

Children & Youth
UN Commission on Sustainable Development 16th session
12 May 2008
SIDS Day

Thank you Madame chair for the opportunity to speak, and good afternoon. I am Daniel from Singapore; this is my colleague Jennifer from the United States. We are privileged to represent the Youth Caucus today. As children and youth of the world, we acknowledge the special challenges faced by Small Island Developing nations, many of which were eloquently addressed this morning. Consequently, we agree that CSD scheduling should reflect the importance of these issues.

We would like to further emphasize one point which we are extremely concerned about; one which we feel affects all of the themes of CSD-16 and all issues that relate to SIDS. We are talking about the ethical responsibility of developed countries to safeguard the wellbeing of those most affected by climate change. The moral imperative for industrialized countries is clear: They cannot sit idly and watch while the peoples of SIDS endure hardships that the developed nations are directly responsible for creating.

The children & youth of the Small Island Developing States have inherited an uncertain future. Climate Change places a particular burden on children who face forced dislocation at a vulnerable period in their lives, and whose cultural and geographic identities are increasingly threatened. The developed states must assist SIDS in mitigating the effects of coastal displacement, forced migration, and degradation of the natural resource base.

Governments must ratify binding international treaties to address climate change, and be held accountable to honor their commitments. All developed states that have not signed onto international agreements on climate change must do so immediately. These treaties must reflect the reality of people at the grass-root level. Speaking about sustainable development issues without proceeding to concrete actions demonstrates a lack of sincerity, even hypocrisy. There is an unjust disconnect between words & actions, exacerbating the suffering of the world's most vulnerable.

The presenters this afternoon have spoken with hope about the potential for a sustainable & prosperous future for the people of the Small Island Developing States. As the children & youth of the world we urge that our actions as a global community enable this aspiration to become a reality.