



Statement by Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury,
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Developed Countries, Landlocked developing Countries and Small island
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at the CSD-14 on the SIDS Day
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It is very important that CSD-14 session is engaging today in full-fledged discussions with special focus on the particular relevance of this year's CSD themes to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It is also very appropriate that in these interactions, emphasis will be given to practical initiatives that would enhance the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Having the responsibility in the United Nations for advocacy and mobilization of international support and resources for the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI), I would like to commend the manner in which today's deliberations have been structured with broad policy statements at the opening, followed by the three panel discussion on the four CSD thematic clusters on energy, industrial development and climate change coupled with air pollution. All very important and relevant for the sustainable development of the SIDS. The Partnerships Fair with presentations and information desks as well as the Learning Centre and Side Events – all of which devoted to SIDS would run parallel with an impressive array of subjects and participants. These surely would add a practical dimension to the support that the SIDS deserve from the international community through the Commission on Sustainable Development, the intergovernmental body entrusted with the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Let me underscore here and again that in this support, the most significant role has to be played by the United Nations system entities.

My colleague Under-secretary-General Jose Antonio Ocampo has elaborated the substantive issues that the SIDS Day deliberations would be focusing on, particularly those contained in the Report of the Secretary-General on the integrated review of the CSD thematic clusters in the SIDS (E/CN.17/2006/7). Let me take a moment here to express my appreciation for the report loaded with information very relevant for today's discussions. Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Ambassador Julian Hunte – my renewed felicitations at this forum on your chairmanship – would be outlining the plans and expectations of the SIDS on those issues.

I would, therefore, like to present some of my thoughts as to what could be done for the momentum for MSI to pick up as more than 15 months have gone by since its adoption at the high-profile and successful meeting in Mauritius. The tremendous goodwill for the SIDS and commitment of support to them expressed at that international meeting should not be allowed to wither away or to be crowded out of the global agenda. That is why it is also necessary that the CSD should in the context of the SIDS Day provide an opportunity to look into the state of overall implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. This should be done on an annual basis with brief written inputs from all major stakeholders – governments, UN system, international organizations like the Commonwealth, regional and sub regional bodies, civil society and the private sector as well as those technical/scientific institutions that are specifically contributing to the realization of the MSI.

The Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) of the UN system that we have for the MSI follow up should come up with a comprehensive set of indicators for measuring implementation. Identifying realistic and worthwhile indicators is essential for monitoring progress. It is a complex and difficult task, more so given the wide-ranging decisions incorporated in the MSI. The task, however, needs to be undertaken urgently under the aegis of IATF. The IATF should therefore necessarily be meeting more often and on a regular basis. It can also become a valuable forum for sharing of knowledge, experience and information among the UN system entities in the implementation process.

Executive heads of each of the relevant UN entity should recommend to his or her governing body the steps needed to be taken for giving shape to the MSI for approval. He or she should also report back regularly to the governing body articulating how the MSI process is being mainstreamed in the entity's work programme. Global leadership of AOSIS needs to provide the guidance to this process at various dispersed UN locations.

Let me share with you in this context the core of the advocacy and resource mobilization efforts being made by the UN-OHRLLS. My role as the Secretary-General of the Mauritius Meeting and our Office's close involvement in the preparatory process have given us a distinct insight into the perceptions and perspectives of various stakeholders regarding the SIDS programme. We, therefore, feel strongly that inclusivity is extremely necessary for structuring broader partnership and strategic collaboration. Our efforts are based on this understanding.

As I had emphasized many times before, during and after the Mauritius meeting, it is absolutely essential that the regional intergovernmental organizations and their Secretariats – the CARICOM, the Pacific Islands Forum and the Indian Ocean Commission – should be organically linked to the implementation process with the full political and resource support of the UN. The information provided in the SG's integrated review report testifies very forcefully the critical role of these organizations. I am very encouraged by the interest and commitment expressed by the Secretaries General of these three regional bodies. Their leadership is vital to the success of our common objective. As all these secretariat representatives are attending the CSD-14 session, may be IATF should hold a meeting with them to talk about the status of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Another major area of our MSI-related efforts is the greater involvement of the international financial institutions, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, in favour of SIDS. I am happy to

say that the World Bank had become increasingly involved in the preparations of the Mauritius meeting in which it participated at a high level. We are in regular contacts to advance collaborative activities for the implementation process. A remarkable decision that would positively advance the MSI is the agreement on special measures for IDA assistance in favour of SIDS that would open up the prospects for increased development resources for these countries. The World Bank's Small States Forum last September deliberated on the issue of insurance that is of primary interest to disaster-prone SIDS. My Office had been involved in these to high light the concerns of the SIDS, particularly encouraged by the strong emphasis conveyed on this matter by the Prime Minister of Dominica. Enhanced understanding of the regional development banks in their resource allocations for the MSI activities has also been a focus of our efforts. We would propose that in the context of Financing for Development deliberations, a special section be added in the Secretary-General's report focusing on the special needs of the SIDS.

My Office has also taken the initiative of sensitizing the newly-established Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), as proposed by the Secretary-General and endorsed by the 2005 World Summit, for giving priority attention to the post-disaster needs of the small islands. We have been encouraged in this by the emphasis placed on this matter by the Prime Minister of Grenada based on his country's post-disaster experience. Soon after the formal launch of the CERF in March, we proposed institutional priority for the SIDS in the Fund's operations. We would seek the support of AOSIS to this initiative.

Another area that our Office has endeavored in has been the inclusion of SIDS in the context of the South-South cooperation. At the last session of the UN High Level Committee on South-South cooperation in New York, the SIDS have been given special attention as one of the most vulnerable groups in the context of the UN's work in this area. Our collaboration with the Special Unit of South-South Cooperation has been covering a number of areas of interest to SIDS.

The Mauritius Strategy emphasized "initiatives in such areas as access to and the use of information and communication technology (ICT)". You would be aware of the strong political support given at the last month's Pacific Leaders' United Nations ESCAP Special Session (PLUS) in Jakarta for establishing satellite communications, in view of the high costs and technical difficulties associated with laying down fibre optics cables amongst the islands. To realize this objective, my Office is preparing to work with UNESCAP and the Pacific Islands Forum and would take the initial follow up steps. We will keep you informed as we move ahead in this regard.

The social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS, their smallness and remoteness calls for the commitment and effective involvement of their partners – all partners - in addressing every aspect of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. My Office looks forward to the support and guidance of the SIDS as we make efforts in this direction.
