

**STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE ARCADO D. NTAGAZWA (MP) MINISTER
OF STATE, VI PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, ENVIRONMENT, UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AT THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING FOR THE
10 -YEAR REVIEW OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING
STATES, MAURITIUS, 10-14 JANUARY 2005.**

Mr. President,

President of the General Assembly,

Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Honourable Ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. President,

Let me join others who have spoken before me, to add Tanzania's voice in expressing my sincere and heart-felt appreciation to the government and peoples of Mauritius in accepting the task of hosting this important meeting. We are grateful for the kind and warm hospitality accorded to me and my delegation since we arrived in this beautiful Island of Mauritius.

I wish also to express my delegation's deep appreciation to the President and Secretary General of the Meeting as well as his staff team for the excellent preparation to ensure a successful outcome of the conference.

Mr. President,

As has been increasingly observed, Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) and other island and coastal communities face a number of challenges. They are acutely vulnerable to environmental degradation; climate change; overexploitation of fisheries resources; land-based pollution and natural disasters. In addition they also share a number of disadvantages including a narrow range

of available resources; excessive dependence on international trade; vulnerability to global developments; lack of economies of scale; high transportation and communication costs and costly public administration and infrastructure.

Mr. President,

As you might be aware, Tanzania encompasses a number of Islands such as Unguja, Pemba and Mafia as well as other Small Island and reefs which face a number of environmental related challenges similar to those facing SIDS. These include: marine pollution including sewage discharge, agricultural runoff, sediment and silts, and industrial effluents; erosion of coastal areas and loss of critical habitats; depletion of coastal and marine biodiversity; destructive fishing methods and fish stock depletion; mangrove destruction and coastal deforestation; and degradation of coastal marine resources resulting from weak land use planning and coastal zoning.

Apart from these, the impacts of climate change on these islands are also vivid. Beach erosion associated with sea rise; increased hurricanes; changing weather patterns and increased drought, are all a manifestation of the changing climate that are seriously impacting on the livelihood and sustainability of the island and coastal population of Tanzania.

Mr. President,

Island and coastal communities' dependency on a limited number of resources mostly related to marine, has further exacerbated their vulnerability. This situation renders them susceptible to trade fluctuations and shocks associated with narrow and limited export based economies. It is therefore difficult for these people and States to effectively integrate into the global economy and the globalisation process. The results have been their continued marginalisation in the international trade which we consider to be the engine of economic growth and development. For them getting out of this quagmire, collective global efforts are vital to cushion them these inbuilt vulnerabilities in their economies.

While my delegation agrees that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development and that the soundness of national development policies, strategies and plans are crucial to the viability of their economies, issues such as natural disasters, sea-rise level and climate change, to mention a few, are beyond the control of these factors. Disasters do not respect sovereignty and borders of States. They do not choose between the rich and poor. The major constraint is that when poor countries are affected by disasters, their impact is great and recovery is slow since the countries lack capabilities for reconstruction and rebuilding of their economies.

Mr. President,

Against this background of extreme vulnerabilities of island communities, we should review the Barbados Programme of Action in the broader context. We thus call upon all Member States to demonstrate more political will to accelerate the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and other Actions to address the vulnerabilities of island communities and States.

Mr. President,

After the 1992 Earth Summit, the international leaders realised the urgent need to convene an international conference on the needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). As a follow-up to this call, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) was convened in 1994. The conference adopted the Barbados Programme of Action which comprehensively addresses the needs of SIDS.

In spite of the commitments made at the Barbados conference, the Special Session in September 1999 as well as at a number of other major United Nations conferences and summits, the overall Implementation of the Programme of Action has to date been far behind the agreed targets. As we are meeting here for the 10- year Review of the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, we should ask ourselves, what we should do to accelerate the

implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international level.

Mr. President,

While progress in the implementation of the Programme remain behind schedule, the Small Island Developing States continue to face serious challenges of natural disasters, rise in sea levels due to climate change, just to name a few. Last year, when the international community was busy preparing for this meeting, the Caribbean Islands were hit by devastating hurricanes. In a period of hours, the hurricanes claimed hundreds of lives and totally disrupted the economic activities, social services and severely dislocated the infrastructure of many Island States.

As these States are recovering from this devastating catastrophe, Indian Ocean rim countries and islands experienced an unprecedented tragedy in living memory from an unusual powerful earthquake, followed by the devastating Tsunami. In a matter of hours, the Tsunami killed hundred thousands of people and caused total destruction of properties, infrastructure and land, erasing the basis of livelihood of millions of people. These disasters have underscored the extreme vulnerability of islands to the forces of nature and have exposed fragility of their economies.

Mr. President,

These calamities are a reminder to all of us, that the world, particularly the islands are at mercy of the violent side of mother nature. My delegation wishes to emphasise the need for early warning system to detect Tsunami and similar disasters before they strike, especially in the Indian Ocean rim where there was none before.

In this context, the international community, particularly the global financial and trade institutions and other multilateral organisations as well as bilateral donors must and should provide specific additional remedial assistance to these States in

human and institutional capacity building, access to and provision of financial resources and related investment, technical support and opening up of markets to their limited range of exports.

Other important areas of intervention by the international community should include, among others, support of environmentally appropriate technologies, including information communication technologies (ICT); achievement of the ODA target of 0.7% of GNP; the fight against HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases; and open, transparent, rule based on non-discriminatory international trading system.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by stressing that if the international community is to look back from the first Earth Summit In 1992 via a number of other major UN conferences and summits such as the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, the problems facing humanity globally are known and have been documented and critically analysed. The solutions to these problems have been as well identified and are well known to all of us. The major problem is in their implementation. This review exercise should primarily focus on why implementation is stalling and how together we can rededicate ourselves to previous commitments and add dynamism in fulfilling them. Unfulfilled promises, declarations, communiqués and all diplomatic niceties devoid of concrete action do not measure up to the level of development the human race and species we have attained and come to this day of our present century.

I thank you for your kind attention.