



**UN SMALL ISLAND CONFERENCE ADOPTS MAURITIUS DECLARATION, STRATEGY;
RECOMMITS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MOST VULNERABLE NATIONS**

Calls for Action on Climate Change, Natural Disasters, Trade

A major United Nations Conference on the future of small island developing States concluded here today with the adoption of the Mauritius Declaration and Strategy, by which the international community recommitted itself to the achievement of the sustainable development of the world's most vulnerable nations.

During the week-long international meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, small island nations had a rare opportunity to present their case to the global community, to seek partnerships and innovative ways to help them address their most vital challenges, including their economic and environmental vulnerabilities.

The Mauritius Strategy adopted today reaffirms that the Barbados Programme of Action, adopted a decade ago, remains the "blueprint" for the sustainable development of small island developing States. It elaborates on a wide variety of actions under 20 broad headings, including climate change and sea-level rise; natural and environmental disasters; management of wastes; coastal and marine resources; freshwater resources; land resources; energy resources; and globalization and trade liberalization.

The newly-agreed text indicates that small island developing States, "believe that they are already experiencing major adverse effects of climate change" and that adaptation to adverse impacts of climate change and sea-level rise remains a major priority for them. It also promotes increased energy efficiency and development and use of renewable energy as a matter of priority, as well as advanced and cleaner fossil fuel technologies.

On trade issues, the text recognizes that most small island developing States, as a result of their small size, persistent structural disadvantages and vulnerabilities, face specific difficulties in integrating into the global economy. It also recognizes the importance of intensifying efforts to facilitate the full and effective participation by small island developing States in the deliberations and decision-making process of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In closing remarks, Paul Raymond Bérenger, Prime Minister of Mauritius and President of the International Meeting, declared the Conference a "resounding success", saying that it had proved, once again, that small States, in general, and small island developing States, in particular, could fully contribute their share in international affairs, at the level of the United Nations and other international institutions. It had shown, once more, that small States did deserve respect and consideration.

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The Mauritius Strategy and Declaration reminded the international community that small island developing States were a special case and particularly vulnerable, he added. They provided for the further and full implementation of the Barbados Programme and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the provision of financial resources sufficient for achieving those Goals.

The Secretary-General of the Mauritius Meeting, Anwarul K. Chowdhury, noted that while the meeting focused on issues of implementation, the international community now had to look forward to the road to implementing the Mauritius Strategy. He thanked the multiple stakeholders for their contributions to finalizing the Strategy, including the donor community, multilateral institutions, civil society, the private sector, regional organizations and the small island developing States themselves.

In other action, the International Meeting adopted its report, which was presented by its Rapporteur-General, as well as a resolution on expression of thanks to the people and Government of Mauritius.

Statements were made by: President of the Federated States of Micronesia; Vice-President of Palau; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu; Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya; Minister of Coordination of Environment Affairs and Natural Resources of Mozambique; Under-Secretary of Energy of Kuwait; European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the European Community; Minister for the Environment and Water Resources of Singapore; Minister of Health and the Environment of the Bahamas; Minister for Development, Cooperation and Francophone of France; Minister of State for Environmental Affairs of Egypt; Minister of State, (Environment and Union Matters) of Tanzania; Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development of Senegal; Under-Secretary of State for Multilateral Affairs of Denmark; Special Envoy for the President on Environment and Sustainable Development of Guyana; Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Japan; Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece; Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia; Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia; Under-Secretary for Multilateral and Human Rights Issues of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico; High Commissioner for Canada in Mauritius and Special Envoy of the Minister of International Cooperation to the International Meeting; Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria; President of the Portuguese Institute for Development Assistance; and the representatives of Maldives, Russian Federation, Nigeria, Norway, Sudan, Peru, United States, Switzerland, Iceland, Dominican Republic, Austria, United Arab Emirates.

Also: Envoy of the Prime Minister, Minister for Petroleum and Energy, Acting Minister for National Planning and Rural Development of Papua New Guinea; representatives of the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Pakistan, Tunisia, Brazil, Chile, United States Virgin Islands, New Caledonia and Netherlands Antilles; Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat; Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Deputy Director-General, International Organization for Migration; President of the Barbados Red Cross Society; Commissioner for Economic Affairs, African Union Commission; CEO and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility (GEF); Member of the Indian Ocean Commission Council of Ministers; a representative of the United Nations Environment Programme; Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT); Liaison Officer, World Health Organization (WHO); Senior Representative, International Monetary Fund; Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP); Secretary-General of the Pacific

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Islands Forum Secretariat; and Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Basel Convention.

Mauritius Declaration

The 20-paragraph Declaration reaffirms the continued validity of the Barbados Programme of Action as the "blueprint providing the fundamental framework for the sustainable development of small island developing States". Reiterating that the acknowledged vulnerability of such States will grow unless urgent steps are taken, it reaffirms the world's commitment to support the efforts of small island developing States for their sustainable development through the further full and effective implementation of the Barbados Programme.

The Declaration further reaffirms that small island developing States continue to be a "special case" for sustainable development. It recognizes that the tragic impact of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami and the recent hurricane season in the Caribbean and the Pacific highlight the need to develop and strengthen effective disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, emergency relief, and rehabilitation and reconstruction capacities.

The text welcomes the declaration of the Special ASEAN Leaders Meeting held in the aftermath of the recent disaster that proposed establishment of a regional natural disaster early warning system for the Indian Ocean and the South-east Asia region. Further, it commits to full implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and to further promotion of international cooperation on climate change.

The Declaration recognizes that particular attention should be given to building resilience in small island developing States, including through technology transfer and development, capacity-building and human resource development. It further recognizes that international trade is important for building resilience and sustainable development and, therefore, calls upon international financial institutions to pay appropriate attention to the structural disadvantages and vulnerabilities of small island developing States.

Further, the Declaration underscores that attention should be focused on the specific trade- and development-related needs and concerns of small island developing States to enable them to integrate fully into the multilateral trading system in accordance with the Doha mandate on small economies.

The text goes on to address women and youth, conservation of marine biodiversity, the importance of cultural identity, HIV/AIDS, and commits to timely implementation of the Mauritius Strategy just adopted.

(The complete text is contained in A/CONF.207/L.6 and Corr.1 and 2.)

Strategy for further Implementation of Action Programme

The 30-page strategy states that the Barbados Programme remains the "blueprint" for the sustainable development of small island developing States, and elaborates on a wide variety of actions under 20 broad headings: climate change and sea-level rise; natural and environmental disasters; management of wastes; coastal and marine resources; freshwater resources; land resources; energy resources; tourism resources; biodiversity resources; transport and communication; science and technology; graduation from least developed country status; trade: globalization and trade liberalization; sustainable capacity development and education for sustainable development; sustainable production

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and consumption; national and regional enabling environments; health; knowledge management; culture; and implementation.

On climate change, the strategy points out that many small island States believe they are already experiencing major adverse effects from climate change and the long-term effects might threaten some States very existence. Through the strategy, the international community reaffirms its commitment to achieving, in accordance with the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystem to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. The text states "Parties that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol strongly urge all States that have not done so to ratify it in a timely manner".

The strategy recommends that the international community: fully implement the Framework Convention; continue to take steps in accordance with the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol to address climate change, including through adaptation and mitigation in accordance with the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", and promote increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy as a matter of priority. For their part, small island States are called on to, with help through the allocation of dedicated financial resources, develop and implement adaptation strategies and establish and strengthen regional climate change coordination mechanisms.

On natural disasters, the strategy points out that small island developing States are located among the most vulnerable regions in the world in relation to the intensity and frequency of natural and environmental disasters and face disproportionately high economic, social and environmental consequences. Through the strategy, those States commit to strengthening the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and related regional mechanisms; and using opportunities such as the 10-year review of the Yokohama Strategy on Natural Disaster Reduction, including the outcome for 2005 to 2015 of the World Conference on Disaster in Kobe, Japan, to consider the specific concerns of small island States, including insurance and reinsurance arrangements.

On health, the strategy states that responding effectively to HIV/AIDS is both an "urgent health issue and a development imperative". Thus, with the help of the international community, further action is required, including strengthening the health management and financing systems for small island States to enable them to arrest the epidemic; technical assistance to facilitate prompt access to funds from the Global Fund to Combat HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and enhanced accessibility to effective drugs at affordable prices.

The strategy states that further implementation of the Barbados Programme, as well as Agenda 21 of Rio and the implementation plan of the Johannesburg Summit, will require a "more focused and substantially increased effort", both by the States and the international community, and outlines steps for both. Small islands States commit to taking action in 12 key areas, such as: implementing national adaptation strategies for climate change; promoting renewable energy; protecting intellectual property, including folklore; developing partnerships to spread out risks, reduce insurance premiums, expand insurance coverage and thereby increase financing for post-disaster reconstruction; and establish and strengthen early warning systems.

