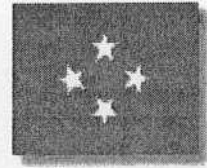




Federated States of Micronesia



STATEMENT

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY JOSEPH J. URUSEMAL
PRESIDENT**

OF THE
FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

TO THE

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
INTERNATIONAL MEETING
TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
PROGRAM OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF
SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

JANUARY 14, 2005

Port Louis, Mauritius

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Heads of State and Governments,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with a deep sense of sadness that I offer the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia and its people profound sympathies and condolences to the affected people and governments in the South Asian and East African regions for the loss of lives and property caused by the recent tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean weeks ago. We are shocked by the apocalyptic nature of the disaster, and I extend our solidarity and support to all afflicted.

Mr. President,

Ten years after Barbados, we gather in this beautiful country of Mauritius for this important review of the Barbados Programme of Action. We face still the same sets of issues identified in Barbados, and many more emerging ones, equally daunting, continue to face the world's small island developing states in their pursuit of sustainable development. In Barbados, we succeeded in focusing the world's attention on the unique problems our small island nations face. We cannot afford to regress in Mauritius. Progress has been made in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and we need to accelerate on the momentum gained and the progress achieved thus far. The assistance of the international community is most crucial if we, SIDS, are to continue forward on that path of progress.

Sadly, Mr. President, the unprecedented disaster in the Indian Ocean weeks ago is a grim reminder of our extreme vulnerabilities as Small Island Developing States to the brutal effects of natural disasters. While the event is still fresh in our minds, this sobering opportunity should give pause to the international community to reflect on these vulnerabilities that face every small island developing states. For countries such as ours, vulnerability is one of the main obstacles to sustainable development. While SIDS vulnerabilities have gained widespread acceptance in many international fora, it is fair to say, Mr. President, that we have yet to see such recognition translated into real action favoring small island developing states.

For the Federated States of Micronesia, as is for the rest of the Pacific islands, it is understandable that global climate change, and in particular, the risk of sea-level rise is of immediate concern to us. Our low lying coral islands dotted across thousands of miles of oceans, and our low-lying coastal areas of mountainous islands are put at risk of being submerged due to the threat of sea-level rise. For long, we have called on bigger and more resourceful nations for immediate actions against global warming out of concern and fear that sea-level rise would make many of our islands disappear. Today, in

Mauritius, **we renew that call on those countries** that have **not done so**, particularly, the **remaining major emitters of greenhouse gases, to follow** the decision taken by the **Russian Federation** in ratifying the Kyoto Protocol at the **earliest** opportunity.

Mr. President,

Despite the difficulties my country face, I am pleased to say that we are making concrete efforts to integrate the impacts of climate change into our sustainable development strategies, thus making us ready to implement adaptation projects. The same can also be said for SIDS. It is, therefore, imperative for the assistance towards SIDS for adaptation measures be moved quickly beyond assessment into concrete adaptation projects.

I would be remiss, Mr. President, if I do not say a few words here about the oceans that has since the beginning of my people's history served them well over centuries. It strikes me as utterly incomprehensible that industrialized nations would continue to traverse the Exclusive Economic Zones of small developing island states with plutonium and radioactive wastes without any liability and compensation arrangements in place in the event of an accident. An oceanic state itself, the Federated States of Micronesia relies heavily on the bounties of the oceans for its people's livelihood and for its economic development. One single accident in our EEZ or in the adjacent EEZs of our neighboring states would place the lives of our people at risk, and severely hamper any of our hopes and aspirations for sustainable development.

One cannot help but raise here also, Mr. President, the issue of unauthorized fishing. A nation with a vast exclusive economic zone rich in fish resources, Micronesia cannot simply act alone to manage and monitor illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in areas under our national jurisdiction. We require the cooperation of other States to take greater enforcement measures to ensure that their vessels do not engage in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in areas of national jurisdiction. Authorized fishing vessels must comply faithfully with the terms of that authorization. Unauthorized fishing is a threat to the conservation and sustainable management of our fishery resources.

Many may think, Mr. President, that we, the small island developing states, are being unrealistic, or worse, that we seek to impose our demands on the developed world while expecting a free ride in the quest for sustainable development. Certainly, that cannot be farther from the truth. The SIDS have already taken significant actions on their own in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action, utilizing their own limited resources. But our capacity to implement the Programme of Action, unaided, is limited without accessing the financial assistance of the international donor community and international financial institutions. And our efforts to access funding from the financial institutions are exacerbated by the application of complex rules and procedures that make it all the more difficult for countries like mine and many other small island developing states to access such funding sources. The proposed framework for resource allocation being considered by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is of particular concerns to us.

In the face of significant decline in official development assistance and increasing obligation on SIDS to address international agreements, financial and technical assistance from the international community is more needed than ever before. We call on our development partners to meet the internationally agreed level of 0.7 percent ODA, and support SIDS in their endeavor to achieve sustainable development.

Mr. President,

We have reached the end of the line. All discussions ongoing since Rio and Barbados now converge in Mauritius. We will have missed a great opportunity to set the course right for the sustainable development of SIDS if this International Meeting fails to uphold the high hopes of our peoples. Let us not fail them.

Finally, let me sincerely thank all the countries and organizations that contributed to the Trust Fund, without whose support many of our delegations could not have come from so far away to participate in this international meeting. We consider this meeting crucial to the future sustainable development of our islands and generations of our people to come.

Your people and Government of Mauritius, Mr. President, have been remarkable and very gracious. My delegation is very grateful for your kindness and hospitality as well as the excellent arrangements provided which have made our stay here in your beautiful country an enjoyable and memorable one.

Thank you, Mr. President.