

## **Small Islands, Big Stakes**

International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the  
Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development  
of Small Island Developing States

Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005

Intervention by  
Ole E. Moesby  
Under Secretary of State

DENMARK

Check against delivery

Prime Minister,  
Distinguished Heads of State and Governments,  
Secretary General of the International Meeting, Mr. Chowdhury,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for your hospitality and for the excellent organization of this meeting.

Let me start by associating myself with the statement of the Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs from Luxembourg, Mr Jean-Louis Schiltz, on behalf of the European Union. I full support the points so aptly formulated by the Presidency in the EU intervention.

The vulnerability to natural disasters has again been sadly demonstrated. The earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean on 26<sup>th</sup> of December has caused severe damages and huge loss of lives. Let me express my sympathy to those who have lost their loved ones in these terrible disasters. It has been a grim reminder of something we have seen before. Mitch, Ivan, and many more. The extent of this disaster, however, has been worse than ever and has – again - drawn our attention to the special vulnerability of small islands and coast near areas. It has been comforting to note that the international response – from governments and from the populations at large – this time has been better than ever. I hope that we shall be able to build upon this - also when it comes to the long-term proms ems and challenges of natural disasters.

During the forthcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan next week, we have an opportunity to discuss the possibilities for prevention as wel as the need for robust early-warning systems in small islands and coast-near regions. Denmark is ready to contribute constructively to the discussion.

Mr. Chairman,  
Denmark is pleased to participate in the International Meeting for the 10-year Review of the Barbados Plan of Action for Sustainable Development of the Small Islands Developing States. SIDS is a heterogeneous group – but the countries face common threats, particularly with respect to issues such as climate change, natural disasters and degradation of ecosystems. We need to continue to focus on the challenges particular to the SIDS. And we are confident that the Mauritius Strategy – as agreed during this International Meeting - will provide the necessary framework for the further implementation of the Programme of Action.

Denmark has supported the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action in many ways, particularly in the field of sustainable development and renewable energy. The most recent example of our support is a four-year grant of 11 million Danish kroner for the implementation of the Pacific Islands Energy Policies and Strategic Action. We believe that it is imperative to increase the share of renewa e energy in the World's energy consumption for economic, social, as well as environment reasons.

Climate change has severe consequences for the SIDS and threatens the very existence of some of the lower lying countries. Denmark welcomes the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Russia and by this, the coming into force of the Protocol by February 16 this year. A prompt

and full implementation of the Protocol is important. It has led the way for consideration of effective and appropriate global responses to climate change after 2012. While mitigation is crucial, we must also be ready to address the inevitable consequences. Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change is a matter that needs urgent attention. Therefore, with our EU partners, we have developed an EU Action Plan which includes components in this field. We also recognize the need to operationalize the adaptation funds under the UN Climate Change Convention. Therefore, we plan to make a further contribution to the 'Least Developed Countries Fund' as well as a contribution to the 'Special Climate Change Fund'.

In line with the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the Johannesburg Summit, one of the key priorities of Danish development assistance is to assist developing countries in their efforts to ensure sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation. In SIDS, however, this ambitious endeavour may be further complicated by special challenges, as for example sea level rise and climate change may affect the availability of water. Several schemes, such as the EU Water for Life initiative, seek to assist countries to overcome the water challenge.

HIV/AIDS has emerged as a significant challenge to sustainable development for many countries. Compared to other regions in the world, Small Island Developing States as a group report low HIV-prevalence rates. But let us not be deceived by statistics: today, the Caribbean ranks second to sub-Saharan Africa in the proportion of its adult population infected. Experience has taught us that without timely and well-targeted actions the HIV/AIDS epidemic can spread rapidly. Prevention strategies that target the specific risk-groups, and ensuring more AIDS knowledge among the population at large, are urgently needed.

Moreover, there is a growing recognition of the importance that trade can play in promoting economic growth and poverty reduction. The international trade negotiations in the World Trade Organisation - notably the Doha Development Round - will be important. Also in this connection we must not lose sight of the SIDS issues.

Mr. Chairman,

This September, Heads of State and Governments will meet in New York to take stock of progress in implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The International Meeting in Mauritius provides a timely opportunity for the SIDS to voice their concerns in advance of the review. For all of us, it is also an opportunity to confirm our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals. Denmark is advocating for a close link between the MDGs and the Monterrey process, and we have taken the lead in making our commitments — as well as our deliveries - transparent in the annual 'MDG-8' reports. Many others are now doing the same.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me assure you that Denmark continues to support the need to address the particular challenges of the SIDS in the area of environment and sustainable development. We are fully committed to international dialogues on the common issues of the SIDS and the need to have them well integrated into the major international events and negotiations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.