



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY
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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

ON THE OCCASION OF THE TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAM OF ACTION
FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND
DEVELOPING STATES, IN PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS
FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 2005

Mr. President,

The United States delegation is pleased to participate in this ten-year review of the Barbados Program of Action. Before addressing the Barbados Review, I would like to express the condolences of my Government to those affected by the great human tragedy that struck nations that surround the Indian Ocean. In the words of President Bush, "we know that nothing can take away the grief of those affected by tragedy...As men and women across the devastated region begin to rebuild, we offer our sustained compassion and our generosity, and our reassurance that America will be there to help." The United States Government has pledged \$350 million and in the months ahead we will continue to consult closely with our international partners and the countries affected on emergency and longer-term needs. In addition to official contributions, we estimate donations of US private citizens and companies to the tsunami relief effort to be more than \$330 million. These numbers do not include our military assets committed to the area: a total of 25 Navy and Coast Guard ships, including the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Group, 43 fixed wing aircraft, 51 helicopters and 15,333 uniformed services personnel. They have already delivered 11 million pounds of relief supplies and equipment.

The United States recognizes the importance of early warning systems in saving lives. We are encouraged by the attention being paid here and around the world toward establishing an international tsunami warning system, particularly to serve the Indian Ocean region. We believe an effective model exists in the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission's International Coordination Group of the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific or "ITSU". The United States is actively engaged, working closely with colleagues and partners, to address this issue and looks forward to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction next week in Kobe, Japan and the 3rd Earth Observation Summit in February in Brussels, and other opportunities for the international community to determine collaborative action to establish an early warning system that alerts on tsunamis as well as a range of other hazards.

We are here to address a topic no less pressing as we deal with this tragedy. Small Island Developing States remain vulnerable in many ways, and face threats that emerged only in the past generation, such as HIV/AIDS. Haiti and Guyana are among the 15 nations most affected by this scourge. The United States is providing \$15 billion over five years toward an international fight against global aids.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS), with the assistance of the international community as a whole, have made important progress in the pursuit of sustainable development. We also recognize that much more work needs to be done if the vision of the BPOA is to be fully realized. This week we have had an opportunity to further our understanding of how best to achieve the Barbados goals by sharing success stories and "lessons learned," and by generating new ideas on how to develop our partnerships.

As we move forward into an "era of implementation," it is essential that international meetings such as this one focus on the practical measures each nation can take to promote sustainable development and to find ways to deliver results that improve lives. We must unleash the power of partnerships by attracting greater participation among all stakeholders, including the private sector. In the last decade, a clear lesson has emerged; achieving lasting development progress requires effective use of all development resources. These include not only domestic resources and savings, but also international trade and investment opportunities, and development

assistance. Achieving lasting development progress also requires a commitment to good governance, to support for the rule of law, and to reducing corruption.

Resources are available for countries that take steps to create policy and institutional environments that are conducive to development. The Millennium Challenge Account is funded at \$1 billion in 2004 and \$1.5 billion in 2005. It is designed not just to increase aid, but also to make aid more effective by investing in countries that practice democratic and good governance, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom. The MCA provides recognition and reward for qualifying countries and an incentive for other countries to adopt these policies that lead to economic growth. SIDS are already participating in the MCA process. Cape Verde and Vanuatu, are two of the seventeen countries currently eligible for MCA funding. Guyana and Timor Leste are also eligible for grants to address areas where they fall short on MCA indicators through the MCA Threshold Program."

In addition, the United States is providing \$15 billion over five years to fight HIV/AIDS, starting in 2004, through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief in more than 100 countries around the world. This initiative will concentrate its efforts on fifteen of the most affected countries, including Haiti and Guyana, and achieve measurable results. The United States is making the largest commitment ever by a single nation toward an international health effort aimed at turning the tide against global AIDS.