The international community, for its part, reaffirms its commitment through: financial resources; the transfer of technology; capacity development; and steps in national and international governance. The financing commitment is

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expected to come through strengthened country-driven donor coordination; support for regional and interregional cooperation among small island States; broad-based partnerships; harnessing the potential for foreign direct investment; and facilitating access to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) by small island developing States. Technology transfer should include a focus on technology that will help build resilience in order to address growing vulnerability. Developing capacity should include investment in training in such areas as water and waste management, energy, climate change adaptation, cultural industries, sustainable tourism, intellectual property rights and disaster management.

The strategy states that good governance is essential for sustainable development and the small island States commit themselves to, among others: developing and strengthening legislative, administrative and institutional structures; promoting an economic environment conducive to investment, technology and enterprise development and a well functioning business sector; and engaging the private sector in sustainable development. For its part, the international community, in order to ensure a dynamic global economic environment, is called on to ensure support for structural and macroeconomic reform, provide a comprehensive solution to the debt problem and increase market access for small island developing States.

Further, the strategy states that the following should be given high priority: redoubled efforts towards the successful completion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations launched at Doha; facilitation for the accession of small island developing States; use of appropriate long-term mechanisms to facilitate the adjustment of small island States to post-Doha trade liberalization; recognition of the importance of long-standing preferences and of the need for steps to address the issue of preference erosion; continuing the commitment to Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund; and working to ensure that in the WTO Work Programme on Small Economies due account is taken of small island developing States, which have severe structural handicaps in integrating into the global economy.

(The Strategy was adopted as meeting document A/CONF.207/L.4/Add. 1 to 7, which contains texts revised and agreed upon during informal consultations in Mauritius.)

Background

The Mauritius International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States continued its high-level segment today. For background on the conference, see Press Release ENV/DEV/SIDS/1 issued on 10 January.

Statements

JOSEPH J. URUSEMAL, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, said assistance from the international community was most crucial if small island developing States were to continue forward on the path of progress. For countries such as Micronesia, vulnerability was one of the main obstacles to sustainable development. For Micronesia, and the rest of the Pacific islands, it was understandable that global climate change, and in particular the risk of sea-level rise, was of immediate concern. Micronesia and its neighbours have called on bigger and more resourceful nations for immediate actions against global warming out of concern and fear that sea-level rise would make many of their islands disappear. He urged countries that had not already done so to ratify the Kyoto Protocol concerning greenhouse gases.

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Mr. Urusemal said it was incomprehensible that industrialized nations would continue to traverse the Exclusive Economic Zones of small island developing states with plutonium and radioactive wastes without any liability and compensation arrangements in place in the event of an accident. One single accident in the zone of Micronesia, or in its neighbour's zones, would place the lives of their people at risk, and severely hamper any of their hopes for sustainable development. Moreover, unauthorized fishing was a threat to the conservation and sustainable management of fishery resources and small island developing States required the cooperation of other States to take greater enforcement measures to ensure that their vessels did not engage in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in areas of national jurisdiction. In the face of significant decline in the official development assistance (ODA) and increasing obligation on small island developing States to address international agreements, financial and technical assistance from the international community was needed more than ever. Small island developing States, he said, called on development partners to meet the internationally agreed level of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) and support them in their endeavour to achieve sustainable development.

ELIAS CAMSEK CHIN, Vice-President of Palau, said that it was time for small island developing States to come to grips with both their strengths and weaknesses, and carve out a prosperous future for their people, their islands and regions. While they must certainly depend on regional and international trade partners for assistance, small island developing States were ultimately responsible for their own futures, sustainable development and cultural and economic health. It was time to move away from excuses and begin the rapid process of implementing modern comprehensive, sustainable, economic, development strategy frameworks. For small island developing States, those frameworks must be unique and fit their own distinctive realities and situations.

Even if countries like Palau made all the right decisions, however, they would not succeed unless they committed to a vibrant and equal partnership with developed nations. The commitment of developed countries must be reflected in expanded practical partnerships, both public and private, with broader and more diverse funding opportunities. It must be demonstrated through rapid and practical disbursing mechanisms that met the capacities of small island developing States. Most of all, that commitment must recognize the cultural and economic uniqueness of every island nation.

SATO KILMAN, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu, said that the principal challenge facing his country was its low capacity to integrate into the global economy. Like many small island States, Vanuatu had not been able to capitalize on the opportunities presented by globalization. For his country, the gains from globalization could only be realized if proper policies and capacities were in place at the national level. Secondly, close to 80 per cent of the population still depended on the land for their livelihood. However, urbanization was upsetting the lives of many people in both urban and rural areas. Towns were taking in more people than they could provide services for and rural villages were getting depopulated and neglected.

In addition, rapid development efforts had exerted considerable pressures on limited available resources, he said. The main response to those challenges had been the Comprehensive Reform Programme (CRP), which targeted economic and social reforms and public sector reform. The successful implementation of sustainable development in Vanuatu depended invariably on the capacity of national institutions, and technical and financial resources. There were a number of critical issues that needed to be highlighted and appropriately dealt with so that small island developing States could further implement sustainable

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development principles more effectively at the national level. Those included social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States; the role of traditional and cultural beliefs, practices and approaches; emerging trends and social challenges; and greater partnerships with development partners and non-State actors. To effectively manage those challenges, small island developing States would need support regarding sufficient financial and technical resources, and an enabling environment at the national, regional and global levels.

STEPHEN KALONZO MUSYOKA, Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya, said the majority of small islands developing States have continued to be engulfed in extreme poverty, conflicts, adverse climate changes, prevalence of diseases including HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation and decline in economic performances, thus negatively impacting on the welfare of their populations. Some of the reasons for lack of adequate resources may be attributed to the limited domestic resource base in small island developing States and the overall net decline in a range of international resource flows to them.

In the wake of the tsunami, Kenya was lucky to have received early warning of the impending disaster from authorities in the Seychelles, which enabled Kenyan authorities to warn their people along the coastline in time. For that reason, Kenya supported the idea of setting up an Indian Ocean early warning system. In closing, he urged the international community to provide resources and assistance that would help small island developing States to implement the commitments agreed upon in Johannesburg and to build capacities that could adequately address the challenges facing them.

JOHN KACHAMILA, Minister of Coordination of Environment Affairs and Natural Resources of Mozambique, said his country identified with all the pledges made to support the Barbados Programme and to small island developing States in implementing the critical issues they faced, including climate change and sea-level rise, environmental disaster, human resources development, among other things. Poverty reduction must be achieved in order to achieve those goals. The threats of international terrorism and the growing problems of HIV/AIDS were also matters of concern that required needed international attention. More resources should be made available to ensure that small island developing States achieved the Millennium Development Goals and those of Johannesburg, as well.

Mr. Kachamila called for the creation of a global disaster management and early warning system in order to prevent the large-scale destruction caused by the tsunami. Capacity-building was essential to ensure preparedness when vulnerable States were confronted by such disasters. The recent influx of people along Mozambique's coastline had added extra stress to fragile coastal communities. Mozambique identified with small island developing States and shared their challenges, especially in terms of marine and coastal degradation. For example, it was often affected by natural disasters. In that regard, development challenges faced by small island developing States were common to all developing States. To implement natural disaster preparedness, international assistance was imperative. Moreover, strong and active partnerships among all stakeholders at all levels were needed to come up with appropriate solutions for the problems faced by small island developing States and other developing countries.

ISSA MOHAMMAD AL-OWN, Under-Secretary of Energy of Kuwait, highlighted the role of development in creating prosperity within nations, and for achieving goals such as reducing poverty. The world had suffered from the phenomena of

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poverty, economic crisis, environmental deterioration and increase in natural catastrophes. It was necessary to understand the causes of such catastrophes, especially in developing countries, and particularly in the least developed countries, which needed appropriate technology to mitigate the effects of such catastrophes.

Kuwait paid particular attention to climate change and had, among other things, studied the effects of climate change on development, he said. His country had also been a victim of different catastrophes. The Government had earmarked \$100 million to support technical research in that area. Among the factors leading to pollution were deforestation and lack of efforts to combat desertification. Kuwait was supporting small island developing States through the establishment of development programmes in such States through, among others, the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Development, which had benefited over 100 States in various parts of the world. He called on developed States to provide real support and open up their markets to the products from developing countries. On its part, Kuwait had worked with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to maintain balanced prices that could stand against any fluctuations. The international community knew the objectives to be achieved, and it had to work together to achieve a better future for all the people of the world.

