



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MS. ELIANA SAISSAC, SECOND SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF ARGENTINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING THE INTERACTIVE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON SIDS IMPLEMENTATION AT THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 28 February 2011)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group wishes to thank the distinguished panelists for their useful presentations on the themes under discussion.

2. The Commission on Sustainable Development is 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, the blueprint for the sustainable development of SIDS.

3. The G77 and China therefore continues to ascribe great importance to the work of the Commission and welcomes this opportunity to highlight issues of critical concern to SIDS in the thematic cluster under consideration i.e. transport, waste management, chemicals, mining and sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Mr. Chairman,

4. SIDS' capacity to effectively move towards the achievement of their development objectives in the current thematic cluster, must be viewed against the backdrop of the ongoing effects of the recent economic and financial crisis, and the increasing volatility of the prices of food, fuel and other commodities on which their economies are heavily dependent. Challenges such as these have undoubtedly served to deplete SIDS' already limited capacities to pursue their overall development agenda.

5. Climate change is by far, the gravest threat to the territorial existence of these countries which have been characterised as being among the world's sustainable development "hotspots". Coastal erosion, coral bleaching, rising temperatures and sea-level rise all pose serious threats to the health and ultimate survival of SIDS.

6. These are certainly challenges which have affected all developing countries to some degree, but the negative effects are amplified in SIDS due to their small size and acute vulnerability to external shocks and natural disasters.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Allow me to briefly highlight a few issues in SIDS in relation to the thematic cluster currently under discussion:

8. Transport: Several SIDS possess limited and poorly developed road networks as well as low transport volumes. In addition, the proximity of roadways and airports to coastal areas makes them

susceptible to flooding and closure. These factors, in addition to the geographical remoteness which characterises most SIDS, mean that transportation costs are quite exorbitant, and constrain these states' ability to provide reliable and efficient air, land and maritime transport services.

9. Waste management and chemicals: SIDS are committed to efficient management of waste and significant progress has been recorded in this regard. However, there remain numerous challenges which must be addressed as a matter of urgency given the negative effects which poor waste management practices are likely to have on sustainability of marine areas, health, food supplies and tourism. One major challenge has been the flooding of waste disposal sites due to their proximity to coastal areas. The trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes and chemicals also affects the marine ecosystems of SIDS given that their economic and environmental sustainability and livelihoods are intrinsically linked with the sea. It is for this reason that more effective regional mechanisms have to be developed to protect SIDS' oceans and coastal zones from ship-generated wastes and challenges posed by the transboundary movement of hazardous material.

10. Mining: Mining is an important sector in very few SIDS, though it contributes significantly to employment generation, rural development and the overall economic growth of those countries where it is a major undertaking. The development of the mining sector in a manner which is in keeping with the overarching goal of environmental sustainability is a challenge due to the negative environmental effects which are attendant to the process. Environmental degradation, soil erosion, pollution, displacement of communities and biodiversity loss are but a few of the negative environmental effects of mining which have the potential to undermine other areas of SIDS' economic endeavours.

11. Sustainable consumption and production: Although the carbon footprints of SIDS are fairly small in keeping with their small size, sustainable consumption and production remains an issue of growing importance in most of these countries notably in relation to renewable energy/energy diversification, climate change adaptation, ecosystem services and waste management/recycling.

12. As it regards SIDS' critical needs in relation to some of the issues under the thematic cluster, in particular, transport and waste management/chemicals, the lack of remains critical. When the special and unique challenges, heightened vulnerabilities and severely limited capacities of SIDS are fully taken into account, it is clear that their national efforts must be complemented a renewed commitment by the international community to make good on their promises of support. Indeed, it is essential that the developed partners professed commitments to SIDS, become manifest in the provision of resources and other support for SIDS' efforts to chart a successful course towards their sustainable development, particularly at this critical juncture.

13. It is our firm expectation that the process of reflection and assessment instigated by the High-level review of the MSI will inspire a renewed sense of urgency to fulfill longstanding commitments to assist SIDS.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.