



The Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

Reports from the Third Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

January 23-28, 2006, UNESCO, Paris

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND THE MAURITIUS STRATEGY

Summary prepared by LaVerne Walker, St. Lucia

During the Third Global Conference, a panel reviewed progress achieved and the obstacles faced by States in their efforts to implement the ocean and coastal components of the BPoA and also to review specific strategies for implementing the actions identified in the 2005 Mauritius Strategy. Several discussion sessions also addressed progress and next steps for SIDS. Acknowledging that the Mauritius Strategy builds on the WSSD, the MDGs as well as the Barbados Programme of Action, and that it further provides more targeted actions for SIDS, the discussion focused on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and identified next steps.

Panel 5: Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island States was chaired by Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, Foreign Affairs, Mauritius, Outgoing Chair, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and included presentations from: Mr. Willie John, Chief Executive Officer, Cook Islands; Mr. Fernando Trindade, on behalf of Celestino Andrade, Ministry of Environment, São Tomé and Príncipe; Mr. Rolph Payet, Principal Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, Seychelles; Mr. Vincent Sweeney, Executive Director, Caribbean Environmental Health Institute, St. Lucia; Mr. Nelson Andrade, Director, UNEP Caribbean Programme, UNEP/UNDP/GEF IWCAM Programme on Integrated Water and Coastal Area Management for SIDS; Ms. Dominique Benzaken, Coastal Management

Adviser, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme; Ambassador Enele Sopoaga, Permanent Representative of the Mission of Tuvalu to the UN; and Ms. Marina Silva, Independent Consultant, Cape Verde. Dialogue sessions related to SIDS were chaired by: Mr. Tim Adams, Secretariat of the Pacific Community; Mr. Nelson Andrade, UNEP Caribbean; Mr. James Hardcastle, Nature Seychelles; Mr. Franklin McDonald, UNEP Caribbean; Marina N'Deye, Cape Verde; Mary Power, South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC); and Mr. Dirk Troost, Chief, Coasts and Small Islands Platform, UNESCO.

The unique and special challenges facing SIDS were also underscored by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of United Nations Millennium Project, in his address to the conference. He acknowledged the necessity of better reflections on these challenges facing SIDS in meeting the MDG and WSSD goals, particularly addressing the impacts of climate change and other global issues, in particular trade liberalization.

Background

Small island developing states (SIDS) are characterized as large ocean States due to establishment of 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), resulting in these small islands being custodians of much of the world's ocean space. Despite the fact that SIDS have large

ocean areas rich in resources (fisheries, oil and gas, minerals, renewable energy), many island States are unable to benefit from the existence of these resources within their EEZs a result of inadequate technical and management capacity. For example, SIDS often lack the technologies necessary for development of ocean resources. Another issue of major concern to SIDS is the threat of climate change and the associated sea level rise predictions. The significant vulnerability of the natural environment, economy, and social structure of SIDS has been well established. Even though similar problems are present in most or all developing countries, because of the inherent characteristics of SIDS, they are felt more acutely by these countries.

Being cognizant that the development needs of SIDS differ from other developing countries, the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), a fourteen point program identifying priority areas for action, was adopted at the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados in 1994. In 2005, at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Mauritius, many of the actions listed under the BPOA were reprioritized by SIDS for further action.

Ten years after the adoption of the BPOA, national and regional assessments indicate that some SIDS have managed to effectively address and manage certain aspects of their vulnerability and have clearly progressed in specific areas related to their development. Unfortunately there are other states that have regressed. One major reason for the lack of implementation of the BPOA has been the decline in international support and resources. Reviews indicate a 50% reduction in Official Development Aid (ODA) to SIDS in the period 1994-2004 (Chowdhury, 2004).

Progress Toward Implementation of Ocean and Coastal Management in SIDS

General Trends Prior to the Mauritius International Meeting¹

- 20% of SIDS nations (8 nations) have developed specific institutions or interagency mechanisms for the coordination of integrated coastal and ocean management;
- 44% of SIDS nations (18 nations) have entrusted the coordination of marine and coastal issues to national environmental institutions. Some of these mechanisms and environmental institutions are part of the National Sustainable Development Plan coordination (6 countries of 18, or 15% of the total).
- No SIDS has delimited its EEZ and deposited EEZ coordinates with the UN Division of Ocean Affairs

and Law of the Sea (DOALOS), nor has any SIDS filed an extended continental shelf claim.

