



CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION, DE RECHERCHES ET DE FORMATION INDIANOCÉANIQUES
CENTRE FOR DOCUMENTATION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING ON THE SOUTH WEST INDIAN OCEAN

**Final Report on the Civil Society Process leading to the International Meeting on the
Review of the Programme of Action on Sustainable Development of SIDS,
January 2005, Mauritius**

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1.0 Introduction

Mauritius hosted from 10 to 14 January 2005 the International Meeting on the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for sustainable development of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In this context, CEDREFI started a civil society preparatory process in order to input in the International Meeting. This partnership started in 2003 with the support of Small Islands Voice of UNESCO to the first civil society regional meeting of the Islands of the Indian Ocean region in Mauritius. This initiative and the support received from UNESCO were instrumental in making CEDREFI the host organisation for the Civil Society Forum which took place from January 6 to 9 January 2005, prior to the SIDS International Meeting. It is in this context that CEDREFI received the support of UNESCO in order to complete the civil society reflection on the way forward and to set the stage for the follow-up after the International Meeting. It must be noted that representatives of civil society of the Caribbean, the Pacific and AIMS (Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea) regions reached consensus on the need not only to ensure global coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the outcome of the Mauritius meeting but also national and regional coordinating mechanisms that can be used as building blocks in the development of policy dialogue at global level.

2.0 The Civil Society Process

CEDREFI was the coordinator of both the civil society national and regional processes leading to the International Meeting. The civil society process was based on the major group concept of the UN with the difference that the private sector was not integrated in the process as it has been agreed that the private sector is a separate group in its own right. However, this approach has not precluded us from seeking the collaboration of the private sector especially the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) in policy dialogue during the preparatory process and the Civil Society Forum. Consequently, the major groups in the national process and by extension at regional level brought together NGOs, CBOs, trade unions, organisations working with the fishermen community, small planters movement, human rights group, researchers and women's groups.

2.1 The Structure

The process was structured at two levels (i) Regional (ii) National

(i) The Regional process

The regional process was based on focal points in the Islands of the Indian Ocean region while during the process there were no focal point for Cape Verde, Sao Tome & Principe and Guinea. The focal points for the Islands of the Indian Ocean were: *Association d'Intervention pour le Développement et l'Environnement* (AIDE) Comoros, *Nature Seychelles*, Seychelles, *Volunteers for Environment Social Harmony and Improvement* (VESHI) for Maldives and CEDREFI for Mauritius. The latter was also the regional

coordinator for the AIMS region. Each focal point had the national responsibility to develop a national process based on its own reality and resources available. In so doing, it created an environment for autonomy and conducive for a flexible partnership on the way forward. The regional coordination ensured the dissemination of information and documents on the regional and international preparatory processes of civil society and governmental level as well as the development through e-mail of common positions for the region. The AIMS region was represented at the level of the International Civil Society Steering Committee, which had the responsibility of overseeing the Civil Society Forum, which took place in Mauritius from January 6 to 9, 2006, prior to the UN International Meeting. The chairperson of the International Steering Committee was Pynee A.Chellapermal, Director of CEDREFI and focal point of *Small Islands Voice* for Mauritius. The other members of the Steering Committee were: Mr Nirmal Shah from *Nature Seychelles*, Seychelles, Mohamed Hamidou Ali, *Association d'Intervention pour le Développement et l'Environnement (AIDE)*, Comoros, Mohamed Shahdy Anwar, *Volunteers for Environment Social Harmony and Improvement (VESHI)*, Maldives.

(ii) The National Level

The national process brought together major groups specialising in a specific sector and constituted a cross-sectoral platform on the review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for sustainable development of the SIDS. The civil society organisations engaged on this platform were: NGOs, CBOs, organisations working with the fishermen community, small planters movement, women's groups, environmental movement, Human and Child Rights groups, trade unions, cooperatives and other resource persons. A list of members of the platform is included in Annex I. The platform met on a fortnightly basis and at each session, a member of the platform reviewed a chapter of the Programme of Action on which the organisation was working. These sessions were complemented by special meetings or workshops that contributed in deepening certain issues or enhance the mobilisation of the major groups in the national process. This approach enabled the major group partners to develop a common understanding of issues and it also contributed in the development of regional and international declarations. As in the case of the regional process, CEDREFI provided the administrative back up and coordinating services to enable the process to move forward.

2.2 The Objectives of the Process

- To enhance the coordinating capacity at CEDREFI in order to be able to coordinate the regional civil society process and ensure a follow-up after the International Meeting in Mauritius.
- To complete the national preparatory process through certain curtain raiser activities.
- To develop and finalise a common political declaration for the AIMS region.
- To prepare and finalise a strategic paper for the civil society of the AIMS region.

