



ITALY

**HIGH LEVEL REVIEW MEETING
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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**

STATEMENT BY

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President of the General Assembly,

Your Excellencies

Dear Colleagues

Five years ago in Mauritius the international community made a number of commitments for meeting the sustainable development goals and priorities of the Barbados Programme of Action, recognizing that the sustainable development must be a national responsibility of SIDS and the international community must provide financial and technical support for the success of the Strategy

The present review shows that these commitments have been, to some extent, fulfilled, compatibly with constrains deriving from global crisis such as the economic, energy and food crisis, which have had and continue to have serious implications for geographically isolated SIDS.

Very positive results have indeed been achieved in all regions. Most SIDS have substantially increased the political commitments to sustainable development as well as public awareness on their importance. They have made considerable efforts to integrate sustainable development principles into national development and sectorial strategies.

Most SIDS have adopted policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation, which in some cases include the achievement of the carbon neutrality objective, and envisage a robust promotion of renewable energy. SIDS have also shown strong leadership in the area of protection of biodiversity, and achieved significant results in establishing protected marine, coastal and terrestrial areas.

In addition, the present review has shown that progress, although uneven within SIDS, has also been made in the areas of gender, health, and education, as well as towards the achievement of environmental sustainability. We commend in

particular the progress made in most regions for creating an enabling regional institutional framework, aimed at maximizing the national efforts in key areas, such as the containment of the climate change threat and the prevention and management of risks inherent natural disasters.

In terms of financing, the review has shown that, while on the one side most SIDS have indeed used their own resources in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, on the other, the international community has played an important role in support of these efforts by providing financing and technical assistance in key strategic areas.

Much however, remains to be done. The review has clearly demonstrated that in spite of the great efforts made, the results achieved are limited with respect to expectations. The global crisis of the last five years have greatly contributed to the erosion of progress made. Climate change adaptation and sea level rise remain one of the greatest challenges to SIDS, a threat to their very existence.

Italy has long been aware of the indisputable injustice inherent the fact that the Island States contribute the least to the global Climate Change, yet are affected the most by its negative consequences.

For this reason we have concentrated our commitment towards the SIDS sustainable development in the area of climate change and related sectors. Italy has in fact supported a number of key initiatives, such as the establishment of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC). The Centre has become a leading enabling regional institution and has laid the ground for a regional strategic approach to climate change. Rising sea levels, together with the associated coastal erosion and salt water intrusion, an escalation in the frequency and intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes, and disruptions in rainfall and fresh-water supply, threaten the very existence of the CARICOM countries. Our hope is of course that the lessons learnt from the establishment of the Centre and from the concrete actions taken by this

institution will be treasured by other regions seeking to maximize the impact of scarce national resources and to streamline the search for a solution to common threats.

In addition, while the international community is still debating on the shape of the global agreement that will ensure equitable participation of all in addressing Climate Change mitigation, Italy has started actions supporting a programme in the Pacific region that stands out as a pragmatic attempt to address the adaptation urgency and search for practical solutions to the great challenge of this century.

The Cooperation Programme on climate change and renewable energy between Italy, Austria, the Municipality of Milan and the Pacific SIDS has become, after only three years of implementation, a successful model for international cooperation.

The programme is ongoing, thus the lessons generated so far are preliminary. Nevertheless, some important conclusions can already be drawn. We believe that the success of the programme is basically due to the strict application of the ownership principle, according to which the development strategy remains in the hands of national governments. Within the general goal of adaptation to Climate Change and development of renewable energy, each participating SIDS has established the priorities needed to build resilience vis-a-vis its own perception of national and local vulnerability. These priorities derive from the sustainable development policies and strategies established by the Pacific SIDS and are fully taken on board by the cooperation programme which has been able to focus, since its inception, on the achievement of measurable, concrete results.

Italy will continue to be committed to the sustainable development of SIDS. We will spare no effort to ensure that the positive lessons that can be drawn from the success stories of the Italian programme can be repeated and strengthened by other bilateral and multilateral organizations, seeking to maximize the impact of international aid programmes.

Thank you Mr. President.