



Intervention by Mr. Sudhir Mital, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests of India on the occasion of SIDS Day during CSD-16, 12 May 2008

Mr. Chairman,

We associate with the statement made by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of G-77. India recognizes the special challenges faced by SIDS in their pursuit of sustainable development. The SIDS remain extremely vulnerable due to their high degree of dependence on external factors, limited resources, small and less diversified economies, high transportation costs, as well as the potentially severe impact of natural disasters. The thematic issues of agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification play a crucial role in the development efforts of SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

In the spirit of solidarity that governs South-South cooperation, India has been honoured to contribute to the development efforts of SIDS by sharing its experience and expertise, as well as intellectual and technological resources. India has 1300 small islands in the Indian Ocean as part of its territory, and is, thus, familiar with the unique challenges of sustainably developing small islands. In its cooperation efforts with SIDS, India has shared the experience gained from addressing similar concerns in the small islands within its territory.

In line with the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation, India has placed special emphasis on the human and institutional capacity building needs of SIDS through its Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation [ITEC] Programme. A large number of personnel from SIDS have received training in India in diverse sectors. Senior officers and decision-makers have made short-term study visits to India. India has also deputed experts to support *in situ* the development efforts undertaken by the SIDS themselves in areas like marine engineering, agriculture, geology, fisheries and medicine.

The ITEC programme has also implemented projects in remote sensing, hydrographic survey, afforestation, breakwater & pontoon jetty construction, agro-industries, waste management systems, infrastructure development, food security, irrigation systems, power transmission networks, information and communication technology, human resources development, health, telemedicine, education, public transport, solar energy and climate change adaptation activities. Overall, India has committed project aid of US\$ 70 million to SIDS, in addition to US\$ 350 million in concessional loans and credit lines.

Mr. Chairman,

SIDS have undertaken major efforts themselves towards sustainable development, particularly with regard to addressing climate change. Efforts by fellow developing countries like India can only supplement the efforts required from the international community. Developed countries must, with a sense of urgency, fulfil their obligations of adequate financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building. SIDS must also be supported in their efforts to prepare National Adaptation Plans of Action, and implement projects identified by such Plans.

Before concluding, Mr. Chairman, I would like to extend our support to the decision proposed by Grenada on behalf of AOSIS for a SIDS Day devoted exclusively to the SIDS.

Thank You.

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