- To finalise a plan of action with the active participation of the national focal points of the AIMS region.
- To develop a new form of partnership, after the International Meeting, among major groups through the setting up of a caucus on each priority issue for civil society of SIDS of the AIMS region.
- To disseminate information to partners on the International Meeting and related activities before and after the meeting via-e-mail.
- The setting up of a coordinating and policy dialogue mechanism at the level of the AIMS region after the International Meeting.
- To initiate dialogue with the ‘Small Islands Voice’ on the way forward on how to coordinate actions between the youth and other major groups of the SIDS of the AIMS region after the International Meeting.
- To prepare a final report on the civil society process of the AIMS region.

3.0 The Process

The civil society process at national level was structured as a cross-sectoral platform as indicated above and it covered a certain number of priority chapters of the Barbados Programme of Action. During the preparatory process leading to the summit, a set of activities was developed and completed.

3.1 National

Every fortnight, a partner organisation made a presentation on one issue covered by the Barbados Programme of Action. In certain cases these issues were addressed during one-day or half-day workshops. The following issues were addressed:

- Sustainable Tourism
- Fair Trade
- Climate Change and Natural Disasters
- Waste Management
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- Marine Resources
- Culture with a special focus on the relationship between biodiversity and culture
- Biodiversity
- Food security
- Militarisation of the Indian Ocean with special reference to the Mauritian sovereignty on the Chagos Archipelago and the US base at Diego Garcia
- Regional Cooperation among the Islands of the South West Indian Ocean.

The focus was on content and these reflections created the opportunity for cross-sectoral reflection and for developing the habit of promoting cross-sectoral approaches. Finally, this regular activity enabled the civil society partners to develop common understanding of issues and to develop common positions. These common positions were shared at the level of the AIMS region and later fed into the global position of SIDS Civil Society. This issue will be dealt further in the next section.

Curtain raiser activities in the form of meetings were held with certain groups and movements. During these meetings, the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) was presented and the relevant linkage between the focus of the activities of the member of the platform and the BPoA were undertaken. These meetings were also opportunities to talk with a bigger group of people than the traditional representatives of the major groups. Consequently, the curtain raiser activities allowed us to talk with teachers at pre-primary level, fishermen from various fishing villagers, small planters, workers organised in trade unions and members of NGOs. A special effort was also done with the media.

In parallel to these activities, regular monitoring sessions have been organised with the Mauritian Ministry of Environment, host ministry of the International Meeting, the UNDP Office in Mauritius, the Ministry of Education, host ministry for the Youth Visioning, the Indian Ocean Commission as the regional inter-governmental body for the AIMS region (IOC was both a partner in terms of regional implementation and follow-up, and a financial partner for the Civil Society Forum).

3.2 Regional and International

The national preparatory process, networking and sharing of information with the focal points of the Islands of the Indian Ocean favoured regional and international partnership and cooperation in creating an enabling environment to enhance the participation of civil society in the regional and international negotiation and dialogue on the review of the programme of action. Regional and international institutions such as the Indian Ocean Commission and the European Union, UNESCO, UNDP and UNDESA also played their partnership role fully in the preparatory exercise not only in terms of financial support but as proactive dialogue partners throughout the process and beyond. Consequently, CEDREFI as representative of the AIMS region presented position papers in various negotiating forums (Declaration presented at these meetings is included in Annex II) and participated in the following meetings:

- The inter-governmental meeting of the AIMS region, January 2004, Seychelles, with the support of IOC.
- The UN inter-governmental meeting, 26-30 January, 2004, Bahamas, with the support of **UNESCO** and IOC
- The Commission on Sustainable Development, New York, 14-16 April, 2004, with the support of UNDESA

- The Small Islands Voice Planning Strategy Meeting and the implantation of the Mauritius Strategy, Bequia, Grenadines, 11-16 July 2005, with the support of **UNESCO**
- The inter-governmental follow-up meeting of the AIMS region on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, 26-28 October 2005, Seychelles, with the support of **UNESCO**
- The FAO follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, 7-8 February 2006, Rome, with the support of UNDESA

4.0 Strategic Paper and Plan of Action for implementation of the Mauritius Strategy

The civil society process focussing on major groups has contributed to shape the Strategy and Plan of Action of the civil society for Mauritius and the AIMS region in general. The process concretely sensitised the major groups, party to the platform, on the need to have serious reflections of issues of national, regional and international interests and to establish the necessary linkages between these levels. The reflections made at national level improved to a large extent the quality of participation of the partners in the Civil Society Forum and the International meeting respectively. This awareness also led in the shaping of the global strategy for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy by civil society.

