

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR EVRIPIDIS STYLIANIDIS  
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OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND  
DEVELOPING STATES

Mr. President,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Hellenic Republic, I would like to thank the Government and the people of Mauritius for the warm hospitality offered to us.

I would also like to congratulate the Secretary General's initiative to organise this international conference ten years after the Barbados Conference and the adoption of the relevant Programme of Action.

This Conference is giving us a chance to exchange views and determine the ways towards the development and strengthening of SIDS which are indeed vulnerable to external threats. Those threats are directly linked to their economic, commercial and political substance.

Mr President,

No one among us could have imagined that our discussions would be overshadowed by the tragedy that has taken place in South-Eastern Asia. This tragedy enhances the importance of this international conference. Our thoughts, our compassion and our joint efforts will be focused, for a long-time ahead, on the relief of the suffering populations and the reconstruction of these areas.

Greece responded immediately, as most of the international community, to the needs of the populations affected from this tragedy. Both civil society and the Hellenic State have succeeded in raising more than 25MEURO worth, in cash, services and any kind of supplies. The aircrafts of the Hellenic Air Force have already transported to Phuket, Colombo and Maldives the above mentioned supplies accompanied by specialized personnel of Greek NGOs and diplomats from the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, in order to coordinate the distribution of the assistance. Moreover, a squadron of Special Forces of the Fire brigade in full gear was transferred to Phuket in order to help the local authorities trying to find any survivors.

Until the end of January, a cruise-ship will leave the port of Piraeus full of supplies raised by different organizations (Church, Municipalities, NGOs, Companies of Public and Private sector etc), with destination the port of Colombo. The ship will also serve as a hospital. All special skilled personnel will be on board from Piraeus.

After this tremendous physical disaster, we should seek means that will prevent, where possible, **similar situations** which have serious **economic, social and commercial impact in large geographical regions**, apart of those affected from this tragedy. Especially for the SIDS that already confront problems due to their distance from the international trade centres, but also due to their restricted productive capacity and economic growth, the support of the international community is of utmost **importance**.

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,

As you know, Greece was elected as a non permanent member of the Security Council for the two forthcoming years. On this occasion and on behalf of my country, I would like to express once again our gratitude to the international community for this honour.

Greece is a state with a large number of islands, and therefore we are very sensitive to issues which are of the utmost interest to small island states. We experience every year many of the problems which arise from the difficulty to organize life, services and development on so many islands at the same time. We will, therefore, try, from our new position in the UN Security Council, but also in every possible way, to promote cooperation with SIDS in order to upgrade their capacities and international role. In this context and in order to enhance capacity building, we are ready to offer legal expertise for horizontal institution building to the SIDS via a Non-Governmental Organisation in the field of the protection of the environment with particular attention to tourism, fisheries etc. Our Ministry and especially the Hellenic Aid Agency will cover all the necessary expenses of that project.

The international community, bilaterally as well as multilaterally will have to strengthen its support to this particular group of developing countries, the SIDS, towards the achievement of the MDG's and in order to meet the demands of the era ahead.

We are confident that the Mauritius Conference will be another important step towards this direction.

Thank you