

## **ADDRESS**

**by H.E.M. M. Skuratovskyi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of  
Ukraine to South Africa, representative of Ukraine to SIDS Meeting (10-14  
January, 2005)**

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election to the Presidency of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. On behalf of my country I would like to assure you of our full support in fulfilling your important duties.

I would also like to associate myself with those who have expressed condolences to all States stricken by the recent tsunami disaster which took a great toll on the lives of people and caused significant material damage.

Mr. President,

The Barbados Declaration and the Programme of Action enshrined a solemn commitment for the international community to build new and equitable partnerships for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States. This commitment to partnership, the commitment to work together was, I believe, the central message of the Barbados Conference, which, as our deliberations confirm, has been heard by the international community. The past ten years have been important in the field of the implementation of the Barbados Declaration and the Programme of Action. We are pleased, that the problems of SIDS have not only become a priority for the UN but also took a high place in the agenda of its relevant bodies and specialized agencies. Since the Barbados Declaration, we have witnessed consistent efforts by Small Island Developing States to meet their commitments under the Programme of Action as well as under the Millennium Declaration.

However, the progress achieved in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action still falls short of the desired and expected rate. Small Islands Developing States continue to face major challenges in their development efforts due to their inherent vulnerabilities such as smallness, remoteness, geographical dispersion, susceptibility to climate change and rising sea levels, fragility of their ecosystems, constraints on transport and communication, isolation from markets etc.

This global catastrophe, perhaps the most devastating tsunami to strike such a number of countries, including Small Island States, which killed more than 150000 people and brought incalculable material losses, has more than persuasively dismissed any doubts regarding SIDS' vulnerability to natural disasters and emphasized the need for adequate global response.

This brings me to recall that these days we are challenged, therefore, not simply by the need to review the implementation of the Programme of Action but also by the need of strengthening our co-operative efforts to achieve substantial progress. As the Programme rightly points out, these challenges are not only critical for Island States, but, largely, for the entire world.

The Government of Ukraine attaches great importance to sustainable development of Small Island Developing States. My country is not and would not be just an observer in this process. We are prepared to share our experience in mitigating the consequences of disasters, including the long-lasting Chernobyl catastrophe aftermath, and in responding to common challenges.

Ukraine stands ready to further develop its friendly relations with SIDS in such areas as preservation of the unique biodiversity of coastal and marine ecosystems and to provide necessary assistance and expertise in addressing their problems, in particular through broad professional training to nationals of these countries in our educational and research institutions.

My country is also known for a high level of sea researches, in particular at the unique Marine Hydrography Institute. Ukraine is active in all major sea research programmes under the auspices of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

Mr. President,

We hope that this Meeting will give an additional impetus to fruitful and efficient implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, to promotion of partnership, introduction of innovative mechanisms for addressing acute problems of SIDS. We believe that full implementation of the Barbados decisions will not only promote sustainable development in this group of States but also contribute to socio-economic progress of the whole humankind.

We fully support the final documents of this Meeting, in particular, the Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme and stand ready to take a constructive part in implementation of its recommendations.

Thank you.