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INFORMATION PAMPHLET
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Small Island Developing States

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



UN-OHRLLS

United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)
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We request the UN Office of the High Representative on Least Developed Countries, Landlocked countries and Small Island Developing States to enhance its role of advocacy and mobilization of support and resources for the implementation the Mauritius Strategy;

(Statement of Rome, 16 November 2005)

... the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States of the United Nations Secretariat continues to mobilize international support and resources for the further implementation of the Programme of Action, in accordance with its mandate

(Paragraph 102 of the Mauritius Strategy, 14 January 2005)

Advocacy and Mobilization of International Support of Resources – A Continuing Task

Since its establishment in 2002, the UN-OHRLLS maintains its strong support for the implementation of the programmes of action for the three most vulnerable groups of countries, namely, the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries* and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

In the case of the SIDS, the UN-OHRLLS works in close cooperation with the Small Island Developing Countries Unit (SIDS Unit) of UN-DESA, in keeping with respective mandates.

The UN-OHRLLS also works closely with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) as the intergovernmental caucus that takes the lead in articulating SIDS position at the UN and other multilateral forums. The strong and continued political support of the members of the Alliance to the UN system's work for the SIDS is needed to have a good impact in the international community especially among development partners, UN system organizations, international financial organizations and regional/subregional organizations as well as civil society and the private sector.

In December 2003, Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed Under-Secretary-General and High Representative Anwarul K. Chowdhury as the Secretary-General of the Mauritius International Meeting convened by the UN General Assembly and held in January 2005. For the whole period, the UN-OHRLLS served as the coordinating secretariat for organizing this 10-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of the SIDS.

The continuing efforts by the UN-OHRLLS to put SIDS issues high on the global agenda was heightened soon after the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy on 14 January 2005 beginning with the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe (18-22 January 2005). Its advocacy and support mobilization efforts for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy are being advanced at various multilateral forums, in particular at the sessions of the relevant UN bodies including the Commission on Sustainable Development, World Bank's Small States Forum (since 2003) and other relevant major global meetings.

The High Representative has also been representing the UN Secretary-General at various Summit level gatherings of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to enhance the cooperation between these regional bodies and the United Nations, inter alia, in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Civil society support is also being mobilized through joint activities, particularly in cooperation with the NGO Committee for Sustainable Development.

Given the enormous potential of the South-South cooperation and its inclusion in the Mauritius Strategy, UN-OHRLLS has continued to underscore the need for putting the most vulnerable countries at the core of activities promoting such cooperation, particularly through triangular arrangements. The UN High Level Committee on South-South Cooperation in its meeting last year took a policy decision to that effect and the UNDP's Special Unit dedicated to such cooperation has already mainstreamed this decision in its programmes and activities. UN-OHRLLS and the Special Unit collaborate closely to give practical shape to the support envisaged in respect of the SIDS. One recent example is the financial support provided by the Special Unit for the technical study on enhancing the Pacific connectivity.

Another priority area of the work of UN-OHRLLS has been its close collaboration with UNDP towards instituting the physical presence of the United Nations in each of the SIDS member states in the Pacific.

Encouraged by the highly successful outcome, the High Representative as the Secretary-General of the conference convened a meeting in Port Louis of all UN and other multilateral organizations participating at the Mauritius Meeting on 14 January 2005 to initiate the consultations for the implementation of the Strategy adopted that day.

