

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

**Implementing the Mauritius Strategy through
Advocacy and Mobilization of International Support**

Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)



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Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows to SIDS

The UN-OHRLLS undertook an analysis of flows of ODA to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from 1994 to 2005. Since the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action to 2005, overall ODA to the 37 SIDS member states of the United Nations decreased by 8.75%, but a dramatic increase was registered during the period 2001 to 2005.

The UN-OHRLLS was set up in 2002 following General Assembly resolution 56/227 of 2001². In respect of SIDS the mandate to the Office is for advocacy and mobilization of international support and resources on behalf of SIDS. Accordingly, the Office launched and maintains a strong campaign on behalf of SIDS to help keep issues of interest to SIDS high on the international agenda wherever pertinent. Hence, it is heartening to note that from 2001 to 2005, overall ODA flows to SIDS increased dramatically by 44.53%. The 2005 ODA to SIDS stands around US \$ 1.8 billion. ■

Special Events for SIDS in 2006

In order to highlight issues of interest and concern to SIDS and to push ahead with the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the areas outlined in it, the UN-OHRLLS organized the following events in New York moderated by High Representative Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury:

Promoting Tourism in the SIDS

The UN-OHRLLS wants to maintain the issue of tourism in SIDS high on the international agenda. Tourism is an area that SIDS economies can really benefit from - in terms of income, foreign exchange and employment. Additionally, tourism is also a cross-cutting economic activity as it sustains other economic activities like transport and communications, hotels, restaurants, food, cottage and other industries. Emphasis on the development and expansion of tourism in the SIDS is a pursuit that UN-OHRLLS considers essential to meeting the goals of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS (MSI).

UNWTO is an important partner of SIDS in helping them promote tourism in an environmentally healthy manner. Sustainable tourism was noted to be one of the least disruptive sectors if well planned, developed and managed. Economically, tourism is a foreign exchange earner and employment generator. Socially, it could enhance the quality of life for all on the island. Environmentally, tourism could contribute to the conservation and management of island resources; especially those that are non-renewable or precious in terms of life support.

The Special Representative of UNWTO in New York, Mr. Rafeuddin Ahmed, reported on 23 October 2006 at an event organized by UN-OHRLLS that UNWTO has initiated a series of pilot projects to assist selected SIDS to develop adaptation policies and implementation techniques at beach destinations and coastal ecosystems. He mentioned that one of the main constraints of developing tourism in islands was accessibility. This constraint was aggravated by the absence of economies of scale that provide a rationale for frequent and reliable transportation services. However, some examples in the Caribbean demonstrated that the development of international tourism in islands could take place if regular air services were put into place. "Cruise tourism" was also gaining importance for promoting this sector in islands.

1 This is the second in the series of United Nations Information Pamphlets on Small Island Developing States on implementing the Mauritius Strategy through advocacy and mobilization of international support. The first was issued in October 2006.

2 With functions recommended by the Secretary-General in paragraph 17 of his report A/56/645

Special Events for SIDS in 2006 continued

The UNWTO has proposed the establishment of a SIDS Tourism Observatory for working towards a sustainable tourism industry in SIDS.

The Chairman, AOSIS, Ambassador Anthony B. Severin (Saint Lucia), said that the event was of "great significance" for SIDS. He expressed concern that the Mauritius Strategy had thus far failed to deliver on its promise. He drew attention to the fact that the tourism sector was recognized as the fastest growing economic sector globally, and that SIDS were ideal candidates for tourism development. Investments in the tourism sector were significant - accounting for a major share of total investment, foreign exchange earnings, and employment generation. Tourism stimulated infrastructure development with the potential of undermining remoteness and isolation that were characteristics of many islands.

Ambassador Severin said that AOSIS looked forward to the support from development partners, the UN system and other stakeholders for support to tourism-related activities identified in the Mauritius Strategy.

