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Statement

by

H. E. Mr. Heinz Fischer
Federal President of the Republic of Austria

at the

**High-level Review Meeting on the Implementation of the
Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the
Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of
Small Island Developing States**

New York, 24 September 2010

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Mr. President,

Let me first underline that I fully associate myself with the statement that will be given by her Excellency Lady Ashton on behalf of the European Union.

Austria highly values today's high-level meeting as an opportunity to conduct a thorough assessment of the progress made, lessons learned and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and the Barbados Programme of Action. We are optimistic that the Political Declaration to be adopted in this event will create new momentum for tackling the challenges that SIDS face. The Political Declaration reaffirms our commitment to the Mauritius Strategy and launches important analytical work which will make economic, social and environmental progress better measurable.

According to the Secretary-General's report on the review of the Mauritius Strategy the picture five years after the Conference of Mauritius is mixed. The greatest challenge for sustainable development, and, in the case of some lower lying countries, even survival of SIDS, is climate change. While small island developing countries are not responsible for the causes of the problem, SIDS are among the first to confront its adverse impacts such as environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, increased water scarcity and rising sea levels. Austria remains committed to combating climate change by working towards an ambitious, comprehensive and legally binding treaty as soon as possible.

Climate protection is closely linked with other areas of development cooperation. Therefore the Austrian Development Cooperation treats climate change as a cross cutting issue, integrated into programs and projects in various sectors.

Energy is one of the sectors closely linked to climate change and the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Access to clean and renewable energy is a key for an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development. Thus, energy is one of the priority sectors of the Austrian Development Cooperation, in our bilateral programs and projects we are especially focusing on renewable energy and energy efficiency. Within the UN we have been pushing for a greater recognition of energy in the context of development policy and cooperation for years. We therefore strongly support the Secretary General's global campaign to ensure universal access to energy by 2030. In addition, Austria supports the work of UN Energy both through staff secondment and through our advocacy. Austria is also one of the countries supporting the Global Energy Assessment, an initiative established by IIASA (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis).

In our cooperation with SIDS, we have for example forged a successful Pacific partnership together with Italy and the city of Milan which is delivering concrete renewable energy projects on the ground, based on national priorities. This programme, which started in 2007, has been prolonged for further three years.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by assuring you that Austria is committed to participating in international efforts to strengthen cooperation with Small Island Developing States and to have their special needs integrated into the main international events and negotiations.

I thank you, Mr. President.