In order to participate effectively in implementation and in engaging in policy dialogue, it was agreed that the civil society in Mauritius requires a form of structure that will ensure sustainability of the civil society process both nationally and in the AIMS region. The proposed structure is based on the structure that was put in place during the preparatory process and a post-Forum workshop was organised with the Mauritian major groups and a consensus was reached on the need for and the structure of the platform for the future monitoring and participation in the implementation of the Mauritian Strategy.

The strategy adopted for the platform is based on the following pillars:

- The development of a cross-sectoral platform at national level and this platform can be adapted by other focal points in the other Islands of the AIMS region.
- The platform will bring together the major groups representing key sectors of the Mauritius Strategy and the major groups must be actively engaged in one of the sectors of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS.
- Each major group will become a reference organisation for the sector on the platform and is required not only to reflect on SIDS issues but also to develop programmes and partnership with other civil society organisations engaged in the specific sector. To paraphrase President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, *'the expectation is what the major groups can do for the sustainability of the platform in terms of*

actions and initiatives in the context of the Mauritius Strategy framework and not what the platform can do for them’.

- The sustainability of the platform depends also on the capacity of the major groups to develop new forms of partnership based on shared values such as good governance, participation and autonomy of the community, solidarity, unity and the rights of the people.
- Finally, the major groups should not confine themselves in implementing projects, but they should develop a new generation of programmes that address democratic processes and the active participation of beneficiaries in the implementation of the Programme of Action. This requires a change of mindset by the major groups themselves and the recognition by the donor community that resources should be made available for the development of dialogue processes as an integrated part of developmental programmes. A detailed concept paper on the platform is in Annex III.

The Plan of Action for the AIMS region is based on the global action plan of the Civil Society Forum that laid emphasis on the following actions:

- Operationalisation of a regional coordinating mechanism for the effective participation of all stakeholders.
- Development of benchmarks and indicators to facilitate affective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy
- Popularisation of the Programme of Action for the further implementation of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS.

Based on the above, a specific concept paper has been prepared after an exchange of views between certain partners of the AIMS region namely Nature Seychelles, Seychelles, CEDREFI, Mauritius and the Small Islands Voice of UNESCO. This concept paper lays emphasis on the concept of ‘**Sustainable Island living**’ as the main aim in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. In the context of the strategy for the civil society of the AIMS region, ‘Sustainable Island Living’ is perceived as a process that enables everybody to enjoy a decent living and a good quality of life in terms of satisfying their needs (economic, social, ecological and cultural) and creates an enabling environment for the next generation to fulfil its aspirations. In so doing, sustainable Island living addresses the control and distribution of resources and the decentralisation of decision-making. Furthermore, it is based on core values such as a culture of partnership based on shared vision, good governance, and autonomy of the community, the Rights of People and participatory approaches. The intention is to build a solid foundation on core issues and challenges. A thorough analysis of stakeholders’ socio-cultural context, existing vulnerabilities and potential for resilience is an essential step in the process which ideally leads to an appropriate forum for multi-stakeholders dialogue and decision-making. The full version of the concept paper is in Annex IV.

4.1 Implementation of Actions

The regional projects will be rooted in the realities of the communities and will avoid 'one size fits all' approaches. Consequently, the development of regional activities will be based on the principle of 'subsidiarity' and variable geometry and will aim at the mobilisation of existing regional expertise.

4.1.1 Regional Actions

The priorities are:

- Organisation of a foundation workshop for the launching of the regional platform.
- Development of a regional database on the SIDS stakeholders and available expertise.
- Popularisation of the Mauritius Strategy through a multimedia toolkit.
- Development of training programmes based on the needs of stakeholders for the further implementation of the programme of action.
- Publication of a regional Newsletter.
- Creation of a regional civil society event based on the outcome of regional and national research and actions on Sustainable Island Living.
- Continue the current dialogue with the Indian Ocean Commission, UNESCO, UNDP and other UN Agencies on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

4.1.2 National Actions

The national actions are under the primary responsibility of CEDREFI and each focal point has the responsibility to develop activities with their constituencies on the basis of their own priorities and realities. In the context of the national platform, each partner will develop activities in its own sector and CEDREFI intends to ensure the coordination of the whole major groups process. Some priority actions identified are:

- Upgrading the activities of the National Platform while taking into consideration other international agreements and conventions. The rationale is to have a more coordinated approach and to avoid being overstretched over to many forums and issues.
- Ensure a regular dissemination of information on the Mauritius Strategy and the state of progress of implementation in Mauritius.

