

**Statement by the Pakistan Delegation at the International Meeting for the
Comprehensive Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for
Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Mauritius 10-
14 January, 2005)**

***Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen***

The Pakistan delegation would, at the outset, like to express confidence in your leadership. We believe that our substantive work during this important meeting stands to gain immeasurably from your wisdom and contextual experience and assure you of full support and cooperation in endeavors aimed at a successful outcome before our delegation leave, this stunningly scenic island.

Pakistan has always been cognizant of the peculiar structural and ecological characteristics of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) which make them vulnerable. Their vulnerability to the forces of nature, inter alia, magnifies the developmental challenges being faced by these states. Some of these challenges include the adverse impact of the climate changes, fragile ecosystems, unattractive and deteriorating terms of trade, problems of renewable energy, un-sustainable tourism, poor access to information technology, diseases like HIV/AIDS, and security challenges.

The support of the international community thus becomes a vital element in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. It is encouraging to see that this fact was recognized by the Rio Conference, which led to the holding of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in 1994. The Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of these countries constitutes another important step in the right direction. It provides a blueprint for the sustainable development of SIDS. It is also reassuring that the global campaign launched to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as contained in the Millennium Declaration and later the references made in the Monterrey Consensus and more recently in the Sao Paulo Consensus reflect the specific needs of the SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

We are heartened to see that SIDS are engaged in serious endeavors to implement the Barbados Programme of Action. The international community can complement and strengthen these efforts by creating an enabling environment and fulfilling its commitments. The SIDS continue to face many challenges. Overall disbursements to small islands have fallen sharply since early 1990s. The small islands have also not been able to attract the levels of foreign private capital and foreign direct investments that they had anticipated, mainly because they lack the market size, skilled labor and indigenous technological development to compete with larger developing countries for such investment flows. Similarly the island states have received little Official Development Assistance (ODA).

We believe that there is a need for a renewed political commitment and an action oriented approach on the part of the international community aimed at full implementation of the Programme of Action as the SIDS today are confronted with even greater risk owing to their vulnerabilities. The need for concerted action with regard to development cooperation is both higher and urgent as never before.

It needs to be appreciated that the group of SIDS has been actively involved in the deliberations at the United Nations General Assembly. We are happy that with the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States within the UN Secretariat, the SIDS are now in a better position to focus on their issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan has consistently been supporting the measures envisaged at all fora, particularly at the United Nations, aimed at furthering the sustainable development of the SIDS. It may be recalled that Pakistan had actively participated in both the Rio Conference and the Global Conference on Sustainable development of SIDS. We lent our full support to the initiative for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and we stand committed to continue supporting the SIDS in future.

Pakistan welcomed the UN General Assembly's decision to convene an International Meeting to review the Implementation of the Programme of

Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Our presence and active participation in this Meeting should serve as yet another vivid exposition of our commitment in this regard. We believe that these forty-plus Small island nations will have a good opportunity to present their case to the international community with a view to forging partnerships and evolving innovative ways to help them address their most vital challenges faced by these economies. This meeting which is tasked to undertake a ten year comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action, has, undoubtedly, big stakes as the SIDS strive to tackle serious threats and look for ways to achieve sustainable development in order to improve the quality of life for their inhabitants.

Apart from the accelerated implementation of the Programme of Action there is a need for renewal of political commitment by all States to the Programme of Action and to related international commitments and pledges.

While the small island countries strive to tackle a variety of challenges, it is essential that, at global level, development partners support agreed goals and assist in the implementation of actions to achieve them, particularly through the provision of financial and technical support.

To this end, we wish to commend the efforts being made by the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGE) under the slogan "Island Issues are Commonwealth Issues" to improve the lot of the small island states. We fully support the active role of the Commonwealth in this regard. Let us not, however, be complacent. It may be unfortunate but a recent tragedy has rendered this Meeting even greater relevance. The devastation caused by Tsunami constitutes a striking reminder of the vulnerability of small island developing states.

Let us, all delegates, before leaving this beautiful capital, evolve a result oriented strategy, based on a comprehensive review of the Barbados Plan of Action and inspired by a true recognition of our joint and several responsibilities towards the whole range of developmental and environmental problems faced by the SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

May I take this opportunity to outline some of the initiatives, which Pakistan has taken to ensure the protection and sustainability of the

environment. We have announced the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and will fulfil our commitments under that, as well as other protocols and international conventions. We have established a Global Change Impact Study Centre. An Advance and Early Warning System for drought is under implementation. A Climate Change Centre is also being established along with establishment of an Environment Monitoring System and Clean Drinking Water Initiative. The Activity Based Capacity Building project has been started. We have also started work on development of strategy for sustainable development. We have linked our development efforts in the Environment sector with capacity building in the Medium Term Development Framework MIDF 2005-10.

There is a strong nexus between health, poverty and environment. Policies and strategies prepared in isolation are not conducive to sustainability. Awareness and education campaigns have accelerated and syllabi are being revised to integrate Environment within education system. All these initiatives are implemented under the National Environment Action Plan of the Government.

Finally, let me assure you that Pakistan would never be found lacking in either commitment or action stemming from a consensual substantive outcome of this meeting.

I thank you sir.