

**Keynote address by H.E. Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States.**

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

It is indeed an honor for me to be present here at the Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Program of Action. This is the first meeting of the AOSIS regions, and it will indeed set the tone for our negotiations and for the process of establishing a consensus between all the island countries. It is therefore important that this regional meeting quickly establishes a set of major points of convergence on the sustainable development priorities of the region. I know from my own experience that the Pacific Island Countries play a highly visible and influential role in the setting of policy within the Alliance. This meeting is therefore a valuable opportunity to demonstrate the commitment of the region to sustainable development and to the inter-regional cooperation between SIDS.

Last year, the World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the special case for SIDS, and endorsed the starting a process to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the Barbados Programme of Action. This review will culminate in an international meeting in Mauritius in 2004. This will be the first post-WSSD review and there is some expectation that it will redefine the nature of international meetings of this kind. It will also be a litmus test for commitments made during the Summit, notably the Type II Initiatives.

The focus of the review is expected to be on implementation and we want to avoid as far as possible the protracted negotiations that have become the hallmark of the last decade. To ensure that the review contributes positively to both the progress of SIDS issues at the international level, as well as the implementation of sustainable development at national and local levels, the preparations will need to adopt a clear set of goals and focus on an achievable set of outputs over the next 2 years. The information gathered during this preparatory process should be presented in a clear and factual manner with a concomitant discussion that thus focuses on the facts on the ground and the lessons learned. This should lead to proposals for practical and pragmatic next steps to ensure that the further implementation of the Barbados Program of Action is carried forward, re-emphasizing the validity of its chapter on implementation.

Based on the experience of the last 18 months and feedback from countries during the Summit negotiations, the following set of principles are proposed to guide the preparations for the review:

- Actively engage national stakeholders in an effective and well-coordinated process
- Ensure national priorities drive the preparatory process and outcomes
- Secure effective participation in the regional, inter-regional and international meetings
- Mobilise resources and the clear commitment of partners to assist with the implementation of sustainable development as an integral part of the preparations
- Ensure that the work achieved in preparation for WSSD is build upon.
- Ensure that national reporting for the B+10 process be as simplified as possible.

To prepare effectively it will be necessary to establish a clear set of outputs for the review and International Meeting. The following are proposed to address a range of critical issues for SIDS

National priority setting and projects for sustainable development

- to be build on National Assessments and linked to capacity building
- utilising multi-stakeholder and Government coordination set-up or strengthened during preparations for WSSD

National capacity for international negotiations

- to build on national experience of WSSD
- a team of negotiators with capacity and consistent representation at regional and international meetings

Regional Assessment of action taken and proposals to implement sustainable development including progress to implement the Summit initiatives;

- based on National Assessments and the deliberation during relevant regional meetings
- requires action by Secretariat to distil National Assessments and present these as input to SIDS regional meetings in 2003

AOSIS Draft Plan of Implementation

- to elaborate the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development for SIDS and better integration of the “three pillars”
- prepared from regional inputs and “negotiated” between island States at the interregional AOSIS meeting

Mauritius Plan of Implementation and Mauritius Declaration

- from negotiations during PrepCom based on AOSIS Drafts out of AOSIS regional and inter-regional meetings, including the AOSIS Draft Plan of Implementation referred to above

Framework for institutional support

- Clear programme of institutional support from the UN system and partners
- Clear Convention work programmes for SIDS based on an assessment of synergies between relevant conventions
- Strengthened institutional arrangements to support SIDS including SIDS Unit, UN Focal Points, links with sub-regional organisations
- Framework for resource mobilisation for the implementation of initiatives, including private sector investment
- Clear programme of institutional support from the GEF, WTO and relevant IFIs
- Elaboration of opportunities for private sector investment in sustainable development – possible SIDS or regional business council(s) for sustainable development

I am aware that this does appear to be a heavy responsibility for us as SIDS. All of us have small administrations, our delegations to international conferences are always small, so the tasks ahead are indeed daunting. But as a stated, this will be the first post-WSSD review, and it will also likely be the last opportunity for us as SIDS to not only make the special case for SIDS, but also to formally achieve the application of this principle – that for sustainable development there is a special and unique case to be made for SIDS.

I look forward to working with you this week, and to welcome you all to Mauritius in 2004.

Thank you.