

**Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies in Pacific Island States
New York, 4 – 5 May 2006**

**Statement by
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Chair, Excellencies, participants, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to warmly welcome you to this Workshop, which we are convening to take stock of NSDS development in Pacific States, and to discuss the next steps in implementation of our UNDESA Project.

I am delighted that we have with us today, His Excellency, Ambassador Mantovani, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, so that I may take this opportunity to thank him personally, and through him, the Government of Italy, for its generous financial contribution to the Project. In particular, this contribution has allowed us to bring representatives from Capitals not only to this Workshop, but also so that they could benefit from participation in the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

I would also like to thank the distinguished Ambassadors and staff of the New York-based Missions for their keen interest and the active participation they have shown in the context of the Project. In particular, I convey a special thanks to His Excellency, Ambassador Aisi, for his willing leadership and engagement of himself and his staff, which has facilitated consultations with Pacific States and contributed to the advances we have made in project implementation. I hope we will continue this productive collaboration with the Pacific Island Forum and its Chair as we progress with the next stage of project implementation.

Finally, I would like to thank you, our National Focal Points, who have traveled for several days in order to be with us here in New York so that we may learn from your NSDS experience and the challenges that you face in this context.

I am also pleased to welcome representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (Pacific Subregional Centre), the Global Environmental Facility, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, all of which support a number of activities for furthering sustainable development for the benefit of Pacific Island populations.

Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Mauritius Strategy and more recently, the Pacific Plan, all call upon countries to develop National Sustainable Development Strategies. I would like to congratulate those of you that have completed such strategies. These strategies are good examples of how sustainable development planning is indeed both possible and desirable in Pacific Island States, and you play an important role in the sharing of experiences and good practice that can benefit other countries.

Ms. Mary Pat Silveira, whom you all know by now, will provide you with more detail of the scope of your work for today and tomorrow and how the next steps in project implementation will unfold. I would like to stress that the ultimate success of the Project lies in the hands of you - the participating States, and the way that you choose to make use of the opportunities offered within the framework of the Project. I, and my staff, will do our utmost to stretch available resources and create well targeted and meaningful interventions, but unless these are internalized in the national development process and modus operandi, the outcomes may at best be limited.

I hope that you will all benefit from the discussions today and tomorrow. I know that we will all walk away with a better understanding of your situations and how we can best support you in your efforts.

Please excuse me, I will have to return to the CSD, but I look forward to seeing you on Monday for SIDS day.

Thank you.