- Several countries have enacted relevant legislation regarding marine management. Most of the enactments are under jurisdiction or coordination of national environmental institutions, most notably, National Environmental Acts (63% of SIDS or 26 countries) and laws that provide for Environmental Impact Assessment (32% of SIDS, or 13 countries). The Environmental Acts often encompass waste and watershed or pollution-related issues, and to a lesser extent legislation on marine protected areas (MPAs) and fisheries management.
- 44% of SIDS (18 countries) have developed National Sustainable Development Plans and Biological Diversity National Strategies. The Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, and Samoa have developed Marine Resources Plans.
- 7% of all SIDS (or 3 countries from the Caribbean) have enacted National Coastal Zone Acts (Barbados, Belize, and Cuba).
- 46% of SIDS (19 countries) have developed national initiatives for integrated coastal management, which are in the form of national plans (17% or 7 countries); national strategies (17% or 7 countries); and national programs (12% or 5 countries).
- 27% of SIDS (11 of 41) have enacted legislation on watershed planning, which includes coastal watershed management. These are the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Barbados, Belize, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, and Suriname.
- Other initiatives closely related with integrated coastal management are the establishment of MPAs. 61% of SIDS, or 25 countries, have established MPAs while at least seven more have recommended or proposed MPA development. Only five SIDS have not established or recommended the establishment of MPAs, and information is needed for six SIDS. Interestingly, the Cook Islands and Samoa have declared their entire EEZs as MPAs, presenting a unique solution for management.

Progress Following the 2005 Mauritius International Meeting

- Three regional meetings were organized by UNDESA-SIDS Unit to examine the progress of implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
- An inter-regional meeting took place in Rome in 2005 to determine next steps on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
- The Cook Islands have made positive strides in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those related to management of waste and monitoring biodiversity.
- The Cook Islands have developed a National Development Plan and a draft Tourism Master Plan

- to assist the country with the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
- Sao Tome and Principe is currently in the implementation phase of a Large Marine Ecosystem Project and in the process of preparing a National Programme of Action for addressing land-based sources of marine pollution.
 - Many islands in the Caribbean have put mechanisms in place to address management of waste and water pollution such as:
 - Establishing Solid Waste Management Authorities;
 - Developing Marine Pollution Acts;
 - Acceding to relevant IMO instruments;
 - Establishing sanitary land filled sites;
 - Conducting public awareness and sensitization campaigns on waste management issues.
 - Many Caribbean governments are committed to the Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Project, funded by GEF, being executed by the Caribbean Environment Programme and the Caribbean Environment Health Institute.
 - Pacific SIDS are in the process of developing National Sustainable Development Strategies, and some have already completed theirs. There is a need for additional financial support to implement and complete the strategies.
 - Development of a Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy was endorsed by the Ministers in 2002 and is currently being implemented at the national level.
 - During the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) it was decided that, during future meetings of the Commission, one full day will be committed to addressing SIDS issues.

Obstacles

- Lack of accountability outside island/mission/mandate.
- Maintenance of capacity within SIDS on pertinent issues needed to assist in the development of the Mauritius Strategy.
- Given the recognition of special status of SIDS, there is still inadequate follow-up in practical terms.
- Lack of human resource on the ground to facilitate the implementation of Mauritius Strategy.
- Development aid to SIDS has declined making access to financial resources more difficult.
- Many of the pledges made to assist SIDS in implementing the Mauritius Strategy have not been met to date.
- Lack of a formalized integration, coordination and monitoring mechanism to assess implementation of the Mauritius Strategy at the national and regional level.
- AOSIS has not been formalized.

