



**SLOVENIA**

*Check against delivery*

**STATEMENT  
BY**

**H.E. MR. SAMUEL ŽBOGAR**

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**at the  
Multi-stakeholder Roundtable 1  
Reducing Vulnerabilities and Strengthening Resilience of SIDS**

**New York, 24 September 2010**

Mr. Chairman,

Today, we are present at this very important event, assessing the progress achieved after the first five years of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Reports show that progress has been made in several fields. At the beginning of this week, we concentrated our efforts on achieving the MDGs. In this regard, we particularly welcome SIDS' advancement in gender equality, as it is not only needed to achieve MDG3, but also essential to the achievement of all other MDGs. Progress has also been noted in the field of health care, as well as regarding some education and environment goals, to which I will return later during my intervention.

However, we are far from celebrating success, as SIDS have made less progress than other developing countries with regard to economic growth, poverty reduction and debt sustainability. This is certainly due to the unique and specific vulnerability and characteristics of SIDS.

Coming from a country of two million people, I am fully aware of the challenges facing small countries, including limited resources; the need for an open economy, which means a higher dependence on the global market and trends; a skills base determined by the size of the population, and so forth.

Vulnerability to external shocks is a clear disadvantage of these countries. In the past few years, we have witnessed the emergence of the climate change crisis, food and energy crisis and the economic and financial crisis. The latter has had multiple effects on SIDS, including the detrimental impact on trade. It is clear that islands need market access and favourable terms of trade. At the same time, there are clear trends of the stalling of official development assistance flows and the decline of remittances and foreign direct investment flows.

Climate change is the greatest threat to sustainable development of SIDS. Its effects can be felt at various levels. Climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, affecting human security and destroying the development achievements of the past decades. It is essential to direct efforts into disaster risk reduction, which will in turn reduce the expenses related to post-disaster recovery.

Climate change is having vast economic consequences on SIDS, including the loss of agricultural land, infrastructure, marine resources and fisheries. Its social impact can be seen as destruction of human settlements, loss of livelihoods, negative impact on health.

Sea-level rise is threatening the very existence of some island states, while some may no longer be inhabitable in the future. Climate change is thus having visible security implications and we firmly support the discussions on this topic that took place in the Security Council and the General Assembly. Attention also needs to be paid to intra- and extra-regional migration, which may cause political instability and further exacerbate social problems.

Climate change needs to be integrated into national and international development plans. Its multiple impacts pose a challenge in terms of policy and planning. Policies on climate change will need to cover all economic sectors, include the response to natural disasters and focus on both mitigation and adaptation. We welcome efforts undertaken by SIDS to carry out climate change adaptation measures, but it is clear that more needs to be done.

Support from the international community in this regard is essential and needs to be scaled up. Climate financing must not undermine or jeopardise the fight against poverty and the progress towards attaining MDGs. Expectations and efforts regarding a comprehensive and globally binding agreement under the UNFCCC need to be raised for Cancun.

The promotion of sustainable energy use is essential for achieving MDGs. Many SIDS are dependent on imported fossil fuels, yet another source of their vulnerability. It is important to focus energy plans on renewables (e.g. solar, wind and tidal energy), not only to decrease the dependence of SIDS, but also to reduce emissions. Decentralised energy systems need to be built in accordance with the geographical circumstances of islands.

Climate change will exacerbate water stress in these countries, where water resources are already scarce. Improved water management is yet another challenge facing SIDS. We commend the various initiatives that have taken place in recent years with regard to water resource assessments, sustainable use of water, waste-water treatment, desalination plans and so forth.

A clear sense of ownership from SIDS regarding the Mauritius Strategy and the need to mainstream sustainable development principles into national development plans are obvious. Partnerships at the international level need to be further developed with a view to supporting the implementation of initiatives that address the vulnerabilities of SIDS. Due to their multifaceted nature, they need to be comprehensively addressed at all levels and across all sectors.

The UN system has been involved in providing support for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. We would like to see the continuation of such support, which could also be scaled up, better coordinated and more effective in the future. In this respect, I would like to call on all actors to ensure good governance when working towards reducing the vulnerabilities of small island states.