- Refocusing the CEDREFI activities on the Integrated Coastal Zone Management with the development of specific activities such as:
 - a. Continue the initial work of mobilisation and capacity building activities with the artisan fishermen community.
 - b. Developing a community project on Sand Watch and Climate Change.
 - c. Implementation of a training programme on ‘economic literacy’ in the context of the impact of globalisation and liberalisation of the Mauritian economy for major groups’ leaders.
 - d. Upgrading the policy dialogue with Government on Sustainable Island Living and developing new forms of lobbying.
 - e. Developing capacity building programmes for both leaders of major groups and grass roots leaders. The two levels require specific programmes that respond to their needs in the context of implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Consequently, training programmes are currently being developed towards these ends.
 - f. Developing a research agenda based on a cross-sectoral approach on coastal issues.

In this context, consultation is underway with the donor community on the development and implementation of the programme of implementation.

5.0 The Way Forward

On the basis of the experiences accumulated during the past three years, CEDREFI intends to reaffirm its commitment for the further implementation of the Program of Action for sustainable development of SIDS. In this perspective, the ‘Sustainable Island Living Concept’ is the corner stone of CEDREFI strategy and programmes. However, the success of this process will depend on our capacity and our understanding of issues at grass roots. This is the challenge of proposing alternatives to the community while trying to influence policy formulation and implementation by Government at national level. The platform will also have to develop new forms of partnership among the major groups and with other stakeholders in the form of policy dialogue and innovative initiatives. In this context, the AIMS region must get prepared to undertake regular review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and submit parallel report to the Governments of the region and to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. Consequently, the capacity of members of the platform and regional focal points will have to be upgraded. In this context, the partnership with UNESCO and Small Islands Voice (global) is vital in accompanying us on this difficult and complex path of sustainable Island living.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I

Members of the Major Groups' Platform in Mauritius

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ANNEX II

Declarations presented at preparatory forums for the International Meeting

I. CALODYNE SUR MER, MAURITIUS, 3-5 OCTOBER, 2005.

Twenty civil society organisations coming from Comoros, Maldives, Reunion Islands, Rodrigues and Mauritius and representing, CBOs working on sustainable livelihood, , small producers in agricultural sector, NGOs working in marine environment, fair trade, rights of the child, youth, women, human rights, research in sustainable development, coastal zone management, sustainable tourism including eco-tourism , biodiversity, fishing sector, regional cooperation and labour together with a number of governmental institutions and the Indian Ocean Commission met at Calodyne sur Mer from 3 to 5 October 2003 for a three-day workshop organised by CEDREFI with the support of **Small Islands Voice, UNESCO** to review the progress on the Barbados Programme of Action.

DECLARATION

We the participants and representatives of our respective organisations/institutions are fully aware that this workshop is an important step in the consultation process leading to the International Meeting on the review of the Barbados Programme of Action to be held in Mauritius in August 2004.

Recognising

- (a) that the SIDS forum is an important tool for advocacy towards sustainable development
- (b) the laudable initiative taken by the Government through the Ministry of Environment to launch a consultation process for the preparation of the country assessment report
- (c) small Islands are extremely vulnerable from various points of view and need a long-term and sustainable development plan that takes into consideration the guidelines of the BPOA
- (d) that scarcity and unequal access to essential natural resources poses a serious threat to sustainable activities aiming at food security and endangers the livelihood of vulnerable groups

Acknowledging

- (a) the issues such as climate change, integrated coastal zone management and sustainable tourism, vulnerability and security, the question of biodiversity, the issue of fair trade and regional cooperation dealt with during the workshop are priority issues for SIDS

(b) there is a need to develop a plan of activities to take us from Calodyne sur Mer to the International Meeting in August 2004.

(c) we need to have a common NGO stand/perspective on the different issues/chapters of the BPOA

(d) the coastal communities, especially the fishermen community, are the most vulnerable in the face of the negative consequences of climate change, natural and man-made disasters, and the mismanagement of our coastal zones

We pledge

(a) to follow the process and to endorse/carry out the proposed plan of action adopted by this workshop till August 2004

(b) to initiate actions towards the sensitisation and mobilisation of our members and target groups on the provisions/guiding principles of the Barbados Programme of Action

(c) to continue and consolidate the review process until the international meeting and address issues from the other chapters of the Programme

(d) to set up a steering committee to ensure coordination and follow up on the resolutions of the workshop

(e) to initiate and maintain the government/civil society dialogue on the BPOA

We request Government

(a) to acknowledge the civil society consultation process initiated at this workshop

(b) to maintain the dialogue and consultation beyond August 2004 on issues pertaining to sustainable development for the benefit and welfare of the SIDS populations

(c) that this forum be allocated a slot in the August meeting to present the civil society stand on the different issues to be addressed by SIDS

(d) to consult civil society with regards to the choice of its representatives in the official delegation at the August meeting

