. In the Caribbean, support to the improvement of response to natural hazards (including climate change) is one of the focal areas.
- It is important to develop long term predictable policy frameworks to help countries move towards a low carbon emission society. The European Union is more then ever committed to **reducing its greenhouse gas emissions** (by at least 20% by 2020) and implementing its obligations under the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol as well as promoting the further development of a global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement.

Energy for sustainable development

- **Access to sustainable energy services is crucial** for the achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals**. To achieve these goals developing countries will need a substantially increased energy input. This is a global challenge which needs to be addressed urgently with all relevant actors in order to arrive at more tangible commitments. Under the European Development Fund 10, it is proposed, in the Pacific, to focus (among other issues) on the development of renewable energy sources.
- Especially for SIDS it is essential to build up **decentralised energy systems**, including solar and wind energy systems, tailored to the geographical circumstances of the SIDS. Increasing the share of **renewable energy** in the energy mix is not only vital to reducing emissions. It is also a tool for lessening dependency on imported fuels and their unpredictable prices – something that has a very negative effect on the economies of Small Island Developing States. In many of these countries, a **large share of the export revenues** has to be spent on **energy imports**. Increasing energy prices represent a heavy burden for poor households.

International Trade

- There is no doubt that islands need **more market access and better terms of trade**. The EU already made substantial efforts to offer enhanced market access to many SIDS and encourages others to join these efforts. We need to make trade an instrument for sustainable development. Trade-related development assistance can play an important role in helping to enhance SIDS' capacity to maximise the benefits of the globalization process.
- In 1999 the EU put in place an extensive programme for trade-related Sustainability Impact Assessments to help ensure the sustainability of international trade. As part of this programme, a number of sector-specific studies has been carried out covering the tourism industry in the Caribbean and the fisheries in the Pacific.

Crosscutting issues

- The EU welcomes the process of elaborating and/or strengthening National Sustainable Development Strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans in the particular cases of SIDS, and encourages to develop this work, as those are particularly relevant instruments to integrate better all sustainable development issues into national planning.