



**STATEMENT
BY**

**THE HONOURABLE T BRENT SYMONETTE
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

**AT THE
HIGH-LEVEL REVIEW MEETING OF THE 65TH SESSION 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**

**UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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Mr Co-Chair,

The Bahamas welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this most important meeting, a critical meeting in the context of our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

For The Bahamas it cannot be overstated that the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPoA) agreed in 1994 remains the blue print for action on sustainable development that should be undertaken by SIDS with the cooperation and assistance of the international community.

The sustainable development priorities outlined in the BPoA and reaffirmed in the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPoA (MSI), are rooted in the fact that SIDS remain a special case for sustainable development and continue to face unique and increasing challenges. In fact, it is important to note that the average vulnerability of SIDS has worsened over the last decade, primarily because of higher exposure to external shocks including increasing adverse impacts of climate change and more frequent and intense natural disasters as well as the fuel, food, financial crises – events of truly global character combined with lower coping capacity as well as inadequate international support.

Mr Co-Chair,

It is indeed also important to note that there have been successes. In The Bahamas, there is unwavering political commitment to mainstreaming sustainable development principles into national development strategies. In the area of biodiversity, significant achievements have been made in establishing protected areas including marine, coastal and terrestrial. The development of a national energy policy, with heavy focus on the potential of renewable energy, is well underway. However, there continue to be constraints at the national and international levels, with respect to full implementation of the BPoA and MSI.

A major challenge at the national level is the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, including hurricanes, some due to the effects of climate change. Other environmental challenges, including waste and water resource management related issues, together with the economic and social challenges alluded to above, constitute serious constraints for The Bahamas. This is only compounded by constraints at the international level, for example, the difficulties we experience in accessing financing in relation to adaptation needs, as well as renewable energy development. There are also impediments to accessing insurance for climate related extreme weather events.

The UN system could also stand to enhance its support to SIDS, strengthening its institutions where necessary and providing more focused and additional services to more effectively address the unique and particular vulnerabilities and development needs of SIDS.

Mr Co-Chair,

It is in this context that The Bahamas looks forward to the adoption of the political declaration, which reaffirms the commitment to support the efforts of SIDS for sustainable development. The political declaration represents our pledge to redouble our efforts in areas where work is sorely needed, including disaster management; renewable energy initiatives; mobilisation of financial and other resources.

The Bahamas also looks forward to the relevant reports of the Secretary General to the 66th UN General Assembly on the Follow-up to and Implementation of the MSI, which we believe will stand as a basis for our future work in this regard.

Thank you Mr Co-Chair.