II.CIVIL SOCIETY PROCESS FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION ON THE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Bahamas Inter-Regional Meeting of SIDS on the Barbados +10 26th-30 January, 2004

1.0 Introduction

Since early October 2003, CEDREFI initiated a civil society process in the Indian Ocean region with the support of *Small Islands Voice of UNESCO*. Civil society organisations such as trade union movement, developmental NGOs, human rights group, fishermen community, small planters movement, youth and women groups joined the process through their participation in a regional workshop in Mauritius. Participants came also from the following Islands: Comoros, Maldives, Reunion, Mauritius including Rodrigues. This initiative produced a declaration known as the '*Calodyne sur Mer Declaration*' which among other things expressed the commitment of the participants to take the process forward up to the International Meeting in Mauritius and to develop a common position through their active participation of their respective organisations in the reflections on and the dissemination of information around the Barbados Programme of Action. In order to carry this process forward, a regional steering committee has been set up and CEDREFI will be the convener of a side event on Barbados + 10 prior to the Mauritius meeting. The current document reflects the current position of the civil society process and the stage they have reached in their reflections.

2.0 The Issues

The following issues are viewed as priorities for the SIDS of the Indian Ocean region:

- Trade and Sustainable Development
- Coastal Zone Management and Sustainable Tourism
- Vulnerabilities
- Climate Change
- Regional Cooperation

2.1 Trade and Sustainable Development

Trade remains an issue of major concern for the sustainable development of SIDS. The economic progress of certain of the SIDS of the Indian Ocean region has greatly been determined by market access preferences in the European Union through the Lome Convention and for others access to the US market. The export of Sugar and textiles in the case of Mauritius and tuna for the Seychelles are cases in point. With the end of the Multifibre Agreement and that of the Natural Product Protocol, the safety net under which the SIDS were being developed will no longer be available. In fact, the SIDS have permanent economic vulnerabilities; their size combined with the distance from the major markets lead to diseconomies of scale. Consequently, the repositioning of the SIDS in the context of globalisation is much more difficult to achieve. Today, the restructuring of

the SIDS economies are high on the agenda and contrary to the perception that the economy of SIDS are better than others cannot resist the current pressure exerted on their economies mainly through centralization, rationalisation of the use of resources, higher productivity and privatisation that is inherent to the process of globalisation, creating a situation whereby workers in various key sectors like the sugar industry, the textile and the tuna sector are being laid off. Consequently, the livelihood of a cross section of the labour force is being challenged and up to now it has been difficult to propose alternative economic activities.

New avenues have to be explored in a fair trade perspective. Fair trade has the potential to bring the guarantees that commercial partnership between the consumers and the producers can bring the means for an autonomous and democratic development. A fair remuneration for organised workers is the basis that could help to change development assistance into co-development. These economic alternatives through fair trade are an emerging phenomenon in the Indian Ocean Islands such as in Reunion. These pilot initiatives need to be documented and disseminated in the SIDS of the region. In this context the proposal of '*Reunion Equitable*' for the setting up of a Fair Trade Control Commission for the Indian Ocean region together with a Fair Trade Label need to be supported in the context of the current process.

2.2 Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Sustainable Tourism

Integrated coastal zone management is a cross cutting issue in the context of the Barbados Programme of Action and it covers issues like coastal and marine resources, tourism resources, biodiversity resources and climate change. In SIDS like in many other Islands, any human activity inland has an impact in the lagoon. In fact various economic sectors of these Islands such as agriculture, industry, tourism, fishing activity and recreational activities for the people are competing for the same coastal resources. Mauritius is a case in point. The Islands of Mauritius has witnessed during the past decade an economic success through a sugar and a textile boom respectively. However at the time of the economic success, the degree of awareness of policy makers about the importance of protecting the environment was relatively weak and this attitude was reflected in the weak legislative and institutional framework at national level. Consequently, as these sectors expanded, they contributed seriously in the degradation of their physical and biological environment of the coastal zone. This situation was not different for the other SIDS. It is only in the 1990's with the Rio Summit and the Global Conference in Barbados, that sustainable development and other environmental concerns found its way on the national and international development agenda.

To-day additional pressure is being exerted on the coastal areas through the expansion of the tourism sector throughout the SIDS of the Indian Ocean. This sector is more and more considered as the new engine of growth. However, the question of carrying capacity from an environmental and cultural point of view for the tourism sector is a challenge to certain SIDS of the Indian Ocean such as Mauritius. It is being argued by developmental NGOs in Mauritius that the Island has reached its carrying capacity as beach access by Mauritians has become a sensitive issue. Also, due to pollution of the

lagoon from various sources, the livelihood of the artisanal fishermen is at stake. The challenge is now to have a more balanced development on the coast without jeopardizing the economic interests of all stakeholders while ensuring that the Mauritian population can continue to have access to the living lagoon and white sand beaches of the Islands. An integrated coastal zone management policy, if seriously implemented, could be the most sensible approach for the SIDS of the Indian Ocean with the proviso that it is implemented in a participatory manner.