LOUIS MICHEL, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the European Community, said the European Union was doing everything possible to ease the suffering of those affected by last month's tsunami and by offering financial assistance. The European Union had a long-standing relationship with small island developing States and had joined forces with many of them to meet the challenges facing them. Since 2002, the European Union had funded some 6,000 projects for small island developing States, amounting to \$3 billion USD.

Mr. Michel highlighted specific projects in water and energy that the Union had set up. Last year, for example, the Union set up a water facility to provide access to clean drinking water for small island developing States in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions. Access to modern energy was a prerequisite for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. The Union had approved the framework for vulnerability, as prepared by the small island developing States themselves; the concept of vulnerability should result in concrete action. He highlighted the need for disaster preparedness and early warning systems. The European Community Humanitarian Office had recently assisted countries in the Caribbean region in the aftermath of the hurricanes there and had also provided emergency assistance to Fiji and Vanuatu when they, too, were struck by disasters.

Concerning trade, he said the Union felt that the creation of a new category of countries in the World Trade Organization (WTO) was not an option. The Union was ready to provide strong support to small island developing States by way of technical assistance and capacity, and to improve access to trade markets. The Union's plan of action on sugar, for example, should result in improving competitiveness and diversification. Trade and environment, fishery subsidies, affordable medication and improvement in the capacity to negotiate were also areas, as included in the Doha deceleration, to which the Union was prepared to assist small island developing States.

YAACOB IBRAHIM, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources of Singapore, noted that the tsunami had indiscriminately left a path of destruction in many Indian Ocean rim countries, ranging from India, the second largest country in the world by population, to Maldives, a small island

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developing State. The tragedy illustrated the unique vulnerabilities of small island developing States to the destructive forces that nature could suddenly unleash. It was crucial for small island developing States to reduce their environmental and economic vulnerabilities, not only to be more resilient to such disasters, but also to help their people achieve a higher standard of living and secure a more sustainable future.

The challenges faced by small island developing States had become more, and not less, complex in the last 10 years, he said. For small island developing States to achieve sustainable development, there was a pressing need for increased cooperation at the national, regional and international levels. Singapore was working with such States through its technical assistance programmes related to capacity-building. It was committed to playing its part in sharing experience and knowledge with its fellow small island nations. Singapore's experience in areas such as urban management, transport planning and design, water management, waste treatment, environmental engineering and management might be of relevance to them.

MARCUS BETHEL, Minister of Health and the Environment of the Bahamas, said that, in spite of the seemingly insurmountable odds, the Bahamas had managed to make strides in dealing with the issues identified in the Barbados Programme of Action. Among other things, it had taken the necessary steps to incorporate sustainable tourism into its development planning process. While tourism development was key in satisfying the socio-economic needs of many small island developing States, unsustainable tourism development practices could lead to significant social and environmental degradation.

Thus, he continued, it was necessary for national, regional and international agencies to mobilize their resources to ensure the sustainable development of that vital industry. To that end, his country encouraged South-South cooperation regarding the use of best management practices and lessons learned in the tourism industry.

Among the overarching concerns emerging from the meeting were how small island developing States would benefit from the process 10 years from now; and what, if any, social or economic constructs would be developed or implemented to assist small island developing States with the issues of vulnerability. Some of the key actions that would be of benefit to Caribbean small island developing States were enhanced partnerships; the strengthening of or establishment of support mechanisms at various levels; and the provision of new and additional financial resources to implement the outcomes of Mauritius.

XAVIER DARCOS, Minister for Development, Cooperation and Francophone of France, noted that his country had committed some 50 million euros to assist in the recovery and rehabilitation efforts in the aftermath of the tsunami disaster. Next week, at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, France would call for the creation of an early warning system in the Indian Ocean, where it had set up several regional initiatives. Those included a meteorological station on the island of Reunion and a programme on disaster prevention and response under the auspices of the French Red Cross.

Mr. Darcos noted that French bilateral cooperation to help small island developing States had risen to 350 million euros. Today's Conference must be seen as part of the preparation for the 2005 summit reviewing the Millennium Development Goals. France had increased its ODA assistance and hoped to set up a pilot project in the next months in the context of last year's hunger and poverty initiative launched at the United Nations. Moreover, he believed that the concept of sustainable development suggested the need for global approaches

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and sensible management of natural resources, among other things. Preserving environmental resources was a prerequisite to sustainable development. Combating climate change was crucial and support should be given to the entering into force of the Kyoto Protocol. The strategy to be adopted at the meeting was an ambitious strategy, to which France would be a staunch supporter.

MAGED GEORGES ILIAS GHATTAS, Minister of State for Environmental Affairs of Egypt, said that the Barbados Programme of Action contained fundamental and crucial measures to obtain sustainable development in the most vulnerable States, who were vulnerable to both national and international variables, whether economic, ecological or commercial. Regrettably, not much had been achieved in the last 10 years. The catastrophe of the recent tsunami stressed the grave dangers facing small island developing States.

It also stressed the fundamental need to effectively implement the Programme of Action, he continued. Despite the resulting grave losses, the tragedy showed that the peoples of the world were able to unite in facing catastrophes. The commitments of various States to the affected had exceeded \$2 billion in less than 2 weeks. The fact that less resources were committed for the last 10 years for the Programme of Action showed that much more could have been done. Investing in monitoring and early warning systems and the streamlining of the use of natural resources were among the ways to avoid further tragedies in the future. The international community had yet to face up to the challenges of poverty, environmental degradation and natural disasters, because an insufficient effort had been made to provide the necessary resources, transfer the necessary technology and take the steps agreed to at the international level.

ARCADO NFAGAZWA, Minister of State (Environment and Union Matters) of the United Republic of Tanzania, said his country encompassed a number of islands, as well as reefs, which faced a number of environmental-related challenges similar to those facing small island developing States. The impact of climate change on those islands was also vivid. Island and coastal communities' dependency on a limited number of resources had further exacerbated their vulnerability. It was, therefore, difficult for those States to effectively integrate into the global economy and the globalization process. He supported calls to set up an early warning system to detect tsunamis and similar disasters when they struck. In that context, he felt the international community, particularly the global financial and trade institutions and other multilateral organizations, as well as bilateral donors, must provide specific additional remedial assistance to those States in: human and institutional capacity-building; access to and provision of financial resources and related investment; technical support; and opening up of markets.

Other important areas of intervention by the international community should include, among others, support of environmentally appropriate technologies, including information communication technologies; achievement of the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP); the fight against HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases; and open, transparent rules, based on a non-discriminatory international trading system.

HAMIDOU SIDIBE, Minister for Planning and Sustainable Development of Senegal, said that with a 700 kilometer-long coastline, his country shared some of the characteristics of islands, which influenced its environmental policy. The sea was advancing, affecting the socio-economic development of the country. Senegal was resolved to implement sustainable development. Like other parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), it was seeking to reduce greenhouse gases. Among other things, it had also signed and

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ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. The synergy between the various environmental instruments provided the framework for Senegal's national policy for sustainable development.

Studies on the impact of climate change had shown the many consequences of global warming, he said. Coastal erosion, resulting from sea-level rise, was leading to the shrinking of beaches and increased salinization, which affected agriculture and tourism. The country had projects under way to reduce or stabilize greenhouse gases. It was reducing the amount of energy and electricity needed in construction, which could lead to a reduction in the pollutants that contributed to greenhouse gases. It was also trying to reduce carbon dioxide by replacing some outdated technologies; rationalize the country's transport; promote renewable sources of energy; and reduce national consumption of oil.

OLE E. MOESBY, Under-Secretary of State for Multilateral Affairs of Denmark, expressed that his country had been supporting the implementation of the Barbados Programme in many ways, particularly in the field of sustainable development and renewable energy. The most recent example of Denmark's support was a four-year grant of 11 million Danish kroner for the implementation of the Pacific Islands Energy Policies and Strategic Action. He believed it was imperative to increase the share of renewable energy in the world's energy consumption for economic, social, as well as environmental reasons. Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change was a matter that needed urgent attention. Therefore, with its European Union partners, Denmark had developed a European Union Action Plan, which included components in that field.

HIV/AIDS has emerged as a significant challenge to sustainable development for many countries and the Caribbean was the second most infected region in the world, he added. Moreover, there was a growing recognition of the importance that trade could play in promoting economic growth and poverty reduction. He said the international meeting provided a timely opportunity for small island developing States to voice their concerns in advance of the review of the Millennium Development Goals later this year. Denmark, he added, continued to support the need to address the particular challenges of small island developing States in the area of environment and sustainable development.