- SIDS Consortium of Universities (established during the Mauritius International Meeting) lacks financial resources.
- Natural disasters in 2005 have impacted the progress of some SIDS on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
- No SIDS has submitted any co-ordinates to United Nations Division on Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea regarding EEZ delimitation and claims for an extended continental shelf.
- Appreciation of the uniqueness of SIDS issues is not well received by the international community. ‘One size fits all concept’ does not fit SIDS.
- Difficult for many SIDS to meet the eligibility criteria of international donor agencies, such as GEF, to access funds to assist in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Next Steps Proposed During Panel Session

Implementation

- Need to focus on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
- Support the implementation of the SIDS Consortium of Universities.
- Formalize the Alliance of the Small Island States (AOSIS).
- Build more partnerships with organizations to assist in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
- Define and implement of contingency plans for marine pollution.
- Address the CBD Program of Work on Island Biodiversity and implementation constraints or issues faced by SIDS and elaborated in the Mauritius Strategy, as key drivers for partnership and implementation at the local level.

Coordination

- Establish partnerships with companies involved in the production of Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) type energy technologies.
- Integrate the Mauritius Strategy into the work programmes of relevant United Nations organizations.
- Develop and establish integrated approaches towards waste management.
- Raise awareness of the issue of climate change and its impact in SIDS and the urgent necessity to implement adaptation activities in SIDS.
- Raise awareness of the issue of energy requirements and uses and the impact of SIDS development.
- Increase coordination and integration of policies and projects.

Monitoring

- SIDS need to establish their own monitoring and evaluation methodology at the national level to

assess their implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

- Creation of a focal point for the Atlantic SIDS: Cape Verde has been recommended.
- Establish indicators for progress on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.
- Recognize the important role of oceans as an economic driver towards the economic advancement of SIDS.

Other

- Support of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands in assisting SIDS with the advancement of ocean related issues such as the delimitations of their EEZ.
- Recognition by the international community that SIDS do not have the same needs and requirements of other developing countries resulting in differentiated treatment.
- The need to establish a physical presence of international representation, in particular the United Nations in SIDS, such as the Pacific SIDS currently without UN presence.

Recommendations and Next Steps Proposed in Dialogue Sessions

Local

- Launch of the civil society platform;
- Establish adult and school learning programs;
- Awareness raising at the national level about the Mauritius Strategy and its importance to SIDS;
- Ensure that Mauritius Strategy is accessible and used by all stakeholders by popularizing Mauritius Strategy through a multi-media toolkit:
 - An annotated version of the Mauritius strategy for civil society and policy makers
 - A pedagogic curriculum aid for schools and a poster leaflet in different languages
- Encourage the empowerment of local people and communities with regards to the Mauritius Strategy;
- Promote increased coordination and communication at the local level;
- Increase access to financial resources;
- Integrate the need for environmental management with poverty alleviation and socio-economic advancement;
- Facilitate understanding and action to address local needs, concerns and interests in the conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity;
- Assist in achieving the biodiversity targets of WSSD and CBD, related MEAs and their regional agreements and the Regional Seas Programmes;
- Identify and support island leaders championing major conservation and sustainable livelihood initiatives;

- Stimulate common pathways for action between Governments and civil society;
- Develop connections between community based initiatives (e.g., Small Islands Voice (SIV), Youth Visioning for Island Living and networks with a social, cultural and economic focus relevant to islands).

Regional

- Improve coordination for SIDS issues at the regional and sub-regional level;
- Develop and strengthen networks and initiatives, such as the Task Force on Island Conservation and Protected Areas (TAFICOPA), IUCN Species Survival Networks, the International Coral Reef Initiative, Micronesians in Island Conservation network, to enhance coordination, information sharing and to catalyze action in islands and within and among SIDS;
- Develop a database on SIDS civil society organizations and stakeholders;
- Facilitate better integration and appropriate use of multi-lateral environmental agreements (MEAs) as instruments for local and regional implementation, through species, place or issue focused agreements and projects, and in particular recognizing the potential and benefits of both the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and World Heritage;
- Enhance policy integration at the national and regional level through mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into existing national policies like National Sustainable Development Strategies or the Regional/National Oceans Policies;
- Creation of regional events to showcase developments and examples of sustainable living.