Official development assistance is but one resource for development. Creating the conditions for strong and sustainable economic growth is critical to building resilience and prosperity. The twin engines of growth -- trade and investment -- are fueled by open markets and a dynamic private sector. While it is true that SIDS face specific obstacles to developing a strong private sector, such as geographic isolation, small landmass, and limited natural resources, these factors cannot account for the considerable variation in success stories experienced by local and foreign entrepreneurs. According to the recent World Bank report, "Doing Business in 2005," in Singapore, a top business economy, it takes 8 days to start a business. In another SIDS in the Pacific region, it can take two months. Starting a business in one Caribbean SIDS takes 31 days and 15.4% of business capital, and in another it takes 78 days and 25.4% of business capital. Heavy regulation and weak property rights make it difficult for the poor to do business and encourage the growth of large informal economies. A panel of Nobel-prize winners recently agreed that easing business start up was one of the most cost-effective ways of fueling development. Regulatory reforms are relatively modest in cost and can have a strong impact on a country's growth. As we proceed in the implementation of Barbados, we must not lose sight of this fact. For SIDS, in particular, removing these obstacles to business is absolutely critical. Such reforms can help bring about both sustainable development and considerable economic growth. We are moving forward on the initiative endorsed by the G8 leaders in Sea Island to apply the power of entrepreneurship to eradicating poverty and look forward to working closely with you to achieve this common goal.

Open markets are an engine of growth and poverty reduction. Trade liberalization presents opportunities for SIDS to integrate more fully into the global economy. In this regard, the successful completion of the Doha Development Agenda is one of the most important steps we can take in the near term. The recent agreed framework among WTO members provides the way forward. Regarding concerns expressed by some delegates to this meeting regarding the possible erosion of trade preferences, we note that the international financial institutions are taking steps to respond to concerns regarding erosion of trade preferences and many constructive possible solutions are under discussion in the Doha negotiations. This international meeting can and should reaffirm support for the WTO process and respect for its mandate.

As Monterrey and Johannesburg made clear, the efforts of governments alone are not enough to advance sustainable development. Partnership is the watchword of U.S. development strategy. The U.S. is a partner in one-third of the 53 SIDS-oriented partnerships currently registered on the UN's Partnerships Database. At Johannesburg, the United States established and joined more than 20 sustainable development partnerships with governments and civil society stakeholders, including NGOs and the business sector. We appreciate Morocco's invitation to the 2nd International Forum on Partnerships for Sustainable Development next March in Marrakech, and we look forward to participating actively as the Forum focuses on partnerships related to water and energy.

The United States began promoting the partnership initiatives even before Johannesburg. Since its inception in 2001, one such initiative, the Global Development Alliance has been mobilizing governments, businesses and civil society by forging public-private alliances to stimulate economic growth, develop businesses and workforces, address health and environmental issues, and expand access to education and technology. This initiative alone has fostered more than 200 partnerships with a total U.S. government investment of close to \$500 million. Alliance partners have contributed over \$2.5 billion in cash and in-kind contributions.

I wish to highlight some U.S. initiatives, spurred by Johannesburg.

- In July 2003, the United States hosted more than 30 nations at **the Earth Observation Summit**. This was a landmark process to develop a coordinated, sustained, and comprehensive international Earth Observation System of Systems. The ten-year implementation plan for creating this integrated system will be presented for adoption to now more than 50 nations, at the third Earth Observation Summit, in Brussels next month [February 16]. SIDS are an essential partner in this effort. We recognize the importance of capacity building — the need for a coordinated effort to improve SIDS' access to, and effective use of, observation products, and SIDS' contributions to observing systems. Belize, and Cyprus, and Guinea-Bissau are already engaged in this effort and others have expressed their interest this week. We encourage all SIDS to take an active role.
- The **Clean Energy Initiative** is a U.S.-led partnership to provide millions of people with new access to modern and efficient energy services and to significantly reduce easily preventable deaths and respiratory illnesses associated with motor vehicle and indoor air pollution. To date, the USG has contributed over \$70 million to the Clean Energy Initiative; these contributions have leveraged over \$700 million in additional resources (\$300 million more than originally expected) from other governments, the private sector, and development organizations to support new partnerships that can provide more than 400 million people with access to modern energy services.
- **Entra 21 Alliance** is a partnership that is improving employability of disadvantaged Latin American and Caribbean youth and young adults (ages 16-29) by helping them gain information and communication technology skills through internships, job training, mentoring, and job placement. This \$25 million alliance is helping to develop a strong, vibrant, upwardly mobile, and skilled workforce, which in turn will strengthen the region's democracies and developing economies. Our partners include the Inter-American Development Bank, International Youth Foundation, Lucent Technologies, Merrill Lynch, and Microsoft.

