

**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**

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Speech by NGO Representative – Nasir Khattak, Climate Institute

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen. I am honored to be here to give a brief NGOs perspective, and then would avail this opportunity to make a suggestion before the General Assembly on two related issues - energy and climate change.

NGOs and the civil society can and are playing a bridge building and catalytic role, forging partnerships, raising awareness and introducing new and innovative ideas and programs to help implement the Mauritius strategy. The activities of NGOs as well as regional organizations in the Caribbean and the Pacific have increased over the past five years. However, there is room for further improvement of the communication and coordination among them, and for finding synergies, to ensure the efficiency of implementation.

In our experience, the financial support provided by the donor community has produced considerable results, but this support has fallen short of the mounting challenges faced by the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). There is a need to link the available financial instruments to quantifiable targets for implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. More effective North-South, South-South and Public-Private partnerships are needed.

Mr. President, we have just come through the warmest six months, the warmest year, and the warmest decade on record. Climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, as we saw numerous disastrous events throughout this decade, such as hurricanes, droughts in different parts of the world, and the recent devastating floods in Pakistan. The small island developing States are most vulnerable to the natural disasters and impacts of

climate change, even though their share of global emissions is tiny. Rather than lamenting their fate we have seen leadership taken by several SIDS, such as the Maldives, that is working on a plan to become Carbon neutral in ten years. Tuvalu has announced similar plans, and programs are in motion in seven Caribbean island states under Global Sustainable Energy Islands Initiative (GSEII), which is another example of partnership between stakeholders including SIDS Governments, UN Foundation, NGOs, multi-laterals, such as the Organization of American States, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), local utilities and private sector companies. The thrust of GSEII is to facilitate the capacity of island states to show larger nations by their own successful examples that a low carbon energy transformation can benefit a nation's domestic economy as well as the global climate.

Mr. President, I would submit that SIDS may be holding the path to the solution of energy and climate problems. Transformation of SIDS energy base to renewables and greening of their economies is the best possible win-win opportunity that is there before us. Most SIDS are highly dependent on imported oil and other fossil fuels. Fortunately, many of the small island states have renewable energy resources, such as wind, solar, geothermal, and there is vast potential for energy efficiency.

The international community must scale up the efforts to transform the energy base of small island states to renewable. Let me take the liberty to suggest, that an ambitious master plan may be developed to achieve energy independence in the next ten years by all the members of the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS). This is very much possible and achievable by strengthening the existing mechanisms and platforms, such as SIDS DOCK by AOSIS and the GSEII. We need political will, vision and leadership, and out of the box thinking. SIDS spend 25% of their foreign exchange on importing fossil fuels. Energy independence of SIDS by utilizing renewable resources is the shortest path to their economic development, which will in turn reduce the vulnerabilities of SIDS, enhance their capacity to adapt and develop resilience to face the multitude of other challenges they are confronting. In addition, SIDS can serve as models and examples for bigger nations and regions to follow, and help spur a global clean energy revolution, and help combat global climate change.

Let me further suggest that a concept and feasibility of such a master plan may be developed and presented for discussion at the Climate Change Conference in Mexico later this year.

Considering the current state of technological development, carbon credits, with active private sector involvement, and utilizing the existing mechanisms and platforms, such as Sidsdoc and the Global Sustainable Energy Islands Initiative, the cost to make such plan feasible will be very affordable as compared to some of the recent spending decisions that the world leaders have been making. It will be well worth the positive change that such plan would bring to about forty nations and the impact it would make on the rest of the world.

The islands states are small but their issues are Big. The issues they face today are the same issues that everyone else may be facing soon. These call for Big and Grand solutions, ambitious and new ideas in an age where we are facing globalization of problems, as very well articulated by the Deputy Prime Minister of UK.

Mr. President, much has been said and written. Time has come for a paradigm shift and resetting of priorities when addressing global issues, such as climate change, poverty, hunger, disease, meeting the MDGs and implementing the MSI. As our knowledge of the climate change has shown us, the greenhouse gas emissions know no boundaries. The issues and their solutions are as local as they are global. Let me submit to you, Mr. President, all development issues that have been discussed this week in this hall, in this time and age, must be addressed with the same seriousness as if they are our collective local issues. We are connected in more ways than we know now. The good news is that there are enough resources in this world to achieve these goals and reach the targets even ahead of the time.

Mr. President, let us put on the highest priority the needs of the most vulnerable, and put our mind, heart and soul in our efforts when look for solutions to these global problems.

Thank you.