

Declaration of the Mauritius Civil Society Forum

INTRODUCTION

Over 200 civil society participants from SIDS and the Diaspora have met in the last three days assessing, reviewing and sharing experiences of the last ten years. Collectively we have produced this statement focusing on some priority issues and reaching consensus on recommendations.

We have to thank those governments, UN agencies and other development organizations, which have facilitated our activities in this parallel and complementary process. We wish also to express our gratitude to the government and people of Mauritius for their warmth and hospitality.

We especially thank Under Secretary General Chowdhury and his office for the exceptional effort on his part to ensure the fullest possible participation of civil society in this process.

We note the vital assistance of UNDP and their contribution to the Community Vilaj as part of the Civil Society parallel process.

Our deliberations have brought us to the point where the **Civil Society Forum** has concurred in large measure with the views and sentiment of the Secretary General of the United Nations report on the review of the BPoA and the conclusions of several other state and non-state assessments over the last ten years.

Despite the reaffirmation of the relevance and importance of the BPoA in several local, national, regional and international fora including, the Five Year Review of the BPoA in 1999 at the 22nd Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Millennium Summit in 2000 at the United Nations, the International Conference on Financing for development in 2002 in Monterey, Mexico, and the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, implementation has not been satisfactory.

In 2000 the General Assembly resolved to address the special needs of SIDS “*rapidly and in full*”. It was agreed that mistakes from the last ten years must not be repeated if we are to effectively implement the BPoA. Lessons learned demonstrate that unless we, government and civil society, recognizing our differences and independence, act in close collaboration, existing, new and emerging threats will undermine and in some cases destroy entire island states.

It is within this context that we urge your serious attention and consideration to this Civil Society Declaration.

VISION

The SIDS civil society regional structures are part of a global people's movement with a vision of a more equitable world. We therefore reaffirm the Peoples Millennium Forum Declaration and Agenda for Action which we helped to draft together in the year 2000, that our vision is of a world that is humane and genuinely democratic, where all human beings are full participants and determine their own destinies.

CALL FOR ACTION BY GOVERNMENT

The numerous stakeholders involved in the Civil Society Forum, in Mauritius have through participatory workshops affirmed that we:

- Express solidarity with Tsunami victims. While we welcome the debt freeze we call for cancellation of all debt.
- Acknowledge the devastating impacts of recent natural disasters and the funding pledged for reconstruction of stricken areas. We urge that this reconstruction be on the basis of principles of equitable and participatory sustainable development to give long-term hope to surviving communities.
- Call for the institutionalization of participatory processes at all levels of decision-making and implementation, ensuring inclusiveness and realization of full human and environmental rights, as set out in all relevant UN conventions through appropriate policies, mechanisms and structures.
- Affirm that Communities must be at the core of policy-making and sustained investment must be made identify broaden and enhance local effective practices.
- Call for the recognition of the right of our people to food security and food sovereignty emphasizing the sustainable production and consumption of healthy foods by using appropriate and innovative sustainable technologies in SIDS.
- Call for the sustainable use of marine resources, conservation of marine biodiversity, and banning of destructive fishing practices as well as the provision of the appropriate training and tools for the fishing communities.
- Need to ensure that the peoples and communities who depend on fisheries and other natural resources be supported as stewards and custodians of these resources thereby protecting their livelihoods and promoting sustainable development.
- Call for SIDS to urgently develop and accelerate renewable and clean energy programs.
- Call for health and education to be recognized as human rights and for the establishment of comprehensive health programmes to combat the spread of communicable and non-communicable diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS and malaria.
- Call for the cessation of nuclear proliferation, transportation and transshipment of hazardous, radioactive and nuclear materials around or through SIDS' EEZs
- Call for the closure of all foreign military bases on our territories and the restoration and return of those lands to our countries.
- Ensure the implementation of adequately funded and effective strategies for biodiversity conservation and invasive species management that are fully integrated into the sustainable development agenda. This includes actively supporting development,

funding and implementation of the new programme of work for Island Biodiversity with full engagement of civil society.

- Call for a comprehensive ban on the patenting of all life forms and review past patents that have been issued on living species and tissues.
- Urge governments to commit to and establish instruments and mechanisms that operationalise early warning systems and disaster mitigation and response plans throughout the developing region and more particularly SIDS.
- Call for the respective SIDS governments to ratify all core ILO Conventions and to ensure strict adherence to the international labour standards.
- Call for AOSIS to adopt a formal structure that will enable SIDS to better coordinate and further the implementation of the BPoA and the Mauritius outcome.

Commitments to Action By Civil Society

SIDS civil society is committed to working with SIDS governments and development partners to advance the implementation of the Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action so as to:

- Ensure the institutionalization of the effective participation of all stakeholders in determining policy (at all stages), planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation programs and mechanisms.
- Develop benchmarks and indicators to facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the BPoA.
- Establish new or strengthen existing sustainable programs and mechanisms particularly to deal with natural and man-made disasters that pose a threat to human life and the environment in SIDS.
- Advocate for the cessation of nuclear proliferation, transportation and transshipment of hazardous, radioactive and nuclear materials through the EEZ and around SIDS countries
- Set up immediately mechanisms for the protection of SIDS' natural resources, markets and their people from the adverse effects of globalization and liberalization of trade.
- Advocate for the review of current technologies introduced into SIDS and the identification and adoption of technologies that are appropriate and reflect SIDS' realities and vulnerabilities.
- Establish and make operational, a SIDS Civil Society Implementation Fund.
- Assure and promote the proper identification, protection, promotion and packaging of cultural heritage, including indigenous knowledge.
- Commit ourselves to creating a world with strong cultural values, eliminate violence in any form, eradicate discrimination and promote equality of gender, and youth empowerment;
- Reaffirm and recommit to the principles of women' s rights as Human Rights as set out in CEDAW. In particular, we note with concern the feminization of HIV/AIDS and the continued barriers to women' s political participation in decision-making.
- Support the precautionary principle underlying the responsible use of agricultural inputs, of technology including the use of GMOs and introduction of non-

indigenous species, while protecting and enhancing livelihoods and small scale and traditional agriculture and indigenous species.

- Commit ourselves to fostering fair trade, protection of consumer rights and promoting south-south cooperation, and call for the review of rules and agreements of the WTO that are adversely affecting the lives of people in SIDS.
- Re-affirm that access to safe and affordable water and sanitation are basic human rights
- We encourage faith-based communities to play a more active role in the implementation of the Mauritius outcomes.
- With the ratification of the Kyoto protocol we call for the sharing of technologies and information, promotion of appropriate technologies to aid SIDS in mitigating and responding to disasters
- Call for SIDS to be compensated for the negative effects of trade liberalization and that the benefits be shared by the citizens without the imposition of any conditionalities by the international financial institutions.
- Commit ourselves to creating a world where social justice and equity prevails.