Following the Mauritius Meeting, **five** areas that have been identified by UN-OHRLLS for special attention and follow up action are:

- **Disaster risk insurance**
- **Global Environment Facility Funding**
- **Disaster reduction and post-disaster assistance**
- **ICT connectivity**
- **Role of SIDS regional organizations.**

Disaster Risk Insurance

- At the World Bank's Small States Forum in 2005, UN-OHRLLS highlighted the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and encouraged active consideration of the proposal to establish a Small States Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility. UN-OHRLLS also advised that it would be most appropriate if the World Bank/IMF became the lead agency to oversee the establishment of such a Facility in view of their inherent capacities. This is being actively pursued.
- For the Caribbean region, there is also the proposal to develop a Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, to enable the CARICOM governments to purchase risk-aggregated coverage akin to business interruption insurance at a significantly lower rate than individual states could obtain on their own. Preparatory studies and design work for the proposed Facility have been funded through the World Bank resources and a grant from the Government of Japan. Further follow-up are being undertaken.
- The World Bank's active engagement in the SIDS issues was manifested during the preparations for the Mauritius Meeting, beginning with the Inter-Regional Meeting of the SIDS in the Bahamas in January 2004. The High Representative maintained close contact throughout with the Bank Vice Presidents Jim Adams and Ian Goldin who took special interest in the Bank's support to the SIDS and the latter actively participated at the Mauritius Meeting. UN-OHRLLS contacts have continued for collaboration with the Bank for the Mauritius implementation process.

Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding

In the Mauritius Strategy, the GEF was requested to simplify and improve access to its resources for SIDS. UN-OHRLLS and the GEF secretariat has been collaborating on this matter. The “Open Forum for Partnerships” event organized by UN-OHRLLS in March 2005 received a briefing by the CEO of GEF on steps being taken to improve access by SIDS to GEF's resources, and above all, to simplify procedures to do so.

In this context, the GEF secretariat provides the following information:

- SIDS successfully utilized more than US\$ 365 million of GEF funding for 225 projects in the past 13 years. This includes capacity building funds to meet their obligations under the UN Conventions on Biological Diversity, Climate Change and more recently the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Convention to Combat Desertification.
- Publication titled "GEF and Small Island Developing States" is available from the GEF offices in Washington or its implementing agencies (UNDP, UNEP and World Bank) which provides details of these 225 projects.
- Fourth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund (GEF-4) concluded in August 2006. Thirty-two governments agreed to contribute US\$3.13 billion to replenish the GEF Trust Fund over the next four years. This makes GEF-4 the largest replenishment in the history of the GEF.
- The 32 donors to this replenishment are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States.
- Based on the new Resource Allocation Framework, the SIDS are made aware in advance the amount of GEF resources they will be able to program in the coming years. This significantly improves predictability and provides a framework for SIDS to program resources in accordance with national priorities and commitments to the relevant UN environmental conventions.
- On a request from the Pacific SIDS, the GEF agreed to support location of a full-time person within the region to improve their access to GEF funding. An agreement was reached with Australia and New Zealand to fund this person, to be located in a regional organization, for the initial period of three years.

This will be followed by creating a country program for the SIDS that allows countries to have a flexible and quick-disbursing modality of smaller amounts. This will be similar to GEF Small Grants Program that is now being provided to 40 SIDS and in the next 4 years likely to include all the SIDS who request for this facility.

Disaster Reduction Strategy and Post -Disaster Assistance

Extreme vulnerability of the SIDS to natural disasters like cyclones, hurricanes, storms, tsunamis and earthquakes as well as to sea-level rise and climate change has serious negative impact on the development efforts of these countries and poses enormous challenge to them.

UN-OHRLLS took full advantage of the first post-Mauritius opportunity to highlight this vulnerability of the SIDS at the Kobe World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015) that was adopted at the conference included the following provision relating to SIDS under Priorities for Action:

“Implement the outcome of the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, including by establishing and strengthening effective early warning systems as well as other mitigation and response measures.”

Actions undertaken to support the efforts of SIDS to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, through the UN International Disaster Reduction Strategy secretariat (UN ISDR), are direct contributions to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

As follow up, actions are being undertaken by UN-OHRLLS to support the efforts of SIDS to implement the Hyogo Framework through the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN ISDR) secretariat. UN-OHRLLS engaged with the UN ISDR to organize briefings in New York in March 2005 for SIDS and other members of the international community to make them aware of and gain their support for the UN activities relating to instituting additional or improved early warning systems and disaster-preparedness measures for the benefit of the SIDS.