Environmental Stewardship

In the context of a balanced development, environmental stewardship occupies a key role in this strategy. New sustainable development culture and values have to be promoted among the inhabitants of SIDS of the region. This requires a change of mind set and adherence to a new culture of global responsibility. In this context, new pedagogical approaches for awareness raising and popular education have to be promoted and developed at both national and regional levels.

Regional tourism

In context of the promotion of regional cooperation, regional tourism has an important role to play in fostering links among the people of different SIDS. But the free circulation of people of the Indian ocean SIDS should be facilitated and the existing constraints such visa procedures should be simplified. Also regional tourism is a contributor of foreign exchange and tourism between Seychelles and Mauritius is a case in point.

Environmental governance

Integrated coastal zone management policies are not enough. Environmental governance is also necessary. This implies the participation of the people especially of the local communities in policy formulation, planning and implementation. For this participation at all levels to become effective, it is vital to create an enabling environment for policy dialogue among the stakeholders.

2.3 Climate Change

Climate change is a very significant issue in the development of the SIDS of the region. Most of them depend heavily on the tourism and fisheries industry and these sectors are very sensitive to climate change. Climate change and weather conditions have wide-ranging implications on the economy, on the environment, on the health of the population and on their social life. However, climate change is still the reserve domain of an elite and the layman is not aware of the adverse impact of climate change and sea level rise. Certain Islands like Maldives are at serious risk with the sea level rise. It is necessary to make information accessible to the people on this issue and to develop pilot projects at grass roots level especially for the farmers and fishermen community in order to change their mind set in their use of resources. In this context the traditional knowledge of the

community on climate change and climate pattern should be put to contribution in developing mitigating strategies.

But it must be pointed out that the SIDS do not contribute much to the global emission of GHGs, yet the SIDS of the Indian Ocean are among the vulnerable Islands to climate change and sea level rise. Consequently, those countries especially the US and Russia who have not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol should do so as soon as possible. Also international assistance should be provided for the transfer of technologies of relevance to climate change to the SIDS of the region in order to address burning issues such as beach erosion and the development of renewable energy. Otherwise the livelihood and the economy of the Islanders of the region will be at the mercy of climate change and sea level rise.

2.4 Vulnerabilities and Resilience

The issue of vulnerabilities of SIDS is multifaceted and must be addressed from the following angles: economic, political, social, environment, cultural and geopolitical. Small size, proneness to natural calamities, limited capacities to deal with shocks, adverse impact on economic activities and remoteness from main markets are some of the characteristics of the SIDS. These vulnerabilities are permanent and cannot be overcome by policy reforms, as is the case with the other categories of countries. This is why the strategy of getting special and differential treatment in the international forum is essential.

The Geopolitics of SIDS

In the context of this conference, it is important to highlight the vulnerability of SIDS from a geopolitical and strategic perspective. Islands especially SIDS have a long track record of being used for their strategic and geopolitical values by the big powers. The three regions namely the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean have witnessed and are continuing to witness the militarisation and strategic use of certain SIDS against the rights of the population of these SIDS. The current situation of the Chagossian people (the inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago) in the Indian Ocean illustrates quite well the situation. The Chagossian people were expelled from the Chagos Archipelago as from 1965 and were dumped in Mauritius and in the Seychelles in order to make room for the military base of Diego Garcia. Up to now, the Chagossians have been refused the right to return to the other Islands of the archipelago in spite of the fact that the US or the British do not occupy them for military purposes. It is to be noted that Mauritius has been very vocal in claiming its sovereignty on the archipelago since the 1970s on the basis of the violation of United Nations resolutions and Human Rights. Up to now, the British Government's response has been guided by the initial agreement prior to the independence of Mauritius that the archipelago will be reverted back to Mauritius when they will no longer be used by Britain for military purposes. In the same vein, dispute between Mauritius and France on Tromelin Islands and between Comoros and France on Mayotte are issues of concern and must be settled as soon as possible in line with UN resolutions

We call on this conference to support the Mauritius claim on Chagos Archipelago and Tromelin Islands and to put the issue of the strategic use of SIDS for military and strategic purposes on the political agenda of the Barbados +10.

