



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. DR. ABDALMAHMOOD ABDALHALEM MOHAMAD, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON SIDS IMPLEMENTATION AT THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 23 February 2009)

Distinguished Chair,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Commission on Sustainable Development is mandated to serve as the primary intergovernmental body responsible for the implementation of and follow-up to the commitments related to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) including those contained in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. The G77 and China therefore welcomes the convening of this session during the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), as a valuable opportunity to address challenges in the implementation of the BPOA and MSI.
2. The Group of 77 and China remains concerned over the state of implementation of the BPOA and the MSI. While SIDS themselves, have made some progress at the national and regional levels in building the institutional capacity for sustainable development, in formulating strategies and action plans, and in carrying out policy reforms, they continue to encounter many serious problems and constraints which have slowed down or impeded the process of implementation.
3. The lack of financial, technical and human resources, relative to the enormity of the tasks to be accomplished represents a common challenge faced by SIDS across all regions. Many critically needed infrastructural projects that require large investments, such as air and maritime transport, adaptation to climate change and sea level rise, waste management, energy, tourism infrastructure, road and telecommunication infrastructure lie beyond the resources of Small Island Developing States. The global trend of declining ODA levels has been evident in SIDS, and in many SIDS the availability of domestic financial resources has actually been diminished by adverse economic developments and natural disasters. Furthermore SIDS as a group, due to their small size and limited productive capacities, have not benefited from the expansion of global trade and investment.
4. The impact of the global financial and economic crisis has been particularly devastating in SIDS given their openness to the global financial and economic system and high dependence on a narrow range of income generating sectors such as tourism. The G77 and China calls on the international community to ensure that the concerns of all developing countries including the SIDS, are taken into account in ongoing efforts to respond to the global financial crisis.
5. At the International Meeting in Mauritius in 2005 the donor community committed themselves to increase their level of support to the sustainable development efforts of SIDS. However these promises and commitments remain largely unfulfilled. The Group of 77 and China wishes to urge all development partners to honour, in an urgent manner, all commitments related to SIDS and in particular those related to the provision of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building.

6. The thematic cluster of issues of agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification are of critical importance in SIDS. In SIDS pressures on land resources have been exacerbated by competing uses, increased demands, land degradation and climate change. The G77 and China underscores the need for the international community to provide assistance to SIDS to enable them to build institutional capacity including appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks for coordinated management and monitoring of their land resources. This assistance should include access to information on land resources and appropriate tools, and the dissemination of best practices and technologies for implementing sustainable land-use policies.

7. In the agricultural sector SIDS face unique challenges in their effort to diversify their economies and markets in order to increase their degree of food security, self-reliance and promote sustainable livelihoods. Over the past 20 years the value of SIDS commodity exports has declined considerably as a result of the erosion of preferences, increased competition and falling commodity prices. The impact has been particularly severe in poor and rural communities in SIDS. The Group of 77 and China believes that efforts to assist SIDS in this area should align themselves with national and regional priorities and programmes to promote agricultural diversification, improve production and productivity, develop trade and marketing policy frameworks and improve food quality controls.

8. The Mauritius Strategy underscores the serious challenges associated with land degradation faced by most SIDS. The Group of 77 calls on the international financial institutions, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to facilitate SIDS' access to financial and technical resources to develop and implement projects to address land degradation.

9. Additionally, capacity development and science and technology are crucial cross-cutting issues for advancing implementation of the BPoA and MSI in areas relating to the CSD-17 cluster of issues. Increased focus on capacity development and science and technology projects and programmes is needed help SIDS overcome some of their natural resource constraints such as human resource limitations and limited landmass.

Distinguished Chair,

10. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the decision taken by the General Assembly in resolution 63/213 to convene a two-day high-level review of progress made in the implementation of the MSI in September 2010. The Group believes that the Commission, given its mandated role as the primary intergovernmental body responsible for the implementation of and follow-up to the commitments related to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), has a valuable role to play in this process. The Group hopes that this session of the Commission will give this matter the urgent attention and consideration it deserves.

I thank you.