

Address
by
Mr. Navin Chandarpal
Special Envoy of the
President of Guyana
to the
International Meeting
for the
Ten Year Review
of the
Barbados Programme of Action
for the
Sustainable Development
of Small Island Developing States

Mauritius, 14 January 2005

His Excellency the Prime Minister of Mauritius
and President of the International Meeting
His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations
The President of the General Assembly
The Secretary-General of the International Meeting
Distinguished Heads of State, Governments and Delegations
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The People of Guyana share the grief of our sisters and brothers who have suffered from the devastating tsunami in the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004. This tragic loss of so many lives must serve as a timely reminder to our meeting that the issues we have come here to resolve are critical to the lives of the people of our planet and must therefore be treated with the greatest urgency and seriousness.

The Global Conference in Barbados in 1994 was organized by the United Nations because of the recognition during the Earth Summit in 1992 of the special circumstances and needs of small island and low lying coastal developing states. The Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action which emerged from the conference provided a positive framework to guide these states in their efforts to develop with a promise of meaningful support from the developed countries.

In Guyana and in other Caribbean SIDS, there have been serious efforts to implement the Barbados Programme of Action. Many national and regional initiatives have been taken to promote better economic, social and environmental practices. Much has been achieved but the levels are way below what is needed to make a significant impact on the living conditions of the peoples of the region.

The drive towards sustainable development in SIDS has experienced repeated setbacks arising from the twin vulnerabilities of natural disasters and economic shocks.

The devastation of Grenada by hurricane Ivan emphasizes the danger posed by natural hazards to the countries of the region. Hurricanes, floods and volcanoes have struck many Caribbean countries causing severe damage to the very structures which are vital to the development effort. Rebuilding has been very difficult and only possible by diverting resources from a wide range of development targets.

In the Barbados Declaration, the participating states declared:

" The international community should cooperate with small island developing States in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States by **providing effective means**, including **adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources** in accordance with Chapter 33 of Agenda 21; **facilitating the transfer of environmentally sound technology**, including on **concessional and preferential terms as mutually agreed**, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights as well as the special needs of developing countries; **and promoting fair, equitable and non-discriminatory trading arrangements** and a **supportive international economic system.**"

These promises have hardly been kept. Instead a double jeopardy has emerged for developing countries. On the one hand, we have received very little of the "adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources" and "transfer of environmentally sound technology on concessional and preferential terms." On the other hand, the meagre resources we generate within our countries are dwindling under trading arrangements which are the opposite of being "fair, equitable and non-discriminatory."

The examples of the trade in bananas, rice and sugar show very clearly that those with economic might are not reluctant to exercise their power to manipulate trade arrangements even if the result is severe damage to national economies and the social dislocation of large sections of the population. This is clearly not "a supportive international economic system."

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, the conditions internationally have become hostile to the sustainable development of developing countries. Far from being encouraged, less developed countries are being strangled in the noose of a distorted process of globalization formed by the ropes of convenient market forces and unilateralism. There cannot be sustainable development when the less developed are stifled in their quest to develop.

Now is the time at this ten year review for the international community to recognize the negative impact of its failure to provide the support promised to SIDS and to make a decisive shift in its approach. We greatly appreciate the actions of those agencies which have provided financial and technical support in projects contributing to national and regional objectives.

We are however disappointed with many developed countries that have not only failed to provide the committed level of ODA but have also taken very aggressive and hostile positions against the interest of developing countries.

Developed countries need to reduce the pressures on developing countries in the arena of the WTO negotiations. Globalization must not be directed to an atmosphere of confrontation but to one of cooperation. There is a need to reduce global tensions and conflicts and to create a New Global Human Order based on economic, social and ecological justice and the acceleration of efforts to end poverty, disease and human suffering.

We are heartened by the emphasis in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to encourage partnerships and the substantial commitment at Monterrey by developed countries to enhance official development assistance that had been declining during the past decade.

Caribbean SIDS have linked their continuing sustainable development efforts to a Package of Partnership Proposals based on a coordinated regional approach to the challenges faced in the major areas of the national and regional sustainable development programmes.

We have learnt from the good experience in our approach to adaptation to climate change where the achievements were multiplied and qualitatively improved through the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change () partnership. We need such approaches in other sectors also and appeal to our friends with the required resources to examine our proposals, to discuss with us and to generously give the support they can provide.

Mr. President, in our strong concern with the socio economic and environmental aspects of development, we need to recognize the contribution of culture as another strong pillar of sustainable development. The call by the Caribbean for capacity building of cultural industries in SIDS should be strongly supported in terms of investment, financing, business support services and intellectual protection.

Experiences in the last ten years have also emphasized the need for greater attention to the food security needs in developing countries. This is a major component in the drive towards the alleviation of poverty, hunger and disease.

As we thank the Government and People of this beautiful Island of Mauritius for their warm welcome and excellent working environment, let us demonstrate our appreciation by rekindling the flame of hope lit in Barbados ten years ago. Let us resolve to create a genuine spirit of cooperation to regain lost ground and accelerate the march to sustainable development, particularly for small island developing states.