Remarks by
MR. SHA ZUKANG
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
Multistakeholder Roundtable 1:
Reducing Vulnerabilities and Strengthening Resilience of SIDS

High-Level Review Meeting
on the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy

New York, 24 September 2010

Honorable Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to open this roundtable discussion on how to reduce the vulnerabilities of small island developing states and strengthen their resilience.

As the Secretary-General highlighted in his opening statement this morning, small island developing states need the support of the international community now more than ever. Their size, insularity, narrow resource base and high population densities make them extremely vulnerable to economic shocks and the impacts of climate change. The recent food crisis hit them particularly hard and had a severe impact on the poor, most of which are net food importers.

Despite these challenges, small island developing states have made considerable progress in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. We are here today to further that progress by devising concrete, actionable ideas for strengthening their resilience to external shocks. Let us use this time to engage in frank discussion. Let us exchange best practices used in the past and share new and creative ideas for the future.

Excellencies,

You have a background paper which raises some key questions for today’s discussion.

The first question relates to the recent global crises. What are the lessons that SIDS learned from the financial, energy and food supply emergencies? How can preparedness be improved and how can the international community help? Were there any ways to turn the crises into opportunities? Please share the experiences of your respective governments and organizations.

The second topic relates to the national development planning of SIDS. We know that integrated national strategies would help communities prepare for external shocks, including
those stemming from climate change. How can we foster this type of planning? What kind of technical assistance do SIDS need in this regard?

The third topic today relates to reducing vulnerability and building resilience in priority areas identified by SIDS. I refer to climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency and renewable energy, natural disasters, marine and coastal resources, tourism, fisheries and debt reduction. What policies or other special measures can add resiliency to SIDS in these areas? How can financing for them be increased?

Ladies and gentlemen,

As Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, in 2012, I would like to stress the relationship between our discussion today and the themes of Rio+20 -- namely the creation of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and an institutional framework for sustainable development.

Whenever possible, please consider how your experiences and concerns can contribute to the agenda of the Rio+20 Conference. The goals of small island developing states and the global sustainable development agenda are inextricably inter-twined; as we work on one agenda, we are also advancing the other.

I look forward to a lively discussion today. I wish to thank the honorable co-chairs, representatives of governments, major groups, and other participants of this multi-stakeholder round table for sharing their valuable time with us.

With that, let us begin.

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