



INTERVENTION BY MR. S. BEHURA, SPECIAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS, ON THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS: SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES, INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 15TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON FEBRUARY 26, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

India has 1300 small islands in the Indian Ocean as part of its territory. We are thus familiar with the particularities and challenges of developing small islands, while simultaneously protecting their unique environments and fragile eco-systems.

India recognizes the special challenges faced by SIDS due to their economic and environmental vulnerabilities, and has directed its engagement to focus on areas such as natural disaster preparedness and mitigation, resilience and capacity building and adaptation to climate change. With this objective as a policy priority, India has committed concessional loans and credit lines amounting to around US \$ 350 million and project aid of US \$ 70 million to SID Member States. India is ready to share its experience, expertise, intellectual and technological resources to contribute to the economic prosperity and sustainable development of SIDS.

Almost 30 small island States are now covered under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation [IREF] programme which covers a wide variety of projects, including deputation of Indian experts, training of nationals of partner island States in premier Indian institutions and short-term study visits to India for their senior officers and decision-makers. Through the ITEC programme, India has been responding to the needs of capacity building so well articulated in the Mauritius Strategy. Several infrastructural projects like construction of hospitals, provision of telecommunication facilities and construction of road-networks are undertaken in Small Island Developing States, under the ITEC programme. A significant percentage of Indian experts deputed abroad is working in small island States in multifarious fields including marine engineering, agriculture, geology, fisheries and medicine. We have also launched an ambitious programme for collaboration in Information and Communication Technologies, apart from maintaining our contributions in the areas of secondary and higher education.

The report of the Secretary-General notes that SIDS have themselves taken initiatives to address the challenges associated with adaptation to climate change, the projects undertaken by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre [CCCCC] to support the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements is a welcome development. India is proud to be associated in joint implementation of projects with CCCCC.

Contribution of a fellow-developing country like India to the development of Small Island Developing nations and to the implementation of the Mauritius strategy is intended to supplement the efforts required from the international community. It is equally essential that those more fortunate than us shoulder their responsibilities for the provision of adequate assistance, including financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building, to the small Island developing nations. The need to increase market access for SIDS eliminates trade barriers and agricultural subsidies and removes all other external constraints to their sustainable development. They also need to address urgently other aspects related to the special vulnerabilities of these States.

Thank You Mr. Chairman.

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