NAVIN CHANDARPAL, Special Envoy of the President of Guyana, said there had been serious efforts in his country and other small island developing States to implement the Barbados Programme of Action. Many national and regional initiatives had been taken to promote better economic, social and environmental practices. Much had been achieved, but the levels were way below what was needed to make a significant impact on the living conditions of the peoples of the region. The drive towards sustainable development in small island developing States had experienced repeated setbacks arising from the twin vulnerabilities of natural disasters and economic shocks. The promises made in Barbados had hardly been kept. Indeed, international conditions had become hostile to the sustainable development of developing countries.

Far from being encouraged, he noted, less developed countries were being strangled in the noose of a distorted process of globalization, formed by the ropes of convenient market forces and unilateralism. There could be no sustainable development when the less developed were stifled in their quest to develop. Now was the time for the international community to recognize the negative impact of its failure to provide the support promised to small island developing States and to make a decisive shift in its approach. He expressed disappointment with many developed countries that had not only failed to provide

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the committed level of ODA, but had also taken very aggressive and hostile positions against the interests of developing countries.

YORIKO KAWAGUCHI, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Japan, said her country would announce an early warning system for the Indian Ocean and proposed that a special session on the subject be convened at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe next week. As an island nation of more than 6,800 isles, Japan had similar experiences to those of small island developing States. Conditions such as small lands mass, population and market size, as well as lands scattered in the ocean and the remoteness from large markets, required different approaches to nation-building. Moreover, the circumstances of one island country were different from those of another, and small island developing States should not be treated in a uniform manner.

There were unique means that small island developing States could use -- the improvement of distance learning, travelling medical service and promotion of e-Government -- to overcome geographical challenges, she said. In economic activities, small island developing States could present a model to the world on the modalities of sustainable development, boosting economies and tourism by making use of the natural environment. From those points of view, Japan had been providing assistance to small island developing States and promoting policy dialogues with them. Among the serious challenges facing small island developing States were rising sea-levels, waste disposal and the issue of water and sanitation. In particular, it was crucial for people of small island developing States with limited resources to secure safe water. To island states, Japan has extended assistance for the improvement of water supply facilities, as well as measures to control water pollution and treat domestic wastewater. She announced her Government's intention of launching the "Initiative for Disaster Reduction through ODA" at next week's conference in Kobe to enhance the effort for building disaster-resilient societies and economies. She said he hoped the discussion at the Mauritius gathering would trigger global efforts to reinforce disaster reduction measures.

EVRIPIDIS STYLIANIDIS, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, said that the Conference provided an opportunity to exchange views on the way forward for the development of small island developing States, which were indeed vulnerable to external threats. Greece consisted of a large number of islands, and therefore was very sensitive to issues of concern to small island States. It would try, through its new position as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council, as well as every possible way, to promote cooperation with small island developing States in order to enhance capacity-building.

His country was ready to offer legal expertise for horizontal institution building to the small island developing States via a non-governmental organization in the field of environmental protection, with particular attention to tourism and fisheries. The international community, both bilaterally and multilaterally, would have to strengthen its support to small island developing States, towards the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals. He was confident that the Mauritius Conference would be another important step in that direction.

DRAZEN MARGETA, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia, said that Croatia, while not an island, had 1,185 islands, on which lived 2.5 per cent of its population. Hence, it was very well aware of the challenges faced by small island developing States. In order to enhance the development of its islands, Croatia created the National Programme for the Development of Islands in 1997. In addition, since 1995, Croatia had allocated about \$700 million from its national budget to the development of islands.

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Croatian islands faced challenges similar to those faced by small island developing States, including water supply and urban development. Also, it was faced with intensive depopulation of its islands, particularly the smaller ones that were more distant from the mainland, which resulted in the dying out of island settlements and total neglect of their cultural heritage. With a view to preserving cultural and historical heritage, attention was focused on the development of rural island areas. Croatia was prepared to share policies, experiences and best practices with interested small island developing States. It was vitally important to adopt an action-oriented, forward-looking strategy paper which would also be supported by the political will of all governments.

ZAINAL ABIDIN OSMAN, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, while noting the various achievements made since Barbados by small island developing States, namely in the areas of sustainable tourism, water management, energy resources, marine resources and fisheries, he said they needed to be further promoted and encouraged. While many small island developing States have been successfully promoting their tourism industry, the success was very much dependent on both internal and external variables.

Malaysia believed that in order for the Barbados Programme to be fully implemented, the goals in the multilateral environmental agreements that were most relevant to small island developing States, including in the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, should be fully implemented and there should be an increase in financial and technical support, particularly through the Global Environment Facility, to assist small island developing States in the development of their national action plans. It was essential that donor countries, relevant United Nations entities, multilateral institutions, the private sector and civil society, fully contributed to that process. He announced that his country had contributed to the small island developing States Voluntary Trust Fund, had helped to promote trade and investment relations with a number of small island developing States, through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, and had developed active collaboration and partnerships with small island developing States in the context of South-South cooperation.

PATRICIA OLAMENDI TORRES, Under-Secretary for Multilateral and Human Rights Issues of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, stressed that any global approach to security should factor in the threats that were of a diverse nature and had multiple impacts. The measures that should be applied to help small island developing States overcome the challenges confronting them should include those aimed at protecting the diversity of those States, bearing in mind the sustainable development of their people. The High Level Panel of the United Nations was an important tool for addressing the prevention measures in the field of natural disaster, climate change and infectious diseases. Moreover, financing for development to alleviate poverty was essential.

The President of Mexico's policy was to foster cooperation with small island developing States to combat the marginalization of their people, he continued. The Government of Mexico had recently, through the Organization of American States, established the Mexican Fund for Cooperation, with an initial budget of \$10 million, to strengthen projects in the region. Under that scheme, scholarships would be granted to students in the Caribbean region to enhance specific training and learning. In the context of sustainable development, the integrated management of water was crucial. She announced that, in March 2006, Mexico would be hosting the Fourth World Water Forum to address that important issue

SANDELLE SCRIMSHAW, High Commissioner for Canada in Mauritius and Special Envoy of the Minister of International Cooperation to the International Meeting,

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encouraged the different stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, local communities, and the private sector to work closely to address the challenges that small islands faced. Small island developing States needed to collaborate with their neighbours to pool resources and to pursue common interests and, on a global scale, they needed to play their part in addressing environmental issues, including adapting to impacts of climate change and preserving biodiversity. For its part, Canada would contribute to the interregional ocean governance proposal covering the Caribbean, the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and Africa and would provide immediate technical assistance to develop the proposal further to solicit financial support from interested partners. Moreover, in May this year in Newfoundland, Canada would host an international conference on the Governance of High Seas Fisheries and the United Nations Fish Agreement.

Programming in priority areas, such as ocean governance, climate change, biodiversity, and transport and communications was essential; cooperation and coordination at the national and regional levels was equally important. If the people of small islands hoped to build better lives for themselves, their communities, and their countries, they must be able to participate in the decision-making that affected them. By continuing to work together closely, small islands would be able to have access to the tools and resources they needed to reduce poverty effectively, protect the environment, halt and reverse the spread of disease, and foster a vibrant economy.

PETKO DRAGANOV, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, said that it was remarkable that the impact of the problems small island developing States were currently facing could have been mitigated if everyone had taken the specific provisions of the Barbados Programme more seriously. Ten years ago, strengthening the disaster preparedness and management institutions and policies were underscored as the core of any strategy aimed at reducing the vulnerability to natural and environmental disasters. It turned out that 10 years had not been sufficient to build the necessary capacity.

Ten years ago, he continued, there was talk about an integrated approach to the management and preservation of coastal and marine resources. Today, he noted with regret their further degradation through pollution and overexploitation. Ten years ago, concern was expressed about the dependence of small island developing States on imported sources of energy, mainly petroleum products. Today, that dependence had been exacerbated by higher oil prices and their increased volatility. Bulgaria had actively cooperated with a number of small island developing States and was open to expanding the scope of that cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

JOSÉ IGLÉSIAS SOARES, President of the Portuguese Institute for Development Assistance, said to achieve global sustainable development the international community should work together, including the small island developing States, bearing in mind that the future of the next generations will depend upon the use of natural resources. Portugal had vast experience in working with small island developing States. Among its main developing partners were four small island developing States -- Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and, more recently, Timor-Leste, and also least developed countries

Portugal has had a development cooperation policy focusing on capacity-building, centred in education, training and technical assistance, in the education and health sectors, as well as in other areas, such as good governance. That assistance was provided in response to the needs of Portugal's partners. One of the issues to be dealt with was the burden of diseases in small island developing States, such as HIV/AIDS. While noting that Portugal

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has contributed to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Portuguese called on other donors to help small island developing States in improving their health policies and, especially supporting measures to prevent the spread of these diseases.

