



MAURITIUS INTERNATIONAL MEETING: MONDAY, 10 JANUARY 2005

Delegates to the Mauritius International Meeting (IM) met in a morning plenary to hear opening speeches, consider organizational matters, and hear statements from UN bodies, IGOs and NGOs on the comprehensive review of the BPOA. The Main Committee met throughout the day to address organizational matters and continue deliberations on the Strategy document. A panel discussion convened in the afternoon to address environmental vulnerabilities in SIDS.

OPENING SESSION

The opening ceremony of the IM commenced with delegates observing a minute of silence in memory of the lives lost in the recent tsunami disaster.

Opening the IM, Anwarul Chowdhury, IM Secretary-General, recalled the death and destruction caused by the tsunami, and recommended focusing attention on SIDS disaster preparedness in view of the upcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR). He urged: SIDS to enhance regional economic integration and south-south cooperation; the UN to continue advocacy on SIDS at the highest levels; and intergovernmental regional organizations to monitor and coordinate international resource flows to SIDS.

Paul Raymond Bérenger, Prime Minister of Mauritius, was elected President of the IM by acclamation. In his opening statement, Prime Minister Bérenger reported on the impacts of recent hurricanes and the tsunami on SIDS, and called for consideration of an early warning system as an immediate task for the meeting and the UN. He said Mauritius would propose a political declaration reiterating the international community's commitments to SIDS.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: In accordance with the report of the informal consultations for the preparation of the IM (A/CONF.207/L.2), the plenary: adopted the rules of procedure and the agenda; approved the organization of work, accreditation of IGOs and NGOs, and credentials committee; and elected as Vice-Presidents: Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Mauritius Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development (*ex-officio*); Mauritius, Cape Verde and Morocco for Africa; Tuvalu, Nauru and Timor-Leste for Asia; Croatia, Lithuania and Czech Republic for Eastern Europe; Belize, Bahamas and Barbados for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Italy, Belgium and New Zealand for Western Europe and Others Group. The plenary also elected Christopher Fitzherbert Hackett, Barbados' Permanent Representative to the UN, as Rapporteur-General; and Don MacKay, New Zealand's Permanent Representative to the UN, as the Chair of the Main Committee.

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BPOA: Many speakers expressed condolences to the countries affected by the recent tsunami disaster. The CBD Secretariat underscored SIDS' unique position to achieve the global 2010 target to reduce biodiversity loss. UNFPA said achieving sustainable development

requires striking a balance between population, resources and consumption. UNIDO outlined its technical assistance to SIDS on environment, employment, and industrial policy. UNECLAC said the links between economic, social and environmental vulnerability and size were dramatically reinforced by the 2004 hurricanes in the Caribbean. He said the IM should address, *inter alia*: the shortfalls and gaps in BPOA implementation; SIDS-SIDS and regional cooperation; and benchmarks for measuring progress.

The INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION highlighted the role of information and communication technologies (ICT), and stressed its role in environmental sensing and disaster monitoring. UNICEF noted the opportunities for mobilizing resources for children through integrating the MDGs into national poverty reduction plans. Stating that HIV/AIDS is both a consequence of, and contributing factor to, underdevelopment, UNAIDS, highlighted that a range of vulnerabilities place SIDS at a heightened risk to HIV/AIDS.

FAO said the 2005 FAO Conference of SIDS Ministers of Agriculture would follow up on the IM in the areas of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. UNCTAD underscored the economic vulnerability and disadvantages of SIDS, and expressed its support for fair differentiation in the special treatment of SIDS. ILO stressed its role in mobilizing international partnerships and providing specific support to SIDS on: labor laws, social dialogue, social protection, human rights, productivity, and access to employment.

The INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF THE FRANCOPHONIE highlighted its role in implementing regional and international sustainable development programmes. The INTERNATIONAL HYDROGRAPHIC ORGANIZATION stressed the importance of hydrographic data and safe navigation for sustainable economic development and protection of the marine environment. The ASIAN PACIFIC COCONUT COMMUNITY highlighted the role of coconuts in economic development and environmental sustainability. Highlighting the disadvantages that characterize SIDS economies, the SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY called for, *inter alia*, a more gradual phasing out of trade preferences, and internationally agreed compensation schemes for small economies.

The CENTRE FOR DOCUMENTATION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING FOR THE SOUTH WEST INDIAN OCEAN presented the Declaration of the Mauritius Civil Society Forum held from 6-9 January, outlining the calls for action by governments and the commitments to action by civil society. The PACIFIC CONCERNS RESOURCE CENTRE presented the Pacific civil society statement, which calls for new partnerships between donors, governments and civil society. The CARIBBEAN NETWORK FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT outlined the main elements of the Caribbean civil society statement, highlighting the need for, *inter alia*: public awareness strategies; debt cancellation; and early warning systems. NATURE SEYCHELLES presented a civil society statement on behalf of the Atlantic and Indian



Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas region, calling on governments to harness the energy and resources of civil society. The CARIBBEAN POLICY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE presented views from international civil society organizations, underscoring the need for the IM to realize financial resources and agree on technical cooperation assistance.

PANEL DISCUSSION

ENVIRONMENTAL VULNERABILITIES OF SIDS:

This panel was co-chaired by Tagaloa Sale Tuala Tagaloa, Samoa's Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, and Marian Hobbs, New Zealand's Minister of the Environment, and moderated by Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive Director.

Rajendra Pachauri, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), presented findings from the IPCC's Third Assessment Report, including the projected impacts of climate change on SIDS. He stressed the need for planned and anticipatory adaptation measures, in addition to mitigation efforts.

