



PRESS RELEASE



UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

The Mauritius Strategy for Small Islands Must be Implemented

United Nations Under-Secretary-General Highlights the Role Of Civil Society on the Road Ahead

United Nations, 9 February 2005: The United Nations International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was held in Port Louis, Mauritius, last month. The Conference was attended by 120 countries, 17 Heads of State, 50 Ministers and heads of various United Nations agencies. The Conference was preceded by a 2-day forum of non-governmental organizations (NGO), bringing in 300 civil society participants.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the International Meeting, Anwarul K. Chowdhury, called on civil society organizations to come together to implement the Mauritius Strategy by raising the level of advocacy in highlighting the vulnerabilities of island states. Addressing the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development at the United Nations, he said, "Civil Society and the private sector have an important role to play in forging broad-based partnerships for ensuring sustainable development for small island developing states."

Mr. Chowdhury highlighted the need for civil society to be an influential force in shaping world opinion and in implementing the Mauritius Strategy.

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Faced with issues ranging from natural disasters and climate change to trade losses and threats from HIV/AIDS, Mr. Chowdhury spoke of the economic and environmental vulnerabilities of small islands whose representatives gathered in Mauritius to present their problems to the international community and to seek their support and assistance.

“The smallness and remoteness of the small island States continue to pose serious problems in providing international aid and enhancing foreign investments. When small island States have banded together to integrate their economies and meet common challenges, many of the social, economic and human development projects and programmes have proved viable and yielded better results,” he told the Committee.

“The Civil Society Forum in Mauritius provided a strong push for the international community to initiate meaningful action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States.”

Mr. Chowdhury told the participants that he had urged Small Island Developing States to step up their efforts to hasten the pace of regional economic integration, while urging development partners to increase their official development assistance (ODA) to the small island States.

He stressed the importance of the forthcoming CSD-13 and suggested the possibility of an NGO meeting during the Conference.

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