

STATEMENT OF DOMINICA DELEGATION TO THE  
INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON SIDS, PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS,  
January 13, 2005

Mr. President

Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Secretary-General of the International Meeting

Your Excellencies, Heads of State, Government & Delegations

Ladies & Gentlemen

The Commonwealth of Dominica Delegation conveys its gratitude to the Government and People of Mauritius for hosting the International Meeting on SIDS and for the excellent arrangements, which have contributed to its obvious success.

I also want to take this opportunity to convey the sympathy of the Government and people of Dominica to the victims of the Tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean, and to commend the rapid response of the international community and the United Nations.

In 2004, many Small Island Developing States, experienced cyclones, hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes and my delegation also wishes to convey our enduring solidarity to the affected countries in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. Indeed, Mr. President, 2004 was a devastating year for natural disasters and illustrated the extreme environmental vulnerability, which SIDS confront from year to year.

Adapting to these disasters that afflict our small island states requires the same level of swift response that we have seen from the international community in the aftermath of the Tsunami's devastation. This approach

and a longer-term commitment from the international community are most desirable in facilitating quick transition of SIDS from relief to reconstruction and development.

Ten years ago, the international community met in Barbados and committed to a Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS. The Barbados Programme of Action, under review in this meeting, continues to be more relevant today and indispensable to the future sustainable development of SIDS. Outcomes, realized in large part to the efforts of SIDS, include green house gas inventories, vulnerability assessments, national programs to address climate change, creation of disaster management agencies, and initiatives for renewable energy.

Dominica has recently joined member states that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol and urges other states to do so.

Mr. President:

The Commonwealth of Dominica epitomizes vulnerability in several ways:

- Geologically, given its position on a series of tectonic plates, and active volcanic activity;
- Environmentally, given its location in the hurricane belt;
- Economically and socially, given the reality of its status as a small island developing state;
- Macro-economically, given the current reality of its structural development program.

In November and December 2004, our country experienced the wrath of a devastating earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter Scale, followed by more than 2000 strong aftershocks, and an unprecedented number of landslides, which inflicted damage to homes and public infrastructure, totaling US 35 million dollars, representing 12.6 percent of Dominica's

current value of GDP in 2003. This untimely event has adversely affected our budding economic recovery after three difficult years of economic decline, and will necessitate the support of the international community in our rehabilitation efforts.

Mr. President:

In view of the numerous natural disasters around the world in 2004, the Dominica Delegation echoes again the plea of our Prime Minister, Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit, at the 59<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, for the creation of a Global Disaster Fund to assist especially the poor small island developing states in the aftermath of devastating natural disasters.

The emergence of today's globalized economy has further hastened the marginalization of SIDS in the international economic and financial architecture. Trade liberalization and the attendant end of preferences for bananas, the mainstay of our economy, left our economy in tatters. Loss of export earnings from bananas coupled with a crippling debt burden led to a structural adjustment program with the International Monetary Fund. Implementation of this program affected progress in human development and slowed down our progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President:

Small Island Developing States face many new challenges to their sustainable development in this millennium. Among them are the

HIV/AIDS pandemic, globalization, climate change sea level rise, unaffordable fossil-based energy, land degradation, water scarcity, and costs associated with suppression of international terrorism.

These challenges demand the urgency of implementation mechanisms to further the goals of the Barbados Program of Action and the strategy, which will emanate from this meeting. SIDS are unwavering in their commitment to implement the BPOA and will continue to mount all efforts towards realization of the BPOA objectives.

Dominica attaches great importance to the problem of affordable energy and in this regard has launched a major renewable energy initiative to significantly reduce our dependence of fossil fuel. This initiative is consistent with our focus on a sustainable development future as we work toward the goal of becoming one of the undisputable Nature Islands of the world.

Dominica applauds the Youth, Women and Civil Society declarations from this meeting and commits to greater partnership with these sectors and the private sector in the further implementation of the enhanced Barbados Program of Action.

Mr. President:

We call on the international community to demonstrate greater commitment towards partnership with the SIDS in this lofty goal to ensure sustainable development. We call also for special and differential treatment in the trade arena.

The donor community should make a concerted effort to satisfy the commitments already made for increased contributions to Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Helping us to address our vulnerabilities and building our resilience are in the best interest of the international community.

I thank you.