

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BPOA**

The vulnerability of islands and coastal areas was recognized by the 44th session of the UN General Assembly in 1989, when it passed resolution 44/206 on the possible adverse effects of sea-level rise on islands and coastal areas, particularly low-lying coastal areas. The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, brought the special case of small islands and coastal areas to international attention when it adopted Agenda 21, a programme of action for sustainable development. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 on the protection of oceans, all kinds of seas, and coastal areas included a programme area on the sustainable development of small islands. Agenda 21 also called for a global conference on the sustainable development of SIDS.

### **GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS:**

Established by UN General Assembly resolution 47/189, the UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS was held in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 25 April to 6 May 1994. The Conference adopted the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (BPOA), a 14-point programme that identifies priority areas and specific actions necessary for addressing the special challenges faced by SIDS. The priority areas are: climate change and sea-level rise, natural and environmental disasters, management of wastes, coastal and marine resources, freshwater resources, land resources, energy resources, tourism resources, biodiversity resources, national institutions and administrative capacity, regional institutions and technical cooperation, transport and communication, science and technology, and human resource development. The BPOA further identified cross-sectoral areas requiring attention: capacity building; institutional development at the national, regional and international levels; cooperation in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies; trade and economic diversification; and finance. The Conference also adopted the Barbados Declaration, a statement of political will underpinning the commitments contained in the BPOA.

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was given the responsibility to follow up on the implementation of the BPOA.

**UNGASS-22:** In September 1999, the 22nd Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS-22) undertook a comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the BPOA. The Special Session adopted the "State of Progress and Initiatives for the Future Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS," which identified six problem areas in need of urgent attention: climate change, natural and environmental disasters and climate variability, freshwater resources, coastal and marine resources, energy, and tourism. In addition to these priority areas, the Special Session highlighted the need to focus on means of implementation through: sustainable development strategies, capacity building, resource mobilization and finance, globalization and trade liberalization, transfer of environmentally sound technology, a vulnerability index, information management through strengthening the SIDS Network, and international cooperation and partnership. The Special Session also adopted a declaration in which member States, *inter alia*, reaffirmed the principles of, and their commitment to, sustainable development as embodied in Agenda 21, the Barbados Declaration and the BPOA.

**MILLENNIUM SUMMIT:** In September 2000, at the UN Millennium Summit in New York, world leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) and in doing so, resolved to address the special needs

of SIDS by implementing the BPOA and the outcome of UNGASS-22 rapidly and in full.

**WSSD:** The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) convened from 26 August to 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The WSSD reaffirmed the special case of SIDS, dedicating a chapter of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) to the sustainable development of SIDS that identified a set of priority actions, called for a full and comprehensive review of the BPOA in 2004, and requested the General Assembly at its 57th session to consider convening an international meeting on the sustainable development of SIDS.

Non-negotiated partnerships for sustainable development, also known as Type II partnerships/initiatives, were also a key outcome of the WSSD. As of December 2004, 297 such partnerships had been registered with the CSD Secretariat, 53 of which focus on the sustainable development of SIDS.

**UNGA-57:** In December 2002, the 57th session of the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 57/262, in which the Assembly decided to convene an international meeting in 2004 to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the BPOA, and welcomed the offer by the Government of Mauritius to host the meeting. The General Assembly also decided that the review should seek a renewed political commitment by all countries to, and should focus on, practical and pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the BPOA, including through the mobilization of resources and assistance for SIDS. The resolution further decided to convene regional preparatory meetings and an inter-regional preparatory meeting to undertake the review of the BPOA at the national, subregional and regional levels, and invited CSD-11 to consider its role in the review process.

**REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS:** From August to October 2003, three regional preparatory meetings for the IM were held for the: Pacific SIDS (4-8 August, Apia, Samoa); Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) SIDS (1-5 September, Praia, Cape Verde); and the Caribbean SIDS (6-10 October, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago). Each of these meetings prepared regional positions, which were presented as Regional Synthesis Reports during the inter-regional preparatory meeting in the Bahamas in January 2004.

**EXPERT MEETINGS:** In preparation for the inter-regional meeting, four expert meetings were convened from July to December 2003. These meetings addressed: capacity building for renewable energy and energy efficiency; vulnerability of SIDS and enhancing resilience; waste management; and capacity building for sustainable development.

**UNGA-58:** In December 2003, the 58th session of the UN General Assembly, in resolution 58/213, decided to convene the IM from 30 August to 3 September 2004, and approved the provisional rules of procedure of the meeting. In June 2004, the General Assembly, in resolution 58/213 B, decided to change the dates for the IM to 10-14 January 2005, with informal consultations to be held from 8-9 January, if deemed necessary.

**INTER-REGIONAL SIDS PREPARATORY MEETING:** The Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting for the BPOA review took place from 26-30 January 2004, in Nassau, Bahamas. At the conclusion of the meeting, SIDS adopted the Nassau Declaration and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Strategy Paper for the Further Implementation of the BPOA. The Strategy Paper contains chapters

on the priority areas of the BPOA and identifies new and emerging issues, including the graduation of SIDS from least developed country (LDC) status, trade, health and culture.

**INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING:** The Preparatory Meeting for the BPOA review convened from 14-16 April 2004, at UN headquarters in New York, during CSD-12. Delegates conducted a first reading of the AOSIS Strategy, which was endorsed by the G-77/China in March 2004 and used as the basis for negotiations at CSD-12. At the conclusion of the international preparatory meeting, delegates decided to use a compilation text as the basis for further intersessional informal consultations. Delegates also adopted draft decisions on the provisional agenda of, and the accreditation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to, the IM.

**INFORMAL INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS:** Two rounds of informal informal consultations, facilitated by Amb. Don MacKay (New Zealand), were held from 17-19 May and 7, 8 and 11 October 2004, at UN headquarters in New York, to advance negotiations on the Strategy document. At the conclusion of the October round of consultations, delegates had reached agreement on chapters on: Natural and environmental disasters, Energy resources, Tourism resources, Transport and communication, Science and technology, Sustainable capacity development and education for sustainable development, Sustainable production and consumption, Health, Knowledge management and information for decision-making, and Culture.

**MAURITIUS INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM:** An international civil society forum met from 6-9 January 2005, in Port Louis, adopting the Declaration of the Mauritius Civil Society Forum, which outlines calls for action by governments and expresses commitments to action by civil society.

**INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS:** The official opening of the IM was preceded by two days of informal consultations on Saturday and Sunday, 8-9 January, which were held to consider the outcome documents of the IM, and to forward recommendations to the IM on organizational and procedural matters (A/CONF.207/4). Chaired by Amb. Don MacKay, the informal consultations on the outcome documents of the IM focused on advancing negotiations on the Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (A/CONF.207/L.1) and reached agreement on chapters on Coastal and marine resources, Land resources, and Graduation from LDC status. The informal consultations on organizational matters were chaired by Jagdish Koonjul, Mauritius Ambassador to the UN, who was elected by acclamation. The informals considered and approved its recommendations to the IM on all aspects of procedural and organizational matters.