



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action
for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
Port Louis, Mauritius, 10 - 14 January 2005**

**Statement by Joke Waller-Hunter
Executive Secretary,
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

In April 1994 the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was adopted in Barbados. A few days earlier, on the 21st of March 1994, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had entered into force. They have the attainment of sustainable development in common.

Ten years have passed, ten years of implementation, which have shown how much climate change and the sustainable development of SIDS are interlinked. Ten years in which the science on climate change has progressed. Thanks to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the impacts of climate change are now better understood. Assessments by the IPCC confirm the special vulnerability of small islands to climate change, which comes on top of their overall social and economic vulnerability. The devastating tsunami that hit the Indian Ocean focussed the eyes of the world on the vulnerability of coastal areas in a way and at a scale that was unimaginable up to now. While there is of course no link to be made between the tsunami and climate change, it provides a magnified warning on the impact of extreme events. The IPCC has indicated that the frequency, intensity and duration of extreme weather events will change due to climate change leading to increased risks of floods and droughts in many regions. The peak wind and precipitation intensity of tropical cyclones is likely to increase in some areas. The rise in global average temperature resulting from an increase of concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, will cause sea level to rise. Since 1994 evidence has been mounting, and many small islands have been severely affected.

Just a few weeks ago, the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC concluded in Buenos Aires. It showed very clearly that since 1994 action on climate change has taken a two-pronged approach: mitigation of emissions of greenhouse gases, with the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol on 16 February as an important landmark, and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. The increased attention paid to adaptation since COP 7 in Marrakesh resulted in the adoption by COP 10 of the Buenos Aires programme of work on adaptation and response measures. The programme puts a strong emphasis on implementation, making use of activities identified in the context of national communications. It includes *inter alia* further work on

information and methodologies, modelling, vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning. Various workshops and expert meetings, including one specifically for SIDS, will enhance the understanding of the issues.

Throughout the UNFCCC process, SIDS have provided a very active contribution to the development and the implementation of the Convention and its various instruments. At COP 10, the Buenos Aires AOSIS Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change was presented, reflecting the concerns of the SIDS. More than 80 per cent of the SIDS have submitted their initial national communications, identifying their climate change policies and needs in the context of sustainable development. The Global Environment Facility, as the financial mechanism of the Convention and through the special funds set up by COP 7, supports climate activities of the SIDS.

In conclusion: the case of the SIDS is a clear example that without appropriate international action on climate change sustainable development of SIDS, the objective of the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action, cannot be achieved. I wish the Mauritius Meeting every success.