

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR **ALI** GOUTALI

AMBASSADOR OF TUNISIA TO MAURITIUS
WITH RESIDENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

TO THE

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO
REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL
ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

JANUARY 14TH, 2005
MAURITIUS

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like first of all, on behalf of the Tunisian Delegation, to express our sincere thanks to the Government and People of Mauritius for hosting this august international meeting and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to us, throughout our stay on this beautiful island.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Tunisian Government and People, our heartfelt condolences and sympathy, following the Tsunami catastrophe that hit a number of friendly countries and islands, resulting in thousands of victims involving citizens from all over the world and causing devastating damage.

This catastrophe reminds us, once again of the vulnerability of many countries, large and small, of our globe, particularly the SIDS, but also of the inter-connectivity of our welfare and security concerns in our global village. These vulnerabilities and concerns should, from the Tunisian perspective, be addressed through a global vision and approach. Sustainable development is, no doubt, one of the ways to reduce vulnerabilities of States and to ensure well-being and prosperity for the future generations.

However, sustainable development should be viewed from and placed within a global perspective and approach. It should go beyond national considerations and be based on a necessary complementarity between national responsibilities and regional and international partnership.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sustainable development requires therefore, from our perspective, a more commitment to international solidarity and cooperation. Out of this conviction, Tunisia put forward, at the behest of its President Zine El Abidine BEN ALI, the initiative of the creation

of the World Solidarity Fund, adopted by the UN, during the Johannesburg Conference on Sustainable Development in 2002.

The implementation of this initiative has become all the more urgent, as the world is wrestling today with the ravaging consequences of the Tsunami disaster.

Sustainable development and appeasement of vulnerabilities do also require, in the same spirit of solidarity, increased North-South cooperation and more substantial South-South cooperation.

With regard to the latter form of cooperation, Tunisia, being committed to the principle of solidarity among nations, will be glad to share its humble experience and know-how in a variety of areas with brotherly and friendly countries, including SIDS, particularly within triangular technical cooperation.

As far as North-South cooperation is concerned, Tunisia believes that developed countries should show more commitment to the cause of transfer of technologies, particularly with regard to new technologies of information and communication, backbone of progress and development in the present era.

Tunisia, while preparing, in this regard, to host the second phase of the World Summit on Information Society in November 2005, calls on all countries of the World, developed and developing ones, to join efforts in using this event as an opportunity to look together for ways and means of reducing the digital divide between North and South, so as to enable the entire humanity to benefit from the new technologies revolution, for the benefit of our World.

Thank you.