Emergency funding for natural and other disasters

The UN-OHRLLS has been sensitive and concerned to the needs of SIDS following natural disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes. The Office feels that immediate and adequate assistance is needed, and support of the international community is essential in such situations.

It is in this context that the UN-OHRLLS has been highlighting the international funds that SIDS could avail of in their efforts to tackle after-disaster situations. When disasters strike the availability of immediate relief measures without loss of too much time is critical from a humanitarian point of view. In view of these considerations, the UN-OHRLLS has been

attempting to identify and make the SIDS aware of resources that they can access in the event of calamities. In this regard, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is undoubtedly important for the SIDS. Hence, the UN-OHRLLS felt it essential that SIDS be aware of the functionality of this important United Nations initiative.

Towards accomplishing this goal, the UN-OHRLLS and the CERF secretariat organized a special event on 27 October 2006 to build greater awareness amongst SIDS. Ms. Margareta Wahlstorm, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of OCHA delivered a presentation on the role of CERF and the progress made in mobilizing resources for emergencies.

At the event, the Chairman of AOSIS, Ambassador Anthony B. Severin emphasized that SIDS should feature prominently as potential beneficiaries of the CERF in view of the severe natural disasters confronted by them. He recalled the disaster wrought by Hurricane Ivan in 1994 and the telling case of Grenada. However, at the six months review of the CERF in September 2006, resources were reported to have been committed to twenty-six countries and only two of these were SIDS. He called for more of CERF's resources to be available to the most vulnerable SIDS in times of emergencies. ■

Since its launch on 9 March 2006, the CERF has committed USD 261.2 million for over 331 projects in 35 countries, including three SIDS, namely Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Timor-Leste: US \$ 184.2 million for Rapid Response and \$ 77 million for Under-Funded Emergencies. (For further information, please see: <http://ochaonline2.un.org/Default.aspx?alias=ochaonline2.un.org/cerf>)

Progress in Disaster Insurance scheme for the Caribbean

In keeping with UN-OHRLLS's concern about the timely and adequate availability of assistance in the aftermath of disasters in SIDS, the UN-OHRLLS has been supporting the establishment of some form of disaster insurance for the SIDS ever since this issue was raised at the Mauritius International Meeting in January 2005. Such a scheme would provide financial resources to SIDS immediately after disasters. This idea was furthered at the World Bank Small States Forum in 2005. The UN-OHRLLS immediately supported it and encouraged the World Bank/IMF to spearhead such a venture in view of their capacities and expertise in the matter.

The initiatives of the World Bank culminated with the highly successful Donor Pledging Conference organized at the Bank's headquarters in Washington, D.C. on 26 February 2007. The Conference was attended by Ministers and other representatives of 18 governments of the Caribbean region, international and regional organizations, and

donors such as Canada, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, and the European Union among others. The UN-OHRLLS was represented by Mr. Om Pradhan.

Demonstrating support for the world's first ever multi-country catastrophe insurance pool, donors pledged US\$47 million to the reserve fund of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), which will provide participating governments from the region with immediate access liquidity if hit by a hurricane or earthquake.

This Caribbean-owned, regional institution is the first regional disaster insurance facility in the world. Donor contributions to a reserve fund are crucial towards assisting the CCRIF to become operational by this year's hurricane season beginning in June 2007.

The UN-OHRLLS has now called for a replication of the Facility for the Pacific SIDS, and in other regions as well if requested by the concerned governments. ■

Upcoming Events of Interest to SIDS

- Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD 15 (26 February to 2 March 2007), United Nations, New York
- Fifteenth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD 15) (30 April to 11 May 2007), United Nations, New York
- Event: Disaster insurance for SIDS, 2 May 2007 United Nations, New York (proposed)
- Event: Global Coral Reef Alliance, 7 May 2007 United Nations, New York
- Event: Disaster relief with UN ISDR Secretariat, 9 May 2007 United Nations, New York
- Event: Climate Change with UNFCCC, June 2007, United Nations, New York (date to be finalized)

Note: These events will appear in the UN Journal about ten days before the events in question. Contact for further information: Carol Sakubita, UN-OHRLLS at sakubita@un.org and/or telephone number: (917) 367-5710.