MOHAMED LATHEEF (Maldives) said that, within minutes, decades of development, along with the hopes of the citizens of his country, were washed out into the sea on the morning of 26 December. Eighty-two people had died and 26 were still missing, most of whom were children. Thirteen islands had to be evacuated, over 15,000 people were left homeless, and many were facing food and water shortages. The damaged resorts needed major reconstruction to return to business as usual, and the long-term damage of the sudden erosion and silting of reefs on the country's agriculture and fisheries had yet to be assessed. The present priorities were to rehabilitate the lives and livelihoods of tsunami victims, provide shelter to internally displaced persons, reconstruct and repair social and economic infrastructure, and generate economic recovery to pre-tsunami levels.

However, the Maldives alone would not be able to recover from that unprecedented disaster. The country required an estimated \$239 million for emergency relief and a further \$1.3 billion over the next three to five years. The international meeting provided an important platform to highlight the environmental and economic vulnerabilities of small island States. The tsunami catastrophe had shown that environmental calamities did not respect international borders and that they were more damaging to small island States. Therefore, it was imperative to work together to find ways to avoid and minimize the impact of such calamities to those countries.

O. Y. IVANOVA, (Russian Federation), said the review of the Barbados Programme was a substantial contribution to the goals set out at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. He was of the view that the main goal of the meeting in Mauritius was to provide an in-depth analysis of how the Barbados Programme was being implemented, based on the Johannesburg consensus. Further international cooperation was key to assisting small island developing States in reaching their goals. That approach could increase the effectiveness of the Barbados Programme. The international community should strictly follow the sectoral decisions that were passed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development on issues such as the sustainable use of ecosystems, renewable energy and climate change. He was convinced that a sound implementation strategy would bring new life to a global commitment to ensure sustainable development to small island developing States and provide the international community with a new impetus to continue in that endeavour.

AMINU BASHIR WALI (Nigeria) said that while small island developing States had the primary responsibility to implement the Programme of Action at the national level, their efforts would, however, come to naught unless the international community played its complementary part. In the spirit of true partnership and cooperation, the international community, particularly donors, should take urgent steps to fulfil their commitments to complement the efforts of small island developing States in achieving the objectives of the Programme of Action, Agenda 21 and the Millennium Goals. To accomplish that, capacity-building for small island developing States should be deemed as a non-negotiable prerequisite for implementation. Also, new and additional resources should be provided to bridge the resource gap faced by small island developing States in achieving sustainable development.

Transfer of environmentally sound and affordable technology to small island developing States on preferential terms was another major act that would

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make a great difference in the implementation of the Programme of Action, he continued. Also, efforts should be made to assist SIDS through equitable and fair sharing of benefits for the exploitation of their depleting marine and other natural resources. It was possible through partnership, public as well as private, and in the spirit of South-South cooperation, to find common ground to assist small island developing States through various mechanisms and measures, to address their myriad challenges.

HARALD NEPLE (Norway) said the impact of climate change was increasingly making itself felt in the small island developing States. Their geographical uniqueness placed them, through no fault of their own, among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of such changes. Small island developing States had no option but to try to adapt as best, and as quickly, as they could to those effects. Fortunately, the international climate change community was increasingly rising to the challenge of adaptation.

Regarding the outcome of the meeting, he said it should focus on implementation, be action-oriented and have strong added value. The meeting should reinforce the importance of nationally driven plan for sustainable development and poverty eradication. It should also focus on collaboration with the international community in supporting those national plans and strategies, including through harmonization among donors, the promotion of policy coherence and results-oriented monitoring of activities. He urged all small island developing States to continue their efforts to mainstream adaptation into their more general development efforts.

BASHIR ABU SITA (Sudan) said that the recent tsunami stressed the need to support cooperation among the small island developing States themselves, as well as cooperation between small island developing States and the other members of the international community. Among the problems faced by small island developing States was a lack of infrastructure, and human and financial resources. Solving those dilemmas required colossal efforts at the local, national and regional levels. Sudan was currently celebrating the signing of a historic peace agreement, signalling an end to a 20-year civil war, which had stalled development and impacted the lives of its people. Peace was the main pillar required for all countries to achieve sustainable development.

Regarding the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, he emphasized the need to concentrate efforts on the development of human resources, with an emphasis on the individual, through education and training. It was also necessary to provide basic services, such as clean water; integrate the economies of small island developing States into the global market; and further cooperation among small island developing States. It was important to show solidarity with small island developing States and make every effort to address the causes of their vulnerability. Among other things, it was necessary to strengthen infrastructure in coastal zones, address environmental issues impacting the health of the individual, and take into account the protection of cultural heritage.

OSWALDO DE RIVERO BARRETO (Peru) said that among developing countries, some of the most vulnerable today were the small island developing States, because of their fragile ecological systems and because they were located in regions where natural and environmental disasters occurred more frequently and with more strength. His country, with more than 3,000 kilometers of coastline on the Pacific Ocean, had suffered and was likely to continue to suffer serious physical, economic and social effects as a result of the increasing and devastating intensity of the El Niño phenomenon, as a consequence of global warming.

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The present increasing frequency and intensity of disasters as a result of climate change were just the beginning of an avalanche of major hydrological disasters which would place international security at risk. The High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change had identified climate change, and the dramatic increase in disasters over the last decade, as one of the new threats to international security. If global warming was not stabilized, it would be a source of socio-political instability for many small island States, as well as for ecologically vulnerable developing countries like Peru. Therefore, an important conceptual contribution to the final document of the meeting would be that environmental degradation, climate change and increase in disasters were today a new threat to international security.

SICHAN SIV, (United States), in the context of the tsunami disaster, to which the United States had donated \$350 million and another \$400 million in private donations, said his Government recognized the importance of an early warning system for saving lives. The United States was engaged in addressing the issue and looked forward to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe to determine collaborative action to establish an early warning system that alerted on tsunamis, as well as a range of other hazards. It was essential that international meetings focused on the practical measures each nation could take to promote sustainable development and to find ways to deliver results that improved lives. Those included not only domestic resources and savings, but also international trade and investment opportunities, and development assistance.

The United States was a partner in one-third of the 53 small island developing States-oriented partnerships currently registered on the United Nations' Partnership Database, he continued. At Johannesburg, the United States established and joined more than 20 sustainable development partnerships with governments and civil society stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and the business sector. Moreover, trade liberalization presented opportunities for small island developing States to integrate more fully into the global economy. The current international meeting should reaffirm support for the World Trade Organization (WTO) process and respect for its mandate. He affirmed his country's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was an important issue for small island developing States. The United States strongly supported efforts to improve understanding of regional impacts, to enhance the resilience of small island developing States, and to mainstream adaptation across sustainable development activities.

ULRICH LEHNER (Switzerland) said that ever since the concept of small island developing States appeared in 1992, the special needs and vulnerabilities of that group had been recognized. Small island developing States and their populations were culturally rich and merited support for their efforts to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. The Barbados Programme remained topical, and he welcomed the efforts by small island developing States in the last 10 years. The implementation of the Programme must continue. Likewise, development partners had to continue building on their former successes and create a new coalition to enable small island developing States to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Without a doubt, global efforts were required to implement the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, he continued. Special attention must be paid to adaptation measures, whose implementation might limit the effects of climate change. He could not overstate the importance of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, as well as the Kobe Conference next week. Among the new elements identified in the past 10 years that impacted the

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development of small island developing States was HIV/AIDS and the impact of globalization. The economic vulnerability of small island developing States and their small size meant they were limited in their economic activity, particularly global trade.

HJÁLMAR W. HANNESSON, (Iceland), said his country, as an island State, shared the many concerns of small island developing States in the area of sustainable development. Like other island States, Iceland based its livelihood on its natural resources and was committed to utilizing those resources in a sustainable manner. In doing so, there were many challenges and issues that Iceland had in common with small island developing States, so there was scope for cooperation, particularly concerning the oceans, energy and possible climate change. Iceland had sought to share its experience with developing countries by hosting two United Nations University programmes -- on geothermal energy and fisheries -- providing training in key aspects of sustainability and where participants were from small island development States, among others

Mr. Hannesson reiterated the decision taken by his Government to contribute to special funds to assist least developed countries and small island developing States to fully implement the Law of the Sea Convention and United Nations Fish Stocks Agreements. Moreover, the Government of Iceland had decided to launch a special small island developing States initiative, where it planned to make available \$1 million in a special Icelandic fund to support programmes addressing sustainable use of natural resources in small island developing States.

