



Statement

by

Dr. Uschi Eid

Parliamentary State Secretary and Deputy
Minister

for Economic Cooperation and Development,
Germany

At the high-level segment

of the

International Meeting to Review

the Implementation of the Programme of Action for
the Sustainable Development of

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Port Louis, Mauritius

(10-14 January 2005)

Secretary-General Kofi Annan,

Under-Secretary-General Chowdhury,

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to express my sincere thanks to the government and the people of this beautiful island for their hospitality and the excellent organisation of this important conference. Mauritius is not only a member of SIDS, but also one of those states spearheading the process of transforming Africa into a continent of hope. This is indeed an enormous challenge and I wish all African countries much success with this important and crucial endeavour!

We are all still deeply shocked by one of the biggest natural disasters humankind has ever witnessed. The earthquake and the ensuing tsunami in the Indian Ocean have shown that nature can hit us without warning. I want to take this opportunity to express our deep sympathy and solidarity with the people in the region.

Mr. President,

The world is now not asked to conduct scientific research into the reasons for the disaster. Nor should we lose time with ideological or metaphysical speculations. We should give active support to the people concerned, without regard for any religious, ideological or political differences.

This human tragedy teaches us that, above all, measures are needed to prevent such disasters. Germany is very much committed to Early Warning. As part of these efforts, it is necessary to build communication networks at the community level so that early warning information is spread broadly and promptly among the population concerned. We are willing to participate in international efforts agreed upon in Jakarta on January 6th to establish an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean. Next week in Kobe we will propose holding a 3^d **International Conference on Early Warning** in Germany during 2005.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The consequences of this human catastrophe will dominate our agenda for a long time. We should, however, not forget the long- term perspective. Over the last couple of days we have had intensive, constructive discussions on the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. While associating myself with the statement made by the Presidency of the European Union, let me also underline some of the aspects to which the German government attaches particular importance:

First: Climate change

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the international community this century. SIDS are very critically affected by the global warming process. There were as many as 14 major tropical storms in the Caribbean during the latest hurricane season alone. Rising sea levels continue to threaten to completely submerge islands like the Maldives, Tuvalu or Nauru.

Germany is more than ever committed to reducing its emissions of greenhouse gases and implementing its obligations under the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Currently, both northern Europe and parts of the United States of America are facing floods and mud slides. Climate change is also affecting the industrialized countries. I again urge the US and other major emitters to join the Kyoto Protocol.

The **International Conference for Renewable Energies** last June in Bonn, in which most of the countries present here participated, was a step towards stimulating innovation in the interests of a climate-friendly economy. This Conference was evidence of a growing interest in better energy efficiency and renewable energies. Increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix is not only vital to reducing emissions. It is also a tool for lessening dependency on imported fuels and their unpredictable prices – something that has a very negative effect on the economies of SIDS. The Bonn Conference sent out a political message to the world: with a strong political will, with the best technology and with adequate financial resources we can master the challenge of creating a sustainable energy future for all. Germany has been active in sharing its own experiences in the promotion of sustainable energy with many developing countries, a policy we are ready and willing to continue.

We are a strong supporter of the **Climate Change Funds** and of the **Global Environment Facility**. We consider the Global Environment Facility to be an extremely important partner of SIDS.

Second: Working with neighbours

Intensified **sub-regional and regional co-operation** among SIDS - and with neighbouring countries in the regions - might bridge the gap for those countries not in a position to cope with emerging issues at the national level alone. The Caribbean Community, the Pacific Island Forum and the Indian Ocean

Commission provide the necessary structures and should become more closely involved. In Germany's development co-operation with SIDS, we support regional cooperation very strongly. We give priority to projects at the regional level such as the Pacific-German Regional Forestry Project, Aids prevention activities in Caribbean countries or the long-term cooperation we have with CARICOM in the promotion of renewable energies.

Thirdly: Supplying all people with water and sanitation

I emphasise water because water is life! A reliable supply with clean and safe water is essential for human survival in SIDS. To ensure the water supply of their population and for agriculture purposes, SIDS need to take urgent actions to promote a more efficient use of available water resources. For the people concerned, it would be a great success and would make a big difference in their life, if SIDS would report at the Major Event in September in New York, that they are on track to reach the water and sanitation development goals agreed upon by the international community. Germany fully supports the "EU Water for Life Initiative", to which it contributes.

Mr President,

Since the Barbados Conference 10 years ago the world has changed dramatically. New challenges have emerged. Globalization has brought us all much closer. While keeping in mind the overall responsibility of individual countries, we are determined to support SIDS in addressing their most vital challenges: adaptation to climate change, protection of fragile ecosystems, a shift to more sustainable agriculture, more market access, fighting diseases like HIV/AIDS or malaria, promoting renewable energies, making tourism more sustainable and overcoming vulnerabilities and isolation.

Mr. President,

This conference in Mauritius kicks off a very important year for global development. It is another milestone in making the voice of SIDS heard when the heads of state and government meet next September in New York to review their common commitments resulting from the Summits of the 1990s and the Millennium Declaration!

Since 1999, when we last met to review the Barbados Programme of Action, Germany has provided **nearly 200 million euros** in development cooperation to SIDS on a bilateral basis and through international institutions. Germany will continue to lend its support to SIDS to help them to meet the needs of their fragile economies and overcome their specific vulnerabilities even more efficiently.

Thank you, Mr. President