

**High Level Conference of the 5 Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy
for Implementation (MSI+5)**

Check against Delivery



Vanuatu

Statement by

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Vanuatu Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Mr President
Mr. Secretary General
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum. At the outset, allow me to convey our appreciation to you for convening this High Level Conference on the 5 year review of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI). Allow me also to align my statement on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Development States (PSIDS) to the address made by the Hon Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

It is timely that this Conference has been held back to back with the 10 Year Review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) given its inextricable link with the MSI as a programme for how small island developing States (SIDS) might be supported in achieving the MDGs targets and other sustainable development goals despite the significant challenges before us. The Forum Leaders at their recent meeting in Vanuatu adopted the *Port Vila Declaration on Accelerating the Progress of the MDGs*, which highlighted the importance of mainstreaming the programme of support for sustainable development of SIDS as captured in the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the MSI, as an accelerant to achieving the MDGs in the Pacific and addressing the specific vulnerabilities that Pacific SIDS face.

The MSI review for the Pacific SIDS concluded that while performance has been good in terms of the efforts--at national and regional levels—to implement the MSI, *the vulnerability of Pacific SIDS--as underscored by the impacts of the global economic crisis, climate change and natural disasters—is increasing while their ability to cope is not*. This conclusion is partly drawn from the Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report of 2009/2010 which shows that *the Pacific is one of the least successful performers in the Asia-Pacific re MDGs and remains the most vulnerable*. There are many reasons for this including capacity and institutional constraints and governance arrangements. But they also include many inherent peculiarities of the Pacific SIDS such as isolation, small area and population sizes, lack of resources, the high frequency of natural disasters and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. These challenges and vulnerabilities have been compounded by the recent fuel, food and financial crises and will continue to worsen with the impacts of climate change.

The MSI review has identified the following issues and priorities in particular for Pacific SIDS:

- **Climate change** “the most urgent” of issues threatens all aspects of our existence, our pursuit of development, security, environment and survival.

- **Fossil fuel dependency** and its “crippling” effects on all aspects of development, imports, exports, industry, and peoples lifestyles ;
- **Natural disasters** and their “knock-out” effects on any gains we make;
- **Infrastructure (Transport and ICT)** – a priority for the Pacific SIDS given their isolation, which, according to the 2009 World Development report, is twice as much as that of Caribbean SIDS by sea and air. This significantly impacts on our ability to trade, entice tourists to visit our shores and import goods for our populations.
- **Least Developed Countries (LDC) graduation** criteria to take into consideration and to fully reflect the vulnerabilities of SIDS and for the UN and International Community to develop more accurate measures of vulnerability;
- **Fisheries** or the need to improve the benefits accruing to Pacific SIDS from their resources given that it’s at a low 5% of total catch value at the moment; The need to effectively monitor illegal fishing and implement sustainable management regimes over this globally important fish stock.
- **National development planning** that needs to be better linked to budgets, strengthened public financial management systems and sustainability strategies. These need to be supported by predictable and flexible resources from development partners instead of cumbersome fragmented approaches to ODA disbursement and conditionality.
- **The Pacific Plan** as the regional framework for pursuing regional strategies for achieving global goals as articulated in the MSI and national priorities in a coherent and coordinated manner. Supported by the Cairns Compact for Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific through country led donor harmonisation and aid effectiveness.
- **Development Assistance** that is “fragmented, unpredictable and difficult-to-access”. Difficulties in accessing and in managing development financing is seen in the MSI review and the Asia-Pacific report on MDGs as constituting a major constraint in the region’s performance vis-a-vis the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. Performance against the MDGs in view of the high aid per capita in the Pacific region was a key driver to Forum Leaders adopting the Cairns Compact with the primary objective of improving the coordination of internal and external resources aimed at achieving national and regional development outcomes. In saying that, one must bear in mind the special case for SIDS recognising the high cost structure and vulnerabilities of small and isolated economies. Addressing the vulnerability of SIDS requires scaling up of development assistance and improving accessibility to that assistance through

modalities that underpin and adapt to the capacity constraints of SIDS in its management, delivery and monitoring of the assistance.

- **South-South Cooperation** including through improved links between the Pacific and Asia as well as opportunities to link with our counterparts in the Caribbean and AIMS regions;
- **External Trade** - another area of acute vulnerability for the Pacific SIDS given the highly asymmetrical relations and structures that exist at the moment and the need to redress the resulting imbalances through aid-for-trade and terms and conditions that are based on the principles of special and differential treatment;

Roles of Institutions – the MSI review calls on the United Nations and Pacific regional organizations to work more collaboratively in the further implementation of the MSI. In the Pacific region, the development and implementation of the Pacific Plan (endorsed by Leaders in 2005) has taken on the role of facilitating the implementation of the MSI with a particular focus on strengthening regional cooperation and integration. Over the last 5 years our 11 Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) under stewardship of the Forum Secretariat, have undergone significant reform and restructure under the Pacific Plan to provide more efficient services to Pacific Island Countries in this regard. Similarly we acknowledge the efforts of the UN in our region to improve internal coordination at the regional and national levels. At the regional level we would encourage the UN presence to strengthen coordination and alignment of their support to efforts of other intergovernmental agencies and partners in implementing the MSI and the Pacific Plan. We have been particularly pleased with the joint efforts of the CROP and UN Agencies in supporting our members in preparations for these Summits. The development of the Pacific Regional MDG Tracking report was a collective effort led by the Forum Secretariat but contributed to by CROP agencies and UN agencies. Similarly the preparation of the regions MSI+5 Report and position was led by ESCAP with collaborative support from CROP agencies and UN agencies. This type of collaboration is essential when dealing with small administrations as are found with most of our member States.

It remains for me then to respectfully ask that international partners, friends and family of Pacific SIDS put action to this Political Declaration, and in doing so recognise that while as SIDS we share many common challenges and inherent constraints, we also have our individual peculiarities and thus, ultimately must be supported from the ground up. Our own National Plans and capacity where ever possible should be the focus of your engagement, our own regional policies and institutions should be the focus where ever there is merit in gaining more through regional approaches and finally, when you contribute to global efforts and programmes, be sure to reflect the particular and special needs of SIDS so that there is a level playing field for all of us, large or small, isolated or linked to the rest of the world.

I thank you Mr President