Caribbean

- Support the formalization of the Caribbean Development Cooperation Committee (CDCC) as the intergovernmental forum to coordinate the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

AIMS

- Work towards getting the Atlantic SIDS working more closely with the Indian Oceans SIDS (increased integration between the two regions).
- Support Cape Verde becoming the focal point for the Atlantic SIDS.
- Establish an AIMS civil society regional coordination mechanism.
- Strengthen Indian Ocean Commission and incorporate other members of the Indian Ocean Region (e.g. Maldives and Bahrain).

Pacific

- Integrate the Mauritius Strategy into regional programmes and National Sustainable Development

Strategies including in the elaboration of the Pacific Plan recently endorsed by Pacific Island Leaders in their 2005 Summit.

Inter-Regional

- Increased South-South co-operation amongst SIDS (e.g., SPREP model can be emulated to fit Caribbean needs);
- Promote increased coordination and communication at the inter-regional level;
- Improve coordination and dialogue between the global, regional and national level.

International

- Support the formal institutionalization of the Alliance of Small Island States for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy;
- Follow-up on United Nations Resolution which allows for UN departments to appoint a focal point within their agencies which are responsible for SIDS issues;
- Urge UNDESA to establish and inter-agency coordinating mechanisms to follow-up after Mauritius;
- Identify funding to ensure the continuation of SIDSNET;
- Collaboration between SIDSNET and the Global Forum in the advancement of the SIDS agenda globally;
- Establish a SIDS NGO Directory;
- Develop a global ocean forum trustee council given charge of the world's "isolated/fragile" areas including SIDS, Antarctica, and Oceans;
- Support the revision of the GEF criteria for funding eligibility;
- Further the development of the SIDS Consortium of Universities;
- Encourage UN system and other international organizations and programs, for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy;
- Utilize international events to promote and recognize island conservation leadership in the conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity;
- Recognize the existence of many international instruments relevant to SIDS but that island representation and participation within international processes and UN presence in country is not sufficient to link the international level to on-the-ground communities;
- Recognize the need for a global body or effective enforceable regime for seamount protection;
- Support the strengthening of national capacity for follow-up and implementation and in particular the lack of access to financial resources;
- Recommend that UNEP consider elaborating its 'Global Programme of Action for the Protection of

the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities' to give special attention to the needs of SIDS;

- Urge SIDS to join the Convention on Migratory Species;
- Develop a 'global vision for local action' for the implementation of the conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity at the local/national level through a **Global Island Partnership** – a linked collection of partnership activities at local, national and international levels and built upon existing networks, institutions and initiatives.

Conclusion

Small Island Developing States have made strides in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy; however they face many challenges that hinder the rate of implementation. SIDS continue to be vulnerable to natural disasters and environmental degradation due to their small scale and geographical location, which also makes it difficult to compete aggressively on the global market due to their isolation from major international shipping routes.

Successful implementation of the Mauritius Strategy cannot occur in the absence of effective integration, coordination and monitoring mechanisms established at the global, regional, and national levels and this can be enhanced through the formalization of the AOSIS to monitor implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Small Island Developing States Dialogue Session Participants

Small Island Developing States Side Meeting Monday, 23 January, 2006

Celestino Andrade, Minister Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Infrastructure, Sao Tome and Principe

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Bottom-line Assessment Dialogue Session: Small Island Developing States: 25 January, 2006

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Next Steps in Small Island Developing States Dialogue Session: 26 January, 2006

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Footnote:

¹From: Loper, Christen E., Miriam C. Balgos, Janice Brown, Biliana Cicin-Sain, Peter Edwards, Christina Jarvis, Jonathan Lilley, Isabel Torres de Noronha, Adam Skarke, Joana Flor Tavares, and LaVerne Walker. *Small Islands, Large Ocean States: A Review of Ocean and Coastal Management in Small Island Developing States since the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*. Toward Mauritius 2005 Paper Series No. 2005-1. Global Forum on Oceans Coasts and Islands: University of Delaware, Newark, USA (2005).