MARITZA AMALIA GUERRERO (Dominican Republic) said that, because of the characteristics of small island developing States, they would need to reach greater levels of solidarity and cooperation. There was no doubt that small States, when united, could be influential. Their needs and advantages should be taken into account in all international spheres. It was necessary to achieve development in harmony with environmental protection. That was why her country called for the protection of the Caribbean Sea, and rejected the transport of nuclear waste through it. The Dominican Republic proposed the establishment of a working group to evaluate the nature and scope of the risks involved in such transport. Taking care of the Caribbean was crucial for fostering tourism, which was vital for many of the nations in the region. An institutional and legal framework was required in that regard.

She stressed the need to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and to deal with problems before they occurred. The planet belonged to everyone, and it must be protected and managed for all. She also drew attention to the importance of the environmental management of dangerous waste. Noting the increasing imbalance in trade relations, she stated that globalization must help improve the lives of all, not just the industrialized countries. Special, differentiated and effective treatment was required to attenuate the effects of trade liberalization.

GERHARD PFANZELTER (Austria) said that his country had initiated the Global Forum for Sustainable Energy, which provided a platform for dialogue between all interested parties - developed and developing countries, the private sector, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Austria would take action to provide access to energy for people in developing countries. Small island developing States had been among the most proactive in bringing energy for sustainable development into the multilateral debate and to work to build common ground for international action. Austria provided a meeting platform for various energy initiatives announced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development relating to small island developing States.

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He announced that Austria, together with the United Nations Office in Vienna, would make available office space for small island developing States and least developed countries free of charge to support their active participation in the meetings at the United Nations headquarters in Vienna. The work of the Vienna-based organizations in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, development cooperation and the fight against drugs and crime addressed important sectors of the global agenda and contributed to international efforts in responding to the world's new security threats.

ABDULAZIZ NASSER R. AL-SHAMSI, (United Arab Emirates), said the events in southern Asia last month and last year's hurricanes emphasized the vulnerability of small island developing States and highlighted their urgent need for international support. He endorsed the outcomes of the many international meetings that had paid special attention to the vulnerability of small island developing States, due to geography and the impact of climate change. During the former interregional meeting held in January 2004, his Government stated that it recognized the importance of national efforts made by small island developing States to implement the Barbados Programme. He also emphasized the importance of increasing international support to assist them in meeting the requirements of the programme. The best strategy for small island developing States included: increasing the flow of financial resources; improving their opportunity to contribute and benefit from the international trade; facilitating their access to the new, environmental friendly technology; and building national capacity in all areas, including culture and science.

MOI AVEI, Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, Minister for Petroleum and Energy, Acting Minister for National Planning and Rural Development of Papua New Guinea, said his country was struck by a tsunami in 1998 and, therefore, it was able to identify more closely with those who were affected by last month's disaster. Moreover, the people of Papua New Guinea have been able to identify with other small island developing States as to their special circumstances. Small island developing States stood at the margins of development and they needed to be given an opportunity to participate in their development efforts. Papua New Guinea was blessed with abundant resources, but unfortunately their record to date was not adequate, particularly in terms of the exploitation of their natural resources. Papua New Guinea needed to exercise greater political will in order to bring about better economic and social reforms, which would lead to good governance. The international community needed to look at the advantages that small island developing States had to offer to international trade efforts. Small island developing States often lacked the capacity to do surveillance over the illegal poaching and fishing which took place in their waters. That was just one area where they needed the support of the international community. Small island developing States themselves should not only participate as a donor recipients, but also as trading partners.

JAROSLAV SIRO (Czech Republic) noted that the recent tsunami had so tragically underlined the vulnerability towards natural disasters and impacts of climate change of small island developing States and had helped to sharpen the focus of collective action. His country, within the European Union, was actively participating in international efforts to mobilize greater attention to the justifiable needs of small island developing States. The Czech Republic was not an island, but rather a landlocked country in the heart of Europe, far away from any seashore. Nevertheless, it was following with great interest the agenda of the international meeting and was prepared to participate in the further implementation of the Programme of Action. Only a coordinated approach to global problems, in which each partner played its own specific role, would lead to substantial progress in resolving the problems of small island developing States.

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MYKHAILO SKURATOVSSKYI (Ukraine) noted that progress achieved in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action still fell short of expectations. Small island developing States continued to face major challenges in their development efforts due to their inherent vulnerabilities such as small size, remoteness, geographical dispersion, susceptibility to climate change and rising sea levels, fragility of their ecosystems, constraints on transport and communication and isolation from markets. Ukraine stood ready to further develop its friendly relations with small island developing States in such areas as preservation of the unique biodiversity of coastal and marine ecosystems and to provide necessary assistance and expertise in addressing their problems, in particular through broad professional training to the nationals of those countries in its educational and research institutions.

SYED HASSAN JAVED, Pakistan, said his country had been cognizant of the peculiar structure and ecological characteristics that made small island developing States vulnerable; those included their vulnerability to the forces of nature, which magnified the developmental challenges they faced. Overall disbursements to small islands had fallen sharply since the early 1990s. The small islands had also not been able to attract the levels of foreign private capital and foreign direct investments that they had anticipated, mainly because they lacked the market size, skilled labor and indigenous technological development to compete with larger developing countries for such investment flows. Pakistan has consistently been supporting the measures envisaged, particularly the United Nations, aimed at furthering the sustainable development of small island developing States, he added. In closing, he commended the efforts being made by the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGE) under the slogan "Island Issues are Commonwealth Issues" to improve the lot of the small island States.

ALI GOUTALI (Tunisia) said that the recent tsunami served as a reminder of the vulnerability of many countries, large and small alike, particularly small island developing States, as well as of the interconnectedness of the economic and environmental concerns of States. Those concerns should be addressed through a global approach. Sustainable development was one way to reduce the vulnerabilities of States and to ensure the well-being of future generations. It should go beyond national considerations and be based on the complementarity of national responsibilities and international partnership. Sustainable development required a greater commitment to international solidarity and cooperation.

Tunisia had put forward the initiative to create the World Solidarity Fund, which was adopted by the United Nations during the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The implementation of that initiative had become all the more urgent, as the world today was wrestling with the ravaging consequences of the tsunami. Sustainable development and the reduction of vulnerabilities also required increased North-South cooperation and more substantial South-South cooperation. On the latter, Tunisia would be glad to share its experience and expertise in a variety of areas with small island developing States. Tunisia, while preparing to host the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, called on all countries to use that event to look together to find ways to bridge the digital divide.

CARLOS SÉRGIO SOBRAL DUARTE, (Brazil), in the context of the tsunami disaster, said as the international community looked into other situations that highlighted small island developing States' vulnerabilities to severe weather events, it could not overstate the importance of international cooperation to address the adverse affects of climate change and sea-level rise. It was the collective responsibility of the international community to address those issues

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in a way that will ultimately provide small island developing States with adequate means to overcome -- or at least better cope with -- those phenomena. Moreover, the international community must not lose sight of other specific circumstances that adversely affect small island developing States economic and social development in an environmentally sustainable way and of the need to collaborate with a view to assisting small island developing States to overcome their disadvantages and vulnerabilities. Due regard should, therefore, be given to issues like trade, transfer and development of technology, and transport and communication, also covered by the Barbados Programme.

CLAUDIO ROJAS, Chile, said his country fully supported the implementation of the Barbados Programme. Having been affected by a one of the world's most destructive earthquakes and tsunamis in the 1960s, Chile identified with the countries affected by the recent tsunami disaster, to whom they had offered support. Moreover, Chile supported the calls made to set up an early warning system, which, they felt, should become a reality as soon as possible.

The Barbados Programme set out a clear framework for action to assist small island developing States, he continued. It was in the interest of all States to meet the pressing needs of a large number of developing countries, such as small island developing States. Chile had joined forces with Brazil, France and Spain at exploring initiatives to combat hunger and poverty, and to devise and implement new machinery to spur financing and development schemes. Chile was interested in contributing to and implementing tasks at the regional level, as laid out in the Barbados Programme. Chile had also been contributing to development efforts in Haiti, which was where long-term solutions should be the main focus.

CARLYLE CORBIN, Minister of State for External Affairs of the United States Virgin Islands, said the United States Virgin Islands had sought to implement the Barbados Programme. However, limited access to relevant United Nations programmes impeded its capacity to undertake that task. It was primarily through its associate membership in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) that it could make its contribution to international thinking and problem solving on such issues.

