

Statement

by

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Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations**

High-level segment of the International Meeting for the 10-year Review of the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) on Small Island Developing States (Mauritius, 10 to 14 January 2005

Mr President,

Let me begin by thanking the Government of Mauritius for hosting this meeting and for the hospitality we are all enjoying.

The Strategy for further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, is in our view a holistic and integrated approach to support national and regional sustainable development.

Iceland, an island state, shares many of the concerns of Small Island Developing States in the area of sustainable development. Like other island states, Iceland bases its livelihood on its natural resources and is committed to utilizing those resources in a sustainable manner. In doing so there are many challenges and issues we have in common, so there is scope for cooperation, particularly concerning the oceans, energy and possible climate change.

In this context, there is much potential in increasing the use of clean, renewable energy resources such as hydropower, geothermal, solar and wind energy, but also looking ahead to new technologies, particularly the possibilities of hydrogen as a clean energy carrier.

Iceland has sought to share its experience with developing countries by hosting two United Nations University Programmes providing training in key aspects of sustainability. These are the UNU Geothermal Training Programme and the UNU Fisheries Training Programme, where among others, participants have been from Small Island Developing States.

Energy services are an integral component of our economic well-being, and ensuring access to affordable energy can play a crucial part in poverty alleviation.

We fully support the emphases on energy resources in the Strategy for Further Implementation of the Programme of Action, and we are determined to contribute to that development through our programmes. Apart from our expertise in geothermal energy, Iceland is contributing to international efforts in the field of clean energy technologies. We are convinced that use of hydrogen can play a role in securing the three major goals world leaders set for the energy sector, when they met in Johannesburg in 2002, namely increasing access to modern energy services; increasing energy efficiency; and increasing the use of renewable energy.

Mr President, it is well known that the global community does not lack for agreed principles, rules and guidelines to promote the conservation and sustainable utilization of living marine resources. What has been lacking is effective implementation.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is without doubt one of the biggest achievements in the history of the Organization — the first and only comprehensive treaty in the field of the law of the sea. The Convention provides the legal framework for all our deliberations on the oceans, and is therefore crucial for small island developing states. It is imperative that the Convention and related agreements be fully implemented. However, we must also acknowledge that, for many developing states, implementation is constrained by lack of financial resources and capacity to meet the implicit responsibilities.

In this context, allow me to reiterate my Government's decision, made public at the United Nations General Assembly last October, where Iceland contributed to special funds to assist the least developed countries and small island developing states to fully implement the Law of the Sea Convention and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement.

Further, my Government has recently announced an increase in its Official Development Assistance. A part of that increase will be directed towards the Small Island Developing States

Mr President, I would like to inform you that the Government of Iceland has decided to launch a special Small Island Developing States initiative, where it plans to make available one million US dollars in a special Icelandic fund to support programmes addressing sustainable use of natural resources in Small Island Developing States. Special focus will be on programmes within multilateral institutions in the fields of sustainable fisheries and renewable energy.

Finally, Mr President, let me finish by saying that the importance of the oceans for Small Island Developing States cannot be overemphasized. Conservation and sustainable utilization of living marine resources is a matter of crucial importance, for both present and future generations. Enhanced sustainable yield from the oceans is required to ensure future food security and simultaneously improving the well-being of those that depend on the ocean for their livelihood.

Thank you.