

**STATEMENT  
BY  
*HON. DEAN PEART*  
MINISTER OF LAND AND ENVIRONMENT OF JAMAICA**

**TO**

**THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO REVIEW THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND  
DEVELOPING STATES,**

**Port *Louis*, Mauritius  
13 January, 2005**

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Mr. President,

We truly appreciate the warm welcome extended by our hosts, the government and people of Mauritius. Allow me also to express sincere sympathies on behalf of the government and people of Jamaica, to our friends who were affected by the recent Indian Ocean Tsunami – a catastrophe that is still fresh in our minds.

Sustainable development is an imperative for small island states because of their vulnerability. Since the first Global Conference on SIDS held in 1994, where the Barbados Programme of Action was agreed, new challenges and concerns have emerged. These include HIV/AIDS pandemic, economic globalization, the threat of terrorism and the need for capacity and resilience building.

These challenges relate to basic human existence and are crosscutting. Their very nature and magnitude transcend our own abilities to individually respond in an effective manner. This, therefore, underscores the need for a coordinated and collaborative approach in building resilience which includes the meaningful participation of civil society at all levels.

We welcome opportunities, such as this forum, to forge relationships and endorse multilateral and bilateral actions.

Undoubtedly, our efforts will need to be supplemented by effective technical and financial support from the international community. Hence, the need for focused action to strengthen support to SIDS for programmes and projects targeted at capacity-building, and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

For our part, we must develop at national levels, frameworks to make sustainable development more than a slogan and an intricate part of the national planning process. Such frameworks, would serve to harmonize priorities in social, economic and environmental policies. This would ensure effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

A primary concern for many Small Island Developing States, is our dependence on imported energy. The rising costs of imported energy, has caused external economic shocks and increased our external debt burden.

SIDS need renewable energy alternatives. We also need to develop national consumption patterns that are affordable and sustainable. By diversifying our energy resources, SIDS will be better able to manage the risks associated with our dependence on imported petroleum energy.

While we face these challenges, we have opportunities to build our economy and at the same time rehabilitate and maintain environmental integrity. The maintenance of healthy natural resources and environmental integrity has a direct bearing on the economic activity of Small Island Developing States. It is therefore important to conserve our biodiversity.

In our rich cultural heritage, SIDS have special resources on which we can build without threatening the natural environment in the ways that traditional industries do. Industries built on cultural services can benefit from information and communication technologies.

There is a growing acknowledgement of the importance of traditional knowledge which should be harnessed and utilized to build our resilience. This is why Jamaica supports the call for a Convention on Cultural Diversity.

Knowledge management is critical to the empowerment of national and regional institutions for capacity and resilience building. Mechanisms must be developed to protect intellectual property of the creators to ensure equity.

Access to potable water and sanitation for the health and dignity of our population is one of the major areas of emphases as many of our SIDS continue to face challenges of public health and quality of life.

There is clear and immediate need for review of risk management. Our recent experiences with natural disasters exemplify this. Special reinsurance arrangements must be considered for SIDS.

As we move forward, through shared experiences in our efforts to implement sustainable development initiatives, we must strengthen our partnerships to realize our objectives. In closing, let me quote the words of one of our national heroes Marcus Mosiah Garvey, *One love, one aim, one destiny.*

Thank you.