Resilience

It should become a priority for SIDS to explore the dynamics complex of adaptive and alternative systems in order to discover the foundations for sustainability. Resilience is the opposite side of the same coin, as vulnerability. Resilience should be addressed from the point of view of economic, social, cultural and environmental. There is a strong need to initiate research and document on the resilience strategy and policies of SIDS in order to draw lessons from practical experience both in terms of policy and at the level of implementations on the ground.

2.5 Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation to day is very often taken for granted and people in general feel that it is a natural and automatic process. On the contrary, political commitment and a proper understanding of its nature are prerequisites in promoting meaningful regional cooperation at all levels including the civil society. In this context, not very much has been achieved at regional level in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. Implementation has been done piece meal in spite of the existence of an inter-governmental body like the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC). Limited resources, competing programmes, weaknesses in co-financing from donors, the difficulty and complexity of elaborating regional programmes and projects and the sensitive issue of national sovereignty are some of the challenges that the IOC has been facing. The IOC is being challenged in the current review of the Barbados Programme of Action of having the vision of emerging as a key regional institution not only in the Indian Ocean but also in the AIMS region. This will demand among other things for the IOC to reposition itself within the new programme of action that will come out of the Mauritius Meeting and also the support of the international community to put additional resources at the disposal of regional institutions like the IOC. Without additional resources, the implementation of any programme of action will be reduced to a minimal at regional level.

3.0 New Issues

3.1 Biodiversity

'Small Islands developing states are renowned for the rich diversity of their marine and terrestrial ecosystems, endemism being a prominent characteristic of small Islands.

Although endemism and rare life forms are of great interest to scientists and are often the focus of conservation programmes and/or 'biodiversity prospecting' in the hunt for 'new' genes, the cultural importance of 'biodiversity' is an equally important issue often neglected or ignored. It is now accepted that biological resources not only provide water,

food, medicine and employment, but are important for the cultural traditions and lifestyles of Islands peoples. The natural resources base is recognized as the most valuable asset for SIDS and is of utmost importance for the stability of local communities.

Research in the Pacific Islands has shown, for example, that where Pacific trees serve at least 12 ecological functions, they have over 70 cultural and traditional uses and provide between 10 to as high as 75% of the real income and production of Pacific peoples. To replace these products with imported substitutes would either be impossible or too expensive. To eliminate these trees would constitute a major ecological, cultural and economic disaster, which would seriously undermine self-reliance and sustainability in the Pacific Islands.

In a similar context, research has also shown that the native biodiversity of Rodrigues is not only very important at international level in terms of endemism, but is the very life support for the local community, very large segments of population relying on it for their livelihood (basketry and handicraft), medicinal uses and employment. The endangered Rodrigues fruit bat has also been becoming a tourism asset as something interesting and unique to see, particularly as they fly from their roosting spots to the feeding areas in the early evening.

However, the biodiversity of small Islands is amongst the most threatened in the world. Habitat degradation with the resultant loss of species, destruction of coral reefs and depletion of marine resources, pollution, introduction of invasive alien species, and the impact of tourism are some of the serious threats. The majority of small Islands share a common syndrome where remaining habitat areas are small in size, severely degraded and fragmented.

3.2 Security and Terrorism

Since September 11, 2001, the issue of security is high on the agenda of governments and the SIDS are not exempted from these constraints. SIDS as well as other UN members are bound by international obligations under the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 to address these security concerns. However, the latter should not challenge the national sovereignty of the SIDS and jeopardize their political and economic independence and should not lead to violation of Human Rights. In this context, the nation building process of SIDS should not be hindered and any internal interference in the affairs of SIDS of the region is unacceptable. In this context political stability is a prerequisite for the sustainable development of SIDS. The Indian Ocean civil society process is very much supportive of the reconciliation that is underway in the Comoros and called on the political leaders of the Comoros to ensure that the basic values of comorian society is maintained and the civil society in the archipelago can continue to play its role in the sustainable development process.

3.3 Human Rights

Human rights issues are part and parcel of sustainable development and the situation varies from one SIDS to another. In certain SIDS, the struggles for political rights remain to be won and every thing should be done to create an enabling environment for the people to exert their political rights. As a next step, economic, social and cultural rights have to be secured in order to ensure sustainable development and to guaranty the full participation of the people in these development processes. Governments of SIDS should take the commitment to ensure the respect of these rights and translate them into national legislations and norms. With this perspective in mind, it would be important for civil society to shift from a need-based approach to a right-based approach. This paradigm shift requires capacity building of the civil society organisations in order to take up these challenges

3.5 Enabling Environment

An appropriate legal framework and a clear policy for civil society organisations are key elements of an enabling environment in the SIDS of the region. Civil society organisations in the Indian Ocean region take the commitment to engage with government and the private sector in shouldering their responsibility as a partner in the implementation of the Mauritius Programme of Action. In this perspective, civil society processes should not be confined to NGOs only. The major groups like trade union and community-based organisations should develop new form of partnership within civil society in order to advance their concerns and issues. Consequently, the major groups should prepared themselves to be actively involved in the implementation process after the Mauritius meeting and to develop its capacity to submit shadow reports on SIDS issues whenever necessary.