- At the Johannesburg Summit, the Smithsonian Institution coordinated The Summit Institute for Sustainable Development, a highly successful training event for many participants. The Smithsonian has subsequently partnered with UNDP to create *The Institute@..* a series of training workshops at major international meetings. It facilitates translating sustainable development policies into practice. The US Department of State, other US agencies and foundations have supported this innovative provision of practical, high quality "how to" training and continuing education to participants of seven international meetings in 2004. We are pleased that the first Institute of 2005 is here in Mauritius where 16 half-day courses were given.
- We recognize that climate change is an important issue for SIDS, as it is for all of us. The United States remains committed to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. We have undertaken a comprehensive, innovative program of domestic and international actions that address the issue in an effective manner. The United States spends over \$5 billion a year on climate-related activities, far more than any other country. We have dozens of programs and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases in the near term. We remain the world leader in advancing scientific knowledge. And we are spending more than anyone else to develop technologies that will be key to reducing greenhouse gases over the coming century while sustaining the world's economic growth – a prerequisite for a sustained commitment to address climate change.

We also strongly support efforts to improve understanding of regional impacts, to enhance the resilience of SIDS, and to mainstream adaptation across sustainable development activities.

- The U.S. Agency for International Development has initiated a new program aimed at strengthening the capabilities of developing and transition countries to respond to climate-related impacts and risks. This program will strengthen the capabilities of key individuals and institutions to assess relative vulnerabilities and to evaluate and implement adaptation options for agriculture, water, and coastal zone management projects within USAID's development assistance portfolio. USAID and NOAA are also working with a range of humanitarian and meteorological organizations to provide useful weather and climate information to rural communities. The RANE program, which operates in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Western Pacific, uses reserve capacity on the WorldSpace digital satellite system to transmit forecasts, bulletins, imagery, seasonal assessments, and data to remote areas. The goal of the program is to provide environmental information that assists governments and populations in coping with hydro-meteorological hazards and environmental fluctuations.
- Barbados saw the beginning of what became the International Coral Reef Initiative. SIDS should take credit for focusing the world's attention and effort on these immensely rich and important ecosystems. As a founding member of ICRI, the United States remains dedicated to coral reef conservation at home and globally. ICRI was the catalyst for establishing the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force— comprised of federal, state, and territorial government agencies. Through the Task Force, the United States and our island territories have launched major research and conservation programs to protect our domestic and international reef resources. ICRI demonstrates what we can achieve when we collaborate on an issue. Would urge SIDS countries to participate in ICRI and ICRI-related regional activities.
- The spread of invasive **alien species**, both terrestrial and marine, is a growing problem recognized by SIDS and the United States. In my country **alone, the estimate annual damage**

from invasive species is nearly \$137 billion. Over the years, the United States has also been active in providing technical training and support to assist SIDS in addressing terrestrial invasive species problems.

We are encouraged by statements made by distinguished delegates earlier on the importance of clean water. This is a top priority for the United States. Two water initiatives demonstrate our concrete commitment to partnerships with SIDS.

Launched at Johannesburg, "**White Water to Blue Water**" promotes a regional approach to the integrated management of watersheds and marine ecosystems through partnerships. We led the initiative in the Wider Caribbean, and we envision other governments leading similar efforts in other regions. We want to share lessons learned from our experience in this Hemisphere with partners around the world. An international Steering Committee was convened, which guided the planning and implementation of the White Water to Blue Water Partnership Conference held March 21-26, 2004 in Miami, Florida, USA. The Partnership Conference, co-sponsored by the Caribbean Community, CLAD, the UN Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the UN Environment Program, and the United States Government, drew more than 700 participants representing governments, NGOs, and academia from over 30 countries. More than 100 partnerships focused on integrated approaches to watershed management, marine ecosystem management, sustainable tourism, and shipping/maritime transportation in the Gulf of Mexico and Wider Caribbean Region were nurtured or formed during the event. Efforts to continue the synergy developed during the Partnership Conference are being coordinated through the leadership of the Steering Committee, governments, and organizations with strong interests in the Region.

- In addition, our three-year, \$970 million **Water for the Poor Initiative** provided over \$873 million toward increasing access to clean water and sanitation services, watershed management, and improving water productivity in 2003 and 2004. Thus far over 8 million people have received access to improved water and sanitation services through these programs. The **Safe Water System** partnership-- which includes U.S. Government agencies, international organizations, the private sector, and non-profit NGOs -- has built programs in over 20 countries that create local demand for technologies to disinfect and store water at the household level. It has distributed or sold at low cost over 8 million bottles of disinfectant solution to enable people to have affordable, safe drinking water.

These examples and others show that partnerships which involve a broad base of stakeholders work. Through partnerships we are improving peoples' lives, raising hope, and creating a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world. The Barbados review process provides us with an opportunity to further this important work.

Thank you.