

**Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting of SIDS at Ministerial Level
For the International Meeting to Review Implementation
of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of
Small Island Developing States**

Nassau, The Bahamas, January 26–30, 2004

Information Note

1. Introduction

The Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting of SIDS at Ministerial Level to review implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will convene in Nassau, the Bahamas during January 26-30, 2003.

The meeting will afford the representatives of SIDS Member States and Territories the opportunity to consolidate their national and regional review processes, and to determine their common priorities to advance SIDS efforts towards sustainable development, with the support of the international community.

The meeting will have before it as background documents the syntheses of national and regional assessments of the AIMS, Caribbean and Pacific regions respectively on implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, taking into account priorities identified at the SIDS regional preparatory meetings.

It is expected that the Ministerial Meeting will approve a draft proposal from SIDS for discussion at the Preparatory Meeting, for a Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. These documents will form the basis for negotiations at the inter-governmental level, which will be formally inaugurated at the Preparatory Meeting for the Mauritius International Meeting, to be held during April 14-16, 2004.

Non-SIDS Member States, agencies of the United Nations System and representatives of SIDS-related major groups have been invited to participate in the Nassau Ministerial Meeting in observer capacity, so as to assure fullest exchange on issues of concern to SIDS.

The **Provisional Agenda** of the Ministerial Meeting can be found at the website www.sidsnet.org.

2. Venue

The meeting will be held at the Radisson Cable Beach Hotel, Nassau the Bahamas. All participants are required to make their hotel reservations using the form provided at the website www.best.bs. The form should be completed and faxed to the number indicated.

3. Registration

All participants are required to pre-register for the meeting using the form provided at the website www.best.bs. These forms should be completed and faxed to the number provided. Pre-registration is very important, since it facilitates preparation for visa issuance for participants, as required, on arrival in Nassau.

Formal registration for the meeting will be completed at the conference venue at **08.00** on **Monday January 26, 2004**. Participants are invited to register early to ensure that all are seated for the Opening Ceremony which begins at **09.00**.

4. Visas

Visas will be issued on arrival to representatives of countries for which a visa is required for entry into the Bahamas. To facilitate the issuance of visas, please ensure early pre-registration for the meeting at the website www.best.bs.

5. Opening Ceremony

The Ministerial Meeting will be inaugurated by the Hon. Perry G. Christie, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. The Opening Ceremony will be held in the main plenary hall of the conference venue at **09.00**. Participants are invited to be seated by **08.45**.

6. General Debate

The general debate will be conducted during the morning sessions of the first three days of the meeting. This debate will afford the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of SIDS the opportunity to highlight issues of continued national and regional concern revealed in the national and regional assessments respectively and to signal priorities for future action to ensure more effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

Representatives of observer delegations and heads of agencies will also be invited to present their perspectives on strategies to support the sustainable development of SIDS.

Statements will be limited to **seven (7) minutes**.

7. Panel Discussions

The afternoon sessions of the first three days of the meeting will be devoted to focused panel discussions on issues of common concern to SIDS for which priority attention has been signalled through the review process. Each discussion segment will be **two and a half hours** long.

Expert panellists will be invited to lead the discussions on each theme, highlighting the challenges and making specific recommendations for future action. The expert panels will comprise representatives from SIDS member states, representatives of UN agencies and regional inter-governmental organisations, and representatives from academia and other major groups. The discussion will then be opened to the floor, when all SIDS and observer delegations will be invited to participate.

8. Drafting Group

A drafting group will be elected to finalise preparation of the draft SIDS Strategy for Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. Participation in the drafting group will be restricted to representatives of SIDS delegations and SIDS major groups, as well as to representatives of SIDS regional inter-governmental organisations.

9. Programme of Events

A number of activities and side events will be held before and during the week of the Ministerial Meeting. These will be listed in a Programme of Events, which can be found at the website www.sidsnet.org.