Climate Change and National Adaptation Programmes of Action

The UN-OHRLLS is keen that all SIDS establish viable and adequate National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), as climate change is now inevitable and SIDS are being adversely affected in many ways.

While international efforts to rein in green house gas emissions that cause global warming continues, adaptations to new conditions arising from climate change have to be undertaken towards maintaining adequate lifestyles.

With the help of the United Nations, SIDS Governments will need to take the initiative to formulate and put into effect their respective NAPAs. From the list of countries maintained by UNFCCC that have initiated NAPAs, thus far only two of the 37 UN Member State SIDS are accounted for, namely, Comoros and Samoa.

The UN-OHRLLS is highlighting this information to encourage SIDS Governments to take immediate action in the matter. For LDCs, financing may also be available through funds established and administered by UNFCCC. ■

The NAPA Process

The steps for the preparation of the NAPAs include synthesis of available information, participatory assessment of vulnerability to current climate variability and extreme events and of areas where risks would increase due to climate change, identification of key adaptation measures as well as criteria for prioritizing activities, and selection of a prioritized short list of activities. The development of a NAPA also includes short profiles of projects and/or activities intended to address urgent and immediate adaptation needs of LDC Parties.

Countries	Date of submission to UNFCCC secretariat
Bangladesh	November 2005
Bhutan	May 2006
Comoros	November 2006
Djibouti	October 2006
Madagascar	December 2006
Malawi	March 2006
Mauritania	November 2004
Niger	July 2006
Samoa	December 2005

United Nations Climate Change Conference - Nairobi, 6 - 17 November 2006

Climate change is undoubtedly having an impact in the SIDS and there is an absolute need to take steps to establish NAPAs. The UN-OHRLLS considers the issue of adaptation to climate change as one of the most important of activities that SIDS need to undertake, so that lifestyles can be maintained and possibly improved in a changing environment. In this regard, the UN-OHRLLS also follows the activities of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC).

Recently, the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) and the second session of the Conference of the Parties/Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 2) took several decisions that are relevant to SIDS and LDCs. These were in the areas of capacity-building under the Kyoto Protocol, adaptation fund, Clean Development Mechanism, and financing and procedures relating to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

In addition, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) affirmed that its activities under the five-year programme of work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change are to be undertaken to assist all Parties, particularly developing countries, including SIDS and LDCs to improve their understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation. ■

Sixty-first session of the General Assembly

During the 61st session of the General Assembly, the UN-OHRLLS continued its activities to fulfil the mandate for SIDS.

In the Second Committee following the Mauritius International Meeting, the High Representative stated, amongst others, five areas that had been identified by UN-OHRLLS for special attention and follow up action:

- Disaster risk insurance;
- GEF funding;
- Disaster reduction and post-disaster assistance;
- ICT connectivity; and
- Role of SIDS regional organizations.

The High Representative informed delegates that the UN-OHRLLS had followed-up on these issues with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), GEF, UN ESCAP and relevant regional organizations like CARICOM, Pacific Islands Forum and the Indian Ocean Commission. ■

Hyogo Framework: Urgent Need for SIDS Governments to Nominate Focal Points

High Representative Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury participated at the Kobe World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005 with a view to highlighting the concerns of the SIDS in his capacity as the Secretary-General of the Mauritius International Meeting as High Representative for SIDS .

Disaster preparedness stands out as an issue of primary importance to small islands. The Hyogo Framework gives special attention to SIDS under Priorities for Action in the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015). During the 61st session of the General Assembly the High Representative drew the attention of the Member States, and the SIDS in particular, to the Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/229). He urged SIDS governments to designate their national focal points for implementation, follow-up and monitor progress related to the Hyogo Framework and inform the ISDR secretariat at the earliest. These steps are important to gain international support and resources. ■



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