

Statement by Ambassador Rick Barton, U.S. Representative to the Economic and Social Council, at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, 18<sup>th</sup> Session (CSD-18), “SIDS Day” Plenary Meeting

New York, NY  
May 10, 2010

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates,

The United States appreciates the opportunity to focus on the unique challenges facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Today’s meeting is meaningful in reminding us of the progress we have made on SIDS development since Agenda 21. The Barbados and Mauritius meetings focused global attention on applying Agenda 21 to the unique situation of SIDS and - more importantly - identified the actions that would be required at all levels to achieve success. The SIDS process has been the starting point for major sustainable development initiatives, including the protection of coral reefs, the Micronesia Challenge, and the Coral Triangle Initiative.

To achieve sustainable development, we must enhance resiliency in natural and manmade systems. The more resiliencies we can build today, the more choices we provide for our children tomorrow. This is true for SIDS and for all other nations as well.

We have an opportunity this week to define the next stage of our deliberations. Our efforts towards the High-Level Review in September should focus on tangible actions. Our goal is not to revisit the texts of the Barbados Program of Action or the Mauritius Strategy, but instead to focus on concrete steps that will further promote sustainable development and address vulnerabilities. We believe that for the High-Level Review meeting to achieve a meaningful outcome, we must focus on the development and adoption of a short, practical and balanced document.

We commend the effort that went into the regional meetings, and we particularly appreciate the opportunity to have engaged in Saturday’s inter-regional meeting.

Clearly, our ongoing work must address climate change. This is one of the greatest challenges facing human-kind, with possibly devastating impacts on SIDS. The very existence of some low-lying SIDS is at stake. Under President Obama, the United States has done more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions than ever before, both by supporting domestic policies and by vigorously engaging in international negotiations. We strongly support the Copenhagen Accord, which includes both a commitment for fast-start financing and a goal of jointly mobilizing \$100 billion a year by 2020 through a range of public and private resources. The Accord calls for this funding to be prioritized for the most vulnerable countries, including SIDS.

As part of our Copenhagen Accord fast-start financing commitments, the United States is expanding adaptation assistance to enable prompt action to help vulnerable countries adapt and

build resilience to climate change impacts. We will commit \$244 million in Fiscal Year 2010 and have requested \$334 million in Fiscal Year 2011 to support adaptation through these channels.

SIDS will be a focus of these activities. We are currently developing bilateral and regional approaches to address the adaptation needs of SIDS, and we will continue to work closely with SIDS stakeholders on these efforts.

Sustainable development for SIDS is broader than just climate change, and in that context we must address the full range of issues: water, health, food security, biodiversity, invasive species, economic development, waste management, chemicals management, and trade. Through the Barbados and Mauritius meetings, and here at CSD, SIDS have clearly articulated how these topics are unique when viewed through the development lens of SIDS. We are very interested to hear more about specific opportunities in the field of renewable energy, a particular focus for the United States. Given the costs associated with traditional sources of energy in SIDS, we have the chance to demonstrate technology applications that are both cost-competitive and environmentally sound. I believe the same will be true in the area of water, and the topics of this CSD as well.

The United States looks forward to the exchange of ideas as we move toward September, and beyond.

Thank you.