



**Statement**

**by**

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**at the Second Committee**  
**of the**  
**60<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly**  
**on**

***Agenda Item 52: Sustainable development***

**(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable development of Small Island Developing States**

**(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**

**New York**  
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Mr. Chairman,

In his report, A/60/401 on the agenda item 52(b), the Secretary-General underscores that “the principal message of the Mauritius International Meeting was the need for more effective, sustained implementation of the (Barbados) Programme of Action ...” The Mauritius Strategy itself, as adopted last January in Port Louis, has devoted a full section specifically to its implementation. I believe this constitutes a remarkable step forward towards a more focussed approach to the implementation of the 1994 Barbados Programme. As the Secretary-General of the UNGA-convened Mauritius Meeting, it had been my relentless endeavour to focus on this aspect of the outcome of the ten-year review process. It is, of course, very important to bear in mind that implementation process has the tendency to get mired in elaborate paper-work and desk-bound initiatives that contributes to the loss of momentum generated by the high-spirited consensus on the outcome.

Keeping this in mind, I would emphasize here that the Mauritius Strategy would achieve a much better record of implementation if the process is taken closer to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) themselves. In this context, as I have done earlier, we continue to stress the need for a greater involvement of regional intergovernmental organizations in promoting the implementation of the Mauritius outcome, as well as engaging them more constructively in monitoring the implementation process. Monitoring should not only be an exercise in stocktaking but should be a more proactive and dynamic process. As I have been emphasizing, the regional organizations have a much better knowledge of the capabilities and capacities of their respective regional countries. These regional, and as appropriate sub-regional, organizations should be supported in these endeavours by the concerned United Nations entities so that we harness the full potentials of the SIDS in their respective regions for effective and efficient follow up of the Mauritius outcome.

In this context, convening of regional meetings – three of which were held last month for the Caribbean, Pacific and AIMS regions – will contribute to the preparation of

effective measures to be undertaken for implementation . These regional meetings will culminate in the inter-regional meeting to be held in Rome about two weeks from today. It is our expectation that the specific implementation measures would result from that meeting and the process would regain the much-needed momentum. We are also looking forward to the FAO-convened SIDS Ministerial Meeting in Rome on 18 November as that would contribute to the implementation process.

We all recall that the Mauritius Strategy spells out that “each country has the primary responsibility for its own development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized ...” But, at the same time, we should ensure that the Small Island Developing States do have the capacity to undertake this responsibility effectively. The UN Resident Coordinator system, upon request of the individual SIDS, should provide the needed support to draw up their respective nationally prioritized implementation plan. Development partners should then in turn supplement their efforts, as per their commitments made in Mauritius. Civil society and the private sector must also be fully involved in the process of national planning and implementation. Without that, we could repeat the not-so-encouraging experience of the Barbados implementation at the national level.

In order to mainstream the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and to ensure adequate support of the international community, the Secretary-General has strongly emphasized advocacy and mobilization of international support, those being the two sides of the same coin. Advocacy goes hand-in-hand with the United Nations efforts to mobilize international support and resources for the SIDS for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The strong support received from the 2005 World Summit in its outcome document to the development objectives of the Small Island Developing States has given a big boost to these efforts. In addition, soon after the Mauritius International Meeting, my Office initiated its advocacy and support mobilization efforts, beginning with the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January, the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April, the 61<sup>st</sup> annual ministerial meeting of ESCAP in May and the Second South Summit in June. With the objective of mobilizing

support for the SIDS, UN-OHRLLS has been developing collaborative relations with the Bretton Woods institutions, regional financial institutions, the Global Environmental Facility and other partners.

Before concluding, let me draw the attention of all to the new and emerging issues that were identified in the Mauritius Strategy, particularly HIV/AIDS and other health-related issues, security concerns, erosion of trade preferences and the issue of market access, and information and communication technology (ICT), need to be integrated in the SIDS agenda. My Office has been actively involved in raising awareness of these at various multilateral forums highlighting the SIDS interests, particularly in the areas of trade preferences, ICT and HIV/AIDS. We urge that all other concerned organizational partners take up their responsibilities to support the SIDS in these new issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to make a few remarks relating to agenda item 52(c) on *Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction*.

The Report of the Secretary-General in document A/60/180 provides us with an overview of the implementation of the Strategy, and the follow-up activities relating to the Kobe World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

This subject is of particular relevance to the most vulnerable countries of the world – the Least Developed, Landlocked and Small Island Developing Countries which are regularly ravaged by natural disasters overwhelming these countries in their uphill efforts towards sustainable development. The limits on their capacities are well-known. Eleven years ago the milestone World Conference in Yokohama, Japan declared that “the impact of natural disasters in terms of human and economic losses has risen in recent years, and society in general has become more vulnerable to natural disasters. Those usually most affected by natural and other disasters are the poor and socially disadvantaged groups in developing countries as they are least equipped to cope with

them”. This assertion is still valid, if not in more dramatic terms, as reflected in the Hyogo Framework for Action for the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy.

Natural disasters as we have seen from the powerful Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, and the recent South-Asian earthquake and the hurricanes of the Atlantic Ocean, affect continents and islands with equal fury and devastation. In case of the most vulnerable countries, we must realize that impact of disasters becomes doubly magnified. First, they have limited, if any, areas where they can evacuate affected populations to take shelter. Their resilience capacities and the abilities to deal with the aftermath of natural disasters are highly limited. Many of them, without international assistance, do not have the ability to tackle the resultant shortage of shelter, food, fuel, and medical needs of the affected populations let alone effectively take up reconstruction and rehabilitation. With limited financial, technical and manpower capabilities, rebuilding for them becomes a Herculean task and takes much more time stretching the tolerance limits of those affected in their attempts to bring back a semblance of the pre-disaster normal life.

The Secretary-General’s report notes that in the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, the issue of disaster risk is recognized as an important area of focus. Similarly, when it comes to SIDS, the issue of addressing disasters has been taken into account in the Mauritius Strategy as well as in the Hyogo Framework.

I am happy to note that the approach to implementing the Hyogo Framework involves regional organizations, resources, capacity and expertise towards disaster management. In Africa, a continent that has 34 LDCs, the African Union has acknowledged the African regional strategy for disaster risk management. Further work is being undertaken at the sub regional levels.

In the Pacific region, a strategy for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework is being devised with the support of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission

or SOPAC. Similarly, for the Caribbean region, the Organization of American States (OAS) has taken a number of initiatives in the context of the Hyogo Framework.

International, regional and sub regional efforts have to be supplemented by national initiatives to strengthen disaster management capacities. Several countries, including Bangladesh, Mauritius and Uganda, have incorporated disaster risk measures into their CCAs and UNDAFs. All the LDCs, the Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States could very well follow in these footsteps. It is important that the national governments take action in this direction as soon as possible.

The progress to establish early warning systems to the extent that present day technology allows us has been heartening to note especially after the Asian tsunami. The issue of disaster insurance and the operationalization of the disaster-related emergency fund is of particular interest to the SIDS. My Office is working in these areas keeping the best interests of SIDS in particular in mind.

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