Through its own efforts, the United States Virgin Islands had pursued a programme in natural resource management with the opening of a marine park, in recognition of the challenge of minimizing degradation of marine ecosystems. However, that initiative was considerably compromised a few years ago by the unexpected removal from its jurisdiction of over 30,000 acres of submerged land. In a similar vein, recent proposals that would affect fishing in its waters, and which would inhibit traditional fishing techniques, ran counter to its own careful scientific data on the sustainable use of its fisheries resources.

JOSEPH MANAUTE, (New Caledonia), said that New Caledonia became a territory of France in 1979, benefiting from broad autonomy. Among the areas managed by New Caledonia were foreign trade, mining and maritime resource management. The economic activities in the territory were basically in the mining and metallurgical sectors, and the public sector. However, economic development had been subject to several handicaps due to the territory's topography and climate.

New Caledonia's participation in the Conference had made it possible to assess the economic and environmental stakes that existed, he said. Assistance for each country and steps to avoid marginalization were important. Among other things, preferential treatment, the use of renewable energy and tourism would

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make it possible to reduce vulnerabilities and ensure harmonious development for his people.

ROLAND ANTONIUS, Netherlands Antilles, said his country had been engaged in a continuous process of implementation of relevant recommendations laid down in the Barbados Programme and other relevant documents of action forwarded by the international community for the realization of sustainable development. It was his country's conviction that, with the active support of the international community and their respective institutions, the development of small island developing States would be properly attended to. It was of paramount importance that the international community keep exchanging dialogue, thoughts and experiences, out of which a new world culture of relating to each other would be forged.

DON MCKINNON, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, said for over 20 years, the Commonwealth had led the international community in bringing the needs of small States to the fore and providing solutions to help them become stronger and more resilient. The international community had not done all it had pledged to do for small island developing States a decade ago. Doing more for small island States was a shared responsibility. The issue was not a lack of knowledge, nor a lack of technology, resources or money. Rather, it was a matter of inspired leadership and commitment by the international community. Politicians should seize the opportunity to honor their commitments to small island developing States, secure in the knowledge that electors will back them.

In the area of trade, the Commonwealth had been working with the European Commission and other partners on a 17 million euro "Hubs and Spokes" project to provide firmer foundations in developing countries for trade negotiating. Many small island developing States stood to benefit from that initiative. The Commonwealth also helped small island developing States cope with the growing problem of international recruitment of their scarce teachers and nurses. Moreover, the Commonwealth was promoting distance learning in small States and had worked on a range of programmes to help those States strengthen their economic resilience.

EDWIN W. CARRINGTON, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said the evidence from national, regional and independent assessments showed that the economic, environmental and social conditions and resilience of small island developing States in the Caribbean and elsewhere had weakened in the 1990s. Intensified competition from global trade liberalization, deteriorating market access conditions and adverse movements in the commodity terms of trade had led to significantly weakened export capacity, rising trade deficits and increased economic vulnerability.

Social vulnerability in the Caribbean had also increased due to persistent poverty affecting approximately one-third of the population; increasing health threats such as HIV/AIDS; the loss of trained and experienced professionals; widespread trafficking and increasing use of drugs, among other things. At the same time, the region's environmental vulnerability had also increased. Climate change and climate variability had been evidenced by more frequent and stronger hurricanes and more intense droughts. Most small island developing States in the Caribbean had resolved to pursue their development and the implementation of the Barbados Programme through intensified regional cooperation and integration. In spite of adverse conditions, the region, mainly through its own efforts, did register some significant progress.

NDIORO NDIAYE, Deputy Director-General, International Organization for Migration, at the onset of her speech, and in the context of the tsunami

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disaster, appealed to the Conference participants to join forces and support small island developing States with the necessary recovery efforts in improving their economies in a sustainable way. Her organization had been assisting several countries around the world to cope with problems associated with natural disaster management, particularly geared to protecting the displaced, returnees, migrants and other vulnerable populations. Along with the threat of natural disasters, small island developing States had several important vulnerabilities, including international migration, which was an issue of transcendental importance for the world and for small island developing States; it affected all aspects of human society -- economic, cultural, social, legal and political.

She said that for most small island developing States, if vast inequalities in social and economic levels were the fundamental cause of migration, then it followed that globalization contributed greatly to increased migration flows, causing a wider gap between rich and poor countries. Her organization had been examining the development impact of the growth of the diaspora economy on several small island developing States, which had a major role to play in the new task of transformation, reconstruction and rehabilitation. In closing, she said her organization would continue to address the migration challenges confronting small island developing States.

RAYMOND FORDE, President of the Barbados Red Cross Society, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said that one of the reasons why the Red Cross Red Crescent network was so valuable was that it had as one of its basic programmes support for building community self-reliance and for the maintenance of the partnerships that were so essential to disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

In the area of health, experience showed that public health needs in small island developing States were of a different character from those in continental States. Remoteness imposed its own challenges for the communities, and the International Federation was constantly looking for ways of meeting the needs of populations. He added that the International Meeting had the opportunity to address the particular tasks which must be undertaken if small island developing States were to achieve the targets set within the Millennium Development Goals.

MAXWELL M. MKWEZALAMBA, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, African Union Commission, called on developed country partners to open up their markets to small island developing States, given their special characteristics. At the same time, he acknowledged that increased market access alone would not suffice. There was a need to address supply constraints in the small island developing States, as well as enhance capacity for trade policy and negotiation. Trade liberalization and globalization ought to take into account the vulnerability of small island developing States and adequately prepare those countries for the challenges posed by trade liberalization and globalization.

It was also critical for the small island developing States to speak with one voice and to establish an observatory on globalization. And in view of the revenue losses arising from trade liberalization, he called on the international community and the small island developing States to work together on establishing a compensatory financing arrangement for the those States. It was also important that governments, the international community and the private sector work together to ensure that small island developing States continued to remain on course in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. That called for an integrated global plan.

LEONARD GOOD, CEO and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), said his organization had been supporting, and would continue to actively

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support, small island developing States in achieving their goals. The GEF had invested some \$265 million in over 200 projects to benefit small island developing States. Chief among their goals was to promote global and biological benefits to small island developing States. The GEF's priorities were in line with small island developing States in the areas of climate change adaptation and integrated environmental resource management, and agreed that more resources were needed for building capacity. In closing, he said the relationship between GEF and small island developing States was a very strong one.

PAUL VERGES, Member of the Indian Ocean Commission Council of Ministers, said that it was quite legitimate that the Commission contribute to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. It had done so through, among other things, action programmes on the conservation of maritime resources. The islands of the Commission were seeing the impact of the major changes and major challenges facing mankind. They were very concerned by climate change, and hoped to take active part in risk prevention and the prevention of natural disasters.

Members of the Commission were also affected by major pandemics, including HIV/AIDS, he said. The Commission had taken regional initiatives to provide sufferers with a platform of solidarity. Like most developing countries, members were also faced with the phenomenon of population change. They were also very much hit by the consequences of globalization. While promoting regional economic integration, the interests of small economies should be borne in mind within the context of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. Access to new technologies was vital to prevent marginalization of small economies. It was not possible to meet all challenges unless the voice of all small island developing States was heard by the international community.

Mr. SEKOU TOURE, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), while referring to the task force his agency set up in response to the tsunami disaster, expressed the hope that the task force would result in valuable lessons on mitigating the impact of such disasters in the future. In the light of the disaster, it was timely for other regions of the world to review their monitoring systems for all natural disasters with a view of updating them, and where they did not exist, make the necessary plans for their establishment. The UNEP was providing support to the Caribbean small island developing States and would share experiences on the establishment of such early warning system with all small island developing States. The UNEP's continued efforts at improved environmental management and conservation will be aimed not only at safeguarding the natural resources base of small island developing States, but also to support the economic livelihoods and social stability of the countries. The UNEP would also support partners and small island developing States with the view of putting appropriate mitigation mechanisms in place.

Outlining some of his agency's global efforts, he said, UNEP was working closely with the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SREP) in developing a programme for that region. In the Caribbean, UNEP was working very closely with the CARICOM Secretariat, Caribbean small island developing States, and a range of stakeholders and have designed the Caribbean small island developing States programme, which will provide a framework for comprehensive action there. In Africa, the Abidjan and Nairobi Conventions for the Protection of Coastal and Marine Environments were among UNEP's main instruments for support to small island developing States. Moreover, UNEP was working closely with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the development and implementation of a trade and environment capacity-building programme.

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ANNA KAJUMULO TIBAIJUKA, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), said that sustainable human settlements development in small island developing States had not received the adequate attention that it deserved. The struggle for achieving the objectives of the Barbados Programme, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals would have to be waged in human settlements. Among the challenges for small island developing States was rapid urbanization. Sustainable development in small island developing States must include the provision of basic services.

