

An overview on the linkages between Barbados Program of Action, the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Agreement
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Thank you Mr. Chairman

It is an honour to be here in Samoa and to be able to provide the participants with some information regarding the linkages between Barbados Program of Action, the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Agreement, and to give an overview of how we see the practical implications to the International Meeting itself.

Let me first give a brief introduction to the process. As you will be aware, the General Assembly has supported the aspirations of the Small Island Developing States, first through the adoption of the Barbados Program of Action, and secondly through increasingly supportive measures relating to the implementation of the BPOA. In 2002, responding to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, the General Assembly adopted the for the convening of an International Meeting to review the implementation of the BPOA.

Mr. Chairman, the General Assembly made clear that this review should be different from other processes, in that there will be active attempts to link the Barbados review not only to JPOI but to other important agendas closely linked to the sustainable development process.

To this effect we initiated a consultative process with the SIDS, mainly through the office of the Chairman of AOSIS. In supporting the approach advocated by AOSIS, the SIDS Unit assisted with the convening of a brainstorming session, together with the University of the West Indies and several senior SIDS officials. We were then involved in a dialogue with the whole of the group as well as with several regional organizations. The bottom line was that together we were able to agree on a basic chain of events and on certain basic principles for the preparations for Mauritius.

As I mentioned, one of the key issues of the preparatory process is to ensure the linkages between BPOA and the other international processes, which are running in parallel. Foremost among these are the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Agreement.

Consideration of the Millennium Development Goals is to be done primarily through the national assessment reports – which will be discussed in greater detail later in the agenda of this meeting. There was in our view a need for a qualitative as well as quantitative analysis of what the MDGs entail for SIDS. The MDGs are broadly specified so that individual countries can identify their own goals and associated strategies and policies for achieving them. The goals are quantitative in nature so that goal achievement can be

tracked over the development planning period. Underlying the quantitative nature of these goals is the qualitative changes needed to sustain the eradication of poverty. In effect, the MDGs address the various dimensions of the human development of nations.

An assessment of the MDGs indicate that some degree of progress has been made with respect to the achievement of some of the goals: reduction of extreme poverty and hunger, universal primary level education, gender equality and improved maternal health. Some degree of effort would be needed for the other goals to be fully achieved by the year 2015. It will be necessary for the SIDS to clearly identify with the MDGs, to associate their policies and measure with the MDGs, and to report on their progress through existing means as far as possible.

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned earlier, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation directly gave rise to this process of review of the BPOA. What is essential in our work from now up to Mauritius is that we take account of the linkages and the opportunities. One of the outcomes of Johannesburg was the process for the so-called Type-2 initiatives. This was established as an innovative means of seeking additional financing and support for sustainable development partnerships of the willing. Here in the Pacific, the process has progressed impressively, and the large number of umbrella initiatives augurs well for the future. The UN and donor countries correctly view these umbrella initiatives as avenues for more effective direction of assistance. The frameworks of support that they contain are heralded as a more effective means of implementation – carrying out implementation in a more effective manner.

Mr. Chairman, the Monterrey Consensus and its links to the Doha development agenda, should be carefully analyzed from the perspective of SIDS and the results of this analysis should be reflected in the decisions to be taken in Mauritius.

We have received numerous reports from the SIDS relating to the difficulties in applying WTO rules, or to seek to influence their interpretation. In a world where traditional trade preferences are diminishing it is clear that SIDS will have to take new measures. An important element in that discussion is the issue of vulnerability of SIDS, and conversely the building of resilience in SIDS to that vulnerability.

A recent report on vulnerability stated this case clearly. It recommended that SIDS evaluate the viability and requirements for a common approach not only to the WTO negotiations, but also to the building of capacity amongst the SIDS and their delegations.

But this is clearly easier said than done. It would be no surprise to delegations that there is strong resistance by some WTO members to providing special treatment for small economies. The SIDS will have to make a very good case – which will require very effective collaboration among them.

The WTO needs to be convinced of the necessity of granting greater flexibility to SIDS, while SIDS have to begin alternative planning for revenue creation.

This year there will be a resumption of the trade discussions in Cancun, Mexico. A strong presence from SIDS will be required in order to pursue these issues. By linking the trade agenda closely with the sustainable development agenda, SIDS should be able to demonstrate to the international community that the special case of SIDS requires special treatment.

It is also important that we continue to keep abreast of other important developments at the international level. It is significant that the CSD at its session next year will not only consider the preparations for Mauritius, there will also be consideration of a wide range of issues pertaining to freshwater, sanitation and human settlements. We all know how crucial these matters are to SIDS. It is also clear to us that again there is a special case to be made for SIDS and their freshwater, sanitation and human settlements challenges.

We therefore should consider the issues of freshwater, sanitation and human settlements as issues not only for the BPOA review, but to also consider making additional efforts in the CSD to get that recognition of the special case even more explicitly supported.

The focus of the review is expected to be on implementation and avoid as far as possible the protracted negotiations that have become the hallmark of the last decade.

To ensure 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 the 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 its validity.

The regional preparatory meetings have been established and will be held as follows:
Pacific SIDS, to be held in Apia, Samoa from 4 to 8 August 2003;
Caribbean SIDS, to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago from 6 to 10 October;
and for the
Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas SIDS to be held in Praia, Cape Verde from 1 to 5 September 2003,

In addition there will be an inter-regional preparatory meeting, with ministerial participation, for all SIDS, to be held in Nassau, Bahamas from 26 to 30 January 2004.

CSD 12 will now meet as follows:
CSD/PrepCom SIDS 14-16 April
CSD 12 19-30 April

Finally I wish to talk about the possibilities for leveraging new funds through the International Meeting. It is fair to say that previous efforts, such as the 1999 SIDS-Donors meeting in New York did not produce the expected results. Out of the more than 300 projects that were presented only a handful received funding. At Johannesburg we have also seen a large number of type 2 partnerships presented. We must therefore utilize Mauritius as a means of capitalizing on that progress. We would be interested in supporting a perhaps more limited portfolio of inter-regional initiatives in areas of concern. Especially in sectors where we know that there are replicable solutions available in other SIDS. We would like to explore this possibility with you further as the meeting progresses.

In conclusion, I wish to state that we in DESA, particularly at the SIDS Unit stands ready to assist in your deliberations and in the preparations for the International Meeting. We hope to be able to make a strong demonstration of what SIDS can do - with just a little bit of international support and inter-regional cooperation, so that you will truly become the laboratories for sustainable development envisaged in the Barbados Program of Action.

Thank you.