

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

**Statement by**

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and Foreign Trade, Jamaica on behalf  
of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**

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Mr. President,

I speak on behalf of the fourteen (14) Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) represented at the United Nations.

CARICOM delegations associate themselves with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the G77 and China and by the representative of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

CARICOM welcomes the convening of this High Level Review meeting. We consider it opportune to review the gains achieved, the challenges faced and the gaps to be filled in the implementation of the 2005 Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. It is our hope that this meeting will build on the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action which remains the development blueprint for Small Island Developing States.

It is no coincidence that this meeting is being held in the same week in which our leaders deliberated on ways in which to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015. There is a symbiotic relationship between the MDGs and the Barbados Programme of Action. Progress in achieving both the Programme of Action and the MDGs go hand in hand. If the challenges facing Small Island Developing States are not addressed within the holistic rubric of achievement of the MDGs, then most small island states will be in danger of missing the MDG targets.

While SIDS have experienced some measure of progress, many aspects of the MSI still remain unfulfilled due to significant constraints affecting its implementation which, in several cases, have only worsened with time.

This is reflective of the capacity constraints - human, financial and technical - which continue to beset Small Island Developing States. These constraints are made worse by the debilitating effects of successive waves of global crises which have buffeted our countries and which have exposed our limited coping abilities.

Indeed the inherent vulnerabilities of small island states make them the least resilient and most susceptible to external shocks such as the food, energy, financial and environmental crises which in recent years have retarded the growth prospects and sustainable development of our countries. The adverse effects of the economic and financial crisis on small states are particularly felt in trade, investment, aid, tourism and remittances flows which are critical to the economic livelihood of most SIDS.

We acknowledge the assistance of the development partners and regional and multilateral institutions in helping SIDS to address these challenges and constraints. It is evident, however, that much more sustained attention and targeted action is needed to ramp up support for this group of countries.

SIDS are highly motivated to help themselves. But in order to empower SIDS to bridge the existing gaps and thereby increase their social and economic resilience, action on several fronts is required:

1. **Development Financing.** Financial resources and investment in SIDS are critical. We urge development partners to fulfil the previously made commitments in respect of financing. This should be additional to the resources especially earmarked for Small Island Developing States.

There must also be broader recognition of the vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States which have been categorised as middle income countries. This represents a specific challenge for states such as Jamaica as this categorisation hinders access to sources of concessionary financing and restricts or even removes access to development financing. The use of GDP or GNI is not an adequate measure of the state of development of the majority of SIDS. Other factors must be included in the equation, such as high energy and transportation costs, and the vulnerability to natural disasters.

2. **Debt Sustainability.** With the classification as middle- and high-income countries, these small states do not have access to international debt relief initiatives. In this context, CARICOM once again urges international recognition of the underlying debt problem of highly indebted Small island states so as to facilitate access to financing that can ensure debt sustainability and provide the necessary fiscal space for economic empowerment and capacity building. This includes concessionary loans and grants and debt-for-equity swaps.

3. **Expansion and access to export markets.** We fully recognize that trade is key to the economic growth of small island states. A worrying factor for many small states, is persistent trade deficits which have worsened since the financial crisis. Reversing this trend requires strategies to build-up the productive capacities in SIDS; the diversification of markets; and the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), among others. It is important in this context that our development partners scale up their aid-for-trade initiatives to support the building of supply-side capacity and infrastructure. We also call for the conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations with continued focus on the development dimension.
  
4. **Sustainable Development.** Support for sustainable development of SIDS in all its dimensions must be at the core of our actions if we are to meaningfully address the multiple challenges facing SIDS as well as new and emerging concerns. Addressing poverty, investing in resources for development, including human and natural resources, is critical to attaining sustainable development.
  
5. **Climate change adaptation and mitigation.** A major challenge to the sustainable development of small island states is of course climate change. As we are all aware, small island states are the most affected yet have contributed least to the problem of climate change. Tackling the impact of climate change requires resources beyond the capabilities of most small island states to implement the necessary adaptation and mitigation measures. It requires the provision of adequate financing, support for

adaptation, capacity building and technology transfer, including the development renewable energy sources and green technology.

6. **Strengthening of Institutional support.** CARICOM joins others in calling for a review of the UN system's delivery to SIDS. This evaluation should include ways in which to mainstream SIDS issues in the programmes of the UN. We also urge the provision of adequate financing and staffing to strengthen the SIDS Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) to ensure that there is appropriate attention to SIDS issues. At the same time, for Caribbean countries, it is important that the Regional Coordinating Mechanism of the ECLAC Sub regional Headquarters in Port of Spain receive the requisite funding to allow it to carry out its mandate.

Mr. President,

Many challenges continue to confront Small Island Developing States. We are, however, optimistic, that through continued partnership with the international community, Small Island Developing States will be able to significantly overcome their challenges and chart a renewed course towards full implementation of the various commitments contained in the Mauritius Strategy and the Barbados Programme of Action. It is our hope that this High-level Review will signal the start of a renewed partnership aimed at supporting the growth and sustainable development of Small Island Developing States.

Thank you.