A second key challenge was the ability of small island developing States to deal with human settlements in emergency situations created by both natural events and conflict. Disaster risk reduction was a foundation for sustainable development of human settlements in small island developing States. A third key challenge was related to the ability to cope with water supply and sanitation for the poor and marginalized in small island developing States. A fourth key challenge related to improved urban governance in small island developing States. It was necessary to improve the living standards of the urban poor through increased investment and improved urban management practices and processes.

C. N. BISSOONAUTHSING, Liaison Officer, World Health Organization (WHO), said that just as vulnerable people needed special attention, so did vulnerable countries. The prevalence of HIV in the Caribbean was the second highest in the world, exceeding 2 per cent in five countries, and AIDS had become the leading cause of death among adults in that region. Today, jointly with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), WHO was spearheading the "3x5" initiative to scale up provision of treatment to 3 million AIDS patients with the therapy by 2005.

The Director General of WHO had also added the "3x1" principle to focus on three frameworks: action framework, coordination framework and monitoring, and evaluation framework. The UNAIDS and WHO were facing a Herculean task in that objective, because of a shortage of skilled human resources, inadequacy of health systems, poor logistics at the field level, and the scale of financial resources needed to put in place all the requirements. Failure to take action now would leave the international community not only with the guilt of an unfinished agenda, but would also result in millions of deaths which could have been avoided.

JURGEN T. REITMAIER, Senior Representative, International Monetary Fund (IMF), said the IMF's role in small island developing States was similar to that in its other members. The most prominent aspect of IMF operations was probably the provision of financial assistance when required. The IMF's comparative perspective, obtained through experiences with small island developing States in different parts of the world, helped the IMF tailor its policy advice to the specific needs of individual small island economies. In the case of small island developing States, some areas of special focus for IMF assistance and advice included the role of sound domestic policies in the process of integration of small island developing States into the global economy; regional economic surveillance and policy coordination; regional efforts among small island developing States and cooperation with multilateral institutions; specific vulnerabilities of small island developing States to exogenous shock, and the importance of financial sector and stability issues; and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which was not only relevant to small island developing States, but also to many other developing countries.

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HAK-SU KIM, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), said his organization considered small island developing States in the Indian Ocean, South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean among its most important members. Of the 51 global small island developing States, 22 of them were members and associate members of ESCAP. In the Asian and Pacific region, many member countries already had technical expertise and resources to assist small island developing States in addressing the challenges they were confronted with, including their vulnerability to natural disasters and small domestic market size. Among the measures that ESCAP planned to take were the institution of a post-disaster management system to support affected members in a timely fashion; assistance in strengthening national institutions and administrative capacity for sustainable development; and proposing to hold a Pacific Leaders Summit next year during ESCAP's sixty-second Commission Session, to deal with long-term policy coordination issues faced by small island developing States in the Asia and the Pacific region.

GREG URWIN, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, expressed the conviction of the Pacific Islands Forum that the establishment of a more just and equitable world must involve a sustained global recognition of the special situation of small island developing States. The Pacific region placed a high priority on adopting a balanced approach to their development efforts, ensuring that they addressed the three pillar of sustainable development without compromising the ecological integrity of their natural resources and ecosystems. In April last year, Pacific Island Forum leaders, at a special meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, committed themselves to a strengthened regime of regional cooperation, leading to a deeper regional integration. To give substance to that vision, the leaders decided to develop a comprehensive Pacific Plan, which would concentrate of four key areas of concern: economic growth; sustainable development; security; and good governance. Moreover, the Pacific leaders would be looking to strengthen, in the short-term, their cooperation in vital sectors such as health, education, trade, transport, communication. security, fisheries and the environment.

SACHIKO KUWABARA YAMAMUTO, Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Basel Convention, said that waste accumulated in small island developing States at an alarming rate. They were faced with enormous difficulties to handle all kinds of wastes, including hazardous waste, in a proper manner. Awareness of the problem and the availability of waste management facilities did not match the speed of changing consumption patterns that many small island developing States were witnessing as part of their modernization process. The practical experience in the first decade of implementation of the Convention in small island developing States tended to highlight the need for the development of policies addressing the management of hazardous waste and municipal wastes in an integrated manner.

The Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, at its seventh meeting last October in Geneva, took note of the specific constraints confronting small island developing States in the implementation of the Convention. In light of the critical needs of those States to be able to handle their nationally generated hazardous waste, the international meeting might wish to consider the need to facilitate the development of regional integrated waste management action plans in specific areas, commencing with the Caribbean, the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean regions.

Closing Remarks

PAUL RAYMOND BÉRENGER, Prime Minister of Mauritius and President of the International Meeting, said the international community had met here in a

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difficult context, characterized by the painful aftermath of the 26 December tsunami, as well as a lot of frustration accumulated among small island developing States, because of what was described as 10 wasted years in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. In that context, the meeting could have turned sour and acrimonious. Everyone had agreed that the meeting was a decisive moment for the future of small island developing States.

Declaring the meeting a resounding success, he thanked all countries present, the Secretary-General and his staff, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector. The results were on the table. The success of the meeting proved, once again, that small States, in general, and small island developing States, in particular, could fully contribute their share in international affairs, at the level of the United Nations and other international institutions. It had shown, once more, that small States did deserve respect and consideration.

The meeting had begun by expressing solidarity and sympathy for those hit by the tsunami, he recalled. There was then unanimity that the setting up of a tsunami early warning system was a priority and that proper coordination was required. He was grateful that it was agreed that action in the case of cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons was also urgently required. He was impressed by the two documents adopted -- the Mauritius Strategy and Declaration -- which forcefully remind the international community that small island developing States was a special case and particularly vulnerable. The documents contained renewed and strengthened commitments.

Above all, he continued, they provided for the further and full implementation of the Barbados Programme and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including the provision of financial resources sufficient for achieving those Goals. What was locked in was more focused and substantively increased efforts by small island developing States and the international community to implement the measures agreed on and called for. He was also impressed with the language agreed to in relation to climate change and trade issues. Mauritius, which just received the custodianship of the small island developing States process, would spare no effort to having the commitments and goals in those documents translated into concrete action in the months and years ahead.

In particular, he thanked India for helping set up the Convention Centre, which greatly helped Mauritius in its work, as well as those who worked hard for the success of the meeting. He noted two very important upcoming meetings -- next week's Kobe Conference on Disaster Reduction and the high-level United Nations summit in September. Mauritius was committed to keeping small island developing States-specific issues on the agenda and among the priorities of those two meetings. The reward for all the hard work was the mood created and the decisions taken, by small island developing States and their development partners together. The doors to the future of small island developing States had been reopened, the duty now was to see to the implementation of all the decisions taken in Mauritius.

ANWARUL CHOWDHURY, Secretary-General of the International Meeting, said it had been a long journey to reach Mauritius; from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic to the Caribbean, all small island developing States prepared for this meeting. While the meeting focused on issues of implementation, the international community now had to look forward to the road to implementing the Mauritius strategy. Mr. Chowdhury thanked the multiple stakeholders for their contribution to finalizing the strategy; they included the donor community, the multilateral

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institutions, the civil society, the private sector, regional organizations and the small island developing States themselves.

While referring to the addresses of Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the International Meeting and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Mr. Chowdhury said they highlighted the important role of the regional governmental bodies in supporting small island developing States and in identifying key challenges; those organizations included the Caribbean Community, the Pacific Island Forum and the Indian Ocean Commission. The United Nations, he said, had a critical role to play in implementing the strategy. The international community should begin with the mapping out of a road map for the implementation of the strategy. In the coming months, there were several intergovernmental gatherings which would provide an opportunity for the members of the AOSIS and small island developing States to ensure that the international community fully took into account the implementation of the Mauritius strategy.

Those opportunities included the Kobe meeting on disaster reduction next week; a possible resumed session of the United Nations General Assembly in February, which would endorse the strategy so that it became internalized in the United Nations system, which would provide an opportunity for it to be implemented at the local and country level through United Nations Resident Coordinators; the annual session of the United Nations Development Programme Executive Board, which would further support implementation of the strategy at local and country levels; the South Summit in June in Qatar, which would extend on the notion of South-South cooperation in the context of the Group of 77 developing countries; the Millennium Summit review in September; and the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in December which would help advance the trade issues that were agreed upon in Mauritius.

Mr. Chowdhury also paid tribute to the Chairman of the main committee, Ambassador Don MacKay of New Zealand, for his hard work on helping to draft the final document.

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