Theophilus Ferguson John, St. Lucia's Minister of Physical Development, Housing and Environment, stressed the need for SIDS to prioritize the development of locally produced renewable energies.

Sálvano Briceño, Director of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, said the IM should recommend that the WCDR: address the specific needs of SIDS in its framework for action; call for a commitment to develop disaster risk reduction strategies in all sectors; link humanitarian and development efforts in support of disaster reduction; and call on CSD-13 to integrate disaster risk reduction into its thematic cluster.

Kendrick Leslie, Director of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, discussed the social, economic and physical vulnerability of Caribbean nations to climate change and associated increases in extreme weather events, highlighting the need for an early warning system.

Mohamed Latheef, Maldives Ambassador to the UN, presented a statement on behalf of the President of the Maldives, outlining the human, social, and economic impacts of the tsunami.

Discussion: In the discussion, delegates focused on: early warning systems; destruction of coral reefs and mangrove forests; concerns with linking climate change and extreme events; provision of financial resources for early warning; GEF's role in renewable energy projects in SIDS; capacity building; pre-disaster action; climate mitigation; information and education; earth observation technologies; climate monitoring networks and systems; international cooperation; socioeconomic impacts of climate change; partnerships; and sharing of new technologies.

MAIN COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: On the election of officers of the Main Committee, delegates elected Perina Sila (Samoa) as Rapporteur. On the organization of work, Chair MacKay noted that the Committee has been allocated two days to complete its work, and reported that considerable progress was achieved on Sunday's expert group meetings on trade and on transportation of radioactive waste.

CONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL OUTCOMES OF THE IM: Implementation: Access to and the provision of financial resources: Delegates agreed to text urging GEF, consistent with the decisions of relevant bodies, to simplify and improve, *inter alia*, the effectiveness and efficiency of its support, including its disbursement procedures and those of its Implementing Agencies.

On chapeau text concerning actions on specific sustainable development challenges, the G-77/CHINA underscored the role of the international community in facilitating and improving SIDS funding, the EU stressed the need to emphasize the role of national ownership in taking actions, and the US questioned the need for a chapeau, preferring to outline the key areas for support. This text remains unresolved.

In a subparagraph on climate change, the US said reference to sea-level rise broadens the text beyond the relevance of the UNFCCC. Delegates agreed to text stressing the need to develop and implement national adaptation strategies and facilitate regional and interregional cooperation, including within the

framework of the UNFCCC, and, *inter alia*, with support from the UNFCCC's LDC Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund.

The G-77/CHINA proposed and delegates agreed, with some amendments, to a new subparagraph on biodiversity, which includes text on supporting action to build representative systems of terrestrial and marine reserves, advancing the development of the CBD's programme of work on island biodiversity, and facilitating equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

On natural and environmental disasters, delegates agreed, with minor amendments, to a G-77/China proposal on developing partnerships on insurance for post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation, and establishing and strengthening effective early warning systems.

On marine resources, delegates agreed to support SIDS' national and regional efforts in the sustainable management of their marine resources, through appropriate assessment, management, monitoring and surveillance of fish stocks and fishing efforts.

Delegates also agreed, with minor amendments, to G-77/China proposals on: promotion of agricultural competitiveness and food security; development of mechanisms for the design and implementation of SIDS sustainable production and consumption strategies; and enhancement of ICT development.

Science and development and technology transfer: On the chapeau, delegates could not agree to the G-77/China's proposal to include language on the establishment of a SIDS-specific technology transfer facility. Subject to further discussion on the chapeau, delegates agreed to subparagraphs on technology to build resilience, and on the promotion of access to technological system licenses.

Capacity development: On the chapeau, delegates agreed to language calling for continued support from the international community to SIDS' efforts to develop human and institutional capacity. Delegates requested more time to consider the G-77/China's proposed text on monitoring, youth and civil society, and centers of excellence for training and research.

National and international governance: The G-77/CHINA, opposed by the US, suggested replacing text on national enabling environments with provisions from the JPOI. Delegates agreed to revisit the issue on Tuesday. On text concerning the international enabling environment, the G-77/CHINA presented, and delegates agreed to, text stressing the need to ensure that international institutions pay appropriate attention to the particular needs and priorities of SIDS.

On monitoring and evaluation, the G-77/CHINA proposed, and delegates agreed with some amendments, text noting that monitoring and evaluation should include the integrated and coordinated follow-up of UN summits.

Role of the UN: The G-77/CHINA tabled new text and Chair MacKay suggested that the section be addressed on Tuesday.

Natural and environmental disasters: Delegates agreed, with some amendments, to text proposed by the G-77/China, which notes the impacts of the tsunami and the need to augment SIDS' capacity to predict and respond to emergency situations.

Climate change and sea-level rise: The G-77/CHINA, the EU and US each proposed reformulated text. Delegates agreed to begin discussing these proposals in a contact group on Tuesday.

IN THE CORRIDORS

With only one day remaining before the Main Committee is expected to conclude its work, several delegates commented that negotiations received a boost from the informal groups that met through Sunday, achieving progress on text regarding the transportation of radioactive waste and trade. Despite advances, many participants expressed frustration over the wide range of views among and within the main negotiating groups on how to proceed with the text on climate change, a major priority for SIDS and an issue on which the success of the International Meeting could be pegged. Meanwhile, in light of the tsunami disaster and the strong support for early warning systems, some delegates believe that a preventive approach extends beyond early warning, and requires resilience building and a focus on long-term development needs.