United Nations Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs/Central Emergency Response Fund (OCHA/CERF)

- The UN-OHRLLS has been working closely with the secretariat of the newly established Central Emergency Reserve Fund (CERF) which was launched in March 2006 as a result of the proposal of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and as endorsed by the 2005 World Summit. Information on CERF's activities was provided in the form of a note to the Chair, AOSIS, for bringing it to the notice of AOSIS members.
- The CERF now has an overall target funding of \$500 million. The UN-OHRLLS and CERF/OCHA secretariat would hold an upcoming event in October 2006 at the United Nations headquarters to further brief SIDS on benefiting from this fund.



ICT Connectivity

Encouraged by the idea that emerged at the UN-ESCAP organized summit meeting of the leaders of the Pacific islands in Indonesia in April 2006 on the possibility of establishing a dedicated satellite communication infrastructure for them, UN-OHRLLS actively pursued the matter. It joined UN-ESCAP and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to initiate a joint project on **Enhancing Pacific Connectivity**. A technical study is being conducted to explore the technical, economic and commercial viability of satellite technology for the Pacific island countries. This study is expected to be completed by February 2007. The Government of Turkey, the UN Special Unit for South-South Cooperation and others contributed resources for this study.

Greater involvement of SIDS regional organizations

The UN-OHRLLS works closely with regional bodies towards fulfilling its mandates in the context of the three groups of most vulnerable countries. It has been felt that regional intergovernmental organizations like the CARICOM, Pacific Islands Forum and Indian Ocean Commission should assume a greater role in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The rationale for this is based on:

Firstly, such regional organizations are in the geographical region where the Mauritius Strategy is to be implemented. Proximity is obviously an important factor to provide timely guidance, advice and leadership to push ahead with development activities. It could be difficult, unrealistic and unmanageable if such tasks are to be taken up directly from UN headquarters in New York.

Secondly, regional organizations would be more aware and sensitive to the needs of the SIDS in their regions. They would also be better informed about the national, sub-regional and regional projects and programmes, and their viability in the physical, economic, cultural and political contexts.

Thirdly, regional organizations would be knowledgeable about the capacities of the countries and the region both to finance and implement the projects and programmes needed. This would help them determine the nature of technical and financial cooperation necessary to implement development schemes.

Such involvement by the regional intergovernmental organizations would require the support, both financial and political, of the United Nations system, in particular its Funds and Programmes as well as its Specialized Agencies.

Progress is being made in this direction as has also been reflected in the Report of the Secretary-General (A/61/277). These are as follows:

Caribbean region:

A regional coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy is to be established within the framework of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee of UN ECLAC. It will have a Ministerial Council, a technical advisory committee and a secretariat.

AIMS region:

The nature of the mechanism to be set up is still under consideration. Options on how best to have the Indian Ocean Commission to serve as the principal institution to support the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy are being discussed.

Pacific region:

The Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific will assume overall responsibility for implementing the Mauritius Strategy, and will work closely with the Pacific Islands Forum and the permanent missions in New York.

At the same time, the UN Regional Commissions would also have the capacity to assist SIDS in their efforts to implement the Mauritius Strategy. Secretariat arrangements, similar to the unit devoted to the SIDS in UN-ESCAP, could also be very helpful.

Role of UN-OHRLLS:

The role of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) in the context of the Programme of Action for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is as contained in UN General Assembly Resolution 56/227 and in keeping with the Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations A/56/645. In this same resolution the General Assembly requested Member States, all United Nations system organizations, and other relevant multilateral bodies to extend full support and cooperation to the Office of the High Representative.

It is recognized that not all SIDS would have the needed capacity to draw up the plans and programmes to implement the Mauritius Strategy at the national levels. This is where the support of the United Nations Resident Coordinator system would be particularly helpful. UN-OHRLLS is working to ensure that such assistance is forthcoming to all SIDS.