



Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Statement on behalf of the European Union

By

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**At the High-level Review Meeting 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 (SIDS)**

**Round table on *Enhancing international support for small
island developing States***

United Nations

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I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

Sustainable development and cooperation with our developing country partners are essential priorities for the European Union, which we pursue with determination. The reduction and ultimate eradication of poverty is the primary objective in European development cooperation as set out in the Lisbon Treaty. This is fully consistent with UN-agreed development goals and targets, including the Millennium Development Goals, and is testimony to Europe's strong commitment towards multilateralism.

This high-level review meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy is an essential part of this 65th session of the UN General Assembly. In the MDG summit we agreed on an important document that - we trust - will facilitate attaining the MDGs by 2015. In a similar vein it is timely to consider the specific challenges and needs of the Small Island Developing States and pave way for the full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy.

According to a recent Secretary General report, SIDS have made considerable progress in terms of gender, health and certain education and environment goals, but improvements have been slower with respect to economic growth, poverty reduction and debt sustainability. The adverse effect of the global food, financial and fuel crises have clearly hampered progress and showed the high level of economic and social vulnerability of small island States. Their small size, remoteness, trade dependence, narrow resource base, and high exposure to environmental degradation have worked against the achievement of sustained progress.

The EU is pleased to note that recent reports indicate that, *“on the whole, small island developing States had consistently maintained good levels of social, economic and infrastructural development.”* This should however not hide the problems they still face. It is also clear that the SIDS are not a homogeneous group of countries and are confronted by an array of diverse development challenges. However SIDS do share a number of vulnerabilities, and they are particularly exposed to the impact of climate change.

The Mauritius Strategy recognises the vulnerabilities of SIDS, affirms the world's commitment to support the sustainable development of island States and provides the cooperation framework for the period up to 2014 to which the EU remains fully committed.

Indeed the EU has put in place several support actions to help SIDS addressing their most vital challenges. These include: adapting to climate change, increasing access to cleaner energy among the poor, promoting renewable energies, shifting to more sustainable agriculture, protecting fragile ecosystems, improving market access and addressing isolation and vulnerabilities (such as expensive transport costs). Overall SIDS receive a large part of EU development aid, either through direct bilateral assistance or through multilateral aid programmes, such as within the framework of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific nations (Cotonou Agreement). The special situation of island States will be further taken into consideration in the 2010 mid-term review of ACP aid programming.

In addition, the EU has recognized the special vulnerabilities of SIDS, for example through initiatives such as the Global Climate Change Alliance, in which SIDS, together with Least Developed Countries, are identified as the priority beneficiary group for cooperation on climate change or the Vulnerability-FLEX instrument - a series of measures taken by the EU to cushion the human impact of the economic crisis and to boost economic growth in developing countries (including, inter alia, leveraging new resources for counter-cyclical spending, improving aid effectiveness, sustaining economic activity and employment, revitalizing agriculture, investing in green growth, stimulating trade and private investment, and supporting social protection for the most vulnerable).

In the context of the new EU MDG initiative, as announced at the MDG summit, the EU is ready to offer to the most committed and in need ACP countries a targeted effort of €1 billion. This way, by 2015, we trust we will be able to achieve better results, in particular regarding the most off track MDGs.

Climate Change is undoubtedly one of the major challenges that SIDS face. Extreme weather conditions and rising sea levels threaten the very existence of some islands, posing additional development challenges, which may also bring significant security implications.

In this area, the EU's ultimate goal remains an ambitious, comprehensive, legally-binding global framework. This has not changed since Copenhagen. The EU is a world leader on climate action and we are on track to meet our Kyoto target. We have enshrined our 20% reduction commitment into law and are willing to increase our target to 30%, under certain key conditions, namely that:

- all developed countries and advanced developing countries do their fair share in terms of emission reduction efforts; and that

- the weaknesses, which currently undermine the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol are appropriately addressed (including in the area of forestry accounting rules and management of surplus emission allowances).

For the EU it is critical to continue on the path opened by the Copenhagen Accord, which is supported by almost 140 countries, accounting for more than 80% of global emissions. Copenhagen provides the basis for significant short and long term financing of climate action. As far as the "fast start" (2010-2012) funding is concerned, developed countries have committed themselves to providing resources approaching 30 billion USD in the period 2010-2012, with a balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation, and with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable, such as the least developed countries, small islands States and Africa.

In order to increase confidence, we all have to honour our commitments. In this regard, the EU is already working to implement the commitment to provide EUR 2.4 billion annually over the 2010-2012 period for fast start financing. In dialogue with our developing partners and on the basis of their priorities we are designing support programmes in those areas requiring prompt action. We will report on the progress made in this respect in Cancun in December.

Part of the EU fast start financing will be devoted to initiatives aimed at integrating climate change into development strategies and at implementing concrete adaptation measures, for instance through the abovementioned EU Global Climate Change Alliance. We need, as a matter of priority, to strengthen our adaptation efforts designed to reduce vulnerability and

building resilience in Small Island Developing States and, in this respect, implementing the Mauritius Strategy is crucial.

The EU has encouraged the process leading up to the adoption in June 2009 of the UNGA resolution (A/RES/63/281) on climate change and possible security implications, an initiative led by several SIDS, and will remain supportive of further initiatives meant to increase UN efforts in addressing this crucial issue, including by the Security Council.

Besides climate change programmes, the EU also plays an important role by providing financial and technical assistance for developing transport, telecommunications, energy and water infrastructures in developing countries, including SIDS. However, the private sector is also playing a key actor in financing these infrastructures. In this respect, promoting public-private partnerships, especially, by creating an investment friendly environment is essential. Technical cooperation on the ground is also needed. The Small Island Developing States Information Network must play a crucial role in developing technical cooperation to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. This is the reason why EU countries have contributed in 2009 to the revitalization of this network.

Let me conclude by reiterating, once again, the full engagement of the EU in this high-level review, an important opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved, reaffirm our commitment to the Mauritius Strategy and create momentum for accelerating implementation. We are pleased to see that the Political Declaration adopted at this high-level event will launch important analytical work on measurable criteria of economic, social and environmental vulnerability so that the special needs of SIDS can be better taken into account in our global actions to reach development targets, as well as in any future strategy that may follow the Mauritius Strategy in 2015.

Thank you.