4.0 The Way Forward

The civil society process will continue at both national and regional levels in order to come with a very comprehensive position paper that can be discussed in the side event that is being planned by CEDREFI prior to the Mauritius Meeting. In the mean time, the stakeholders of the current process will continue with their consultation and contribute in improving the current document that can be used for dialogue with governments of the Indian Ocean region and the AIMS, with the IOC and in the preparatory meetings such as the Bahamas meeting and the CSD meeting in New York in April 2004.

III.POLITICAL DECLARATION OF THE AIMS CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE BARBADOS + 10 IN THE CONTEXT OF CSD 12, 14-16 April, 2004, New York

We the participants and representatives of our respective organisations/institutions are fully aware of the importance of the review of the Barbados Programme of Action through the International Meeting to be held in Mauritius in August 2004. Since early October 2003, the civil society of the AIMS region has been actively involved in a national and regional dialogue process in order to prepare itself for the Civil Society Forum and the International Meeting in Mauritius. This declaration is a reflection of our common stand.

Recognising

- Small Island Developing States are extremely vulnerable from various points of view and need a long-term and sustainable development plan that will take into consideration the guidelines and implementation strategy that will come out of the International Meeting.
- Scarcity and unequal access to essential natural resources pose a serious threat to sustainable activities aiming at food security and endangers the livelihood of vulnerable groups such as small planters, farmers, producers, the fisher community, women and the related informal sector.
- Globalisation is a permissive and ongoing threat to sustainable development in key sectors such as sugar, vanilla, and textile, fishing industry such as tuna, perfumes and essential oil such as Ylang Ylang.
- The process of globalisation is currently challenging the livelihood of people such as agricultural workers, artisans, the fisher community, textile workers and small and medium producers. The most vulnerable groups in the face of the negative consequences of globalisation need alternative policies in order to ensure a sustainable livelihood.

Acknowledging

- Sustainable development, within the AIMS region, has to be rooted in certain fundamental values such as civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, environmental protection, participation of civil society in decision making process, transparency and democratic governance, solidarity, equity, cultural and linguistic diversity and universal access to information and knowledge.
- Sustainable development in the context of SIDS needs to be coordinated and monitored at national, regional and international level by Government, civil society working in conjunction
- There is a great need in the region to promote and practice dialogue and ensuing action between Government, civil society and the private sector.

- There is a strong need for the respect of cultural and linguistic diversity of SIDS

Key Observations: an overview

- In spite of progress at national level for ensuring a certain degree of sustainable development through the development of a legal and institutional framework, much remains to be done in terms of policy implementation and participation of civil society stakeholders. In this context, financial assistance from international donors have been decreasing while the commitments of national governments have been on the increase since 1994 under new international agreements on the ozone layer, biodiversity, Millennium Development goals, etc. However, the governments of the AIMS region have had major difficulties in mainstreaming these and other sustainable development commitments in their respective country. If we want effective adoption and implementation of sustainable development programmes for SIDS, the Governments of the AIMS region have to revisit their strategies in a manner that would promote a genuine multi-stakeholders approach. Consequently, an enabling environment in terms of legal framework and policy dialogue mechanism for the participation of civil society stakeholders and major groups have to be implemented soon after the International Meeting.
- The issue of vulnerability should not be confined to a strategy of ensuring market access. All sectors of society must be able to benefit from any economic progress and any modernisation of society. The issue of resilience should be understood in the context of conservation and wise use of natural resources and the development of relevant economic frameworks and programmes that can ensure the livelihood of all peoples of the region particularly the disadvantaged groups and the unemployed. New economic and social reintegration programmes have to be promoted through the creation of an enabling environment and the setting up of mechanisms such as national solidarity funds. The whole philosophy should be based on the concept of the empowerment and autonomy of the people as opposed to the dependency approach.
- There is a lack of political commitment to resist certain types of development projects that promise large benefits but actually violate environmental standards and basic values of sustainable development. The Government of the countries of the region have a leading role to play in sustainable development. The economic and social history of the respective countries have shown that without good governance and political leadership, it would have been impossible to realise the progress that have been achieved in the region. In this context, SIDS that had difficulty in having good governance has been lagging behind. The situation in the Comoros is a case in point. Other examples can also be found outside the AIMS region.
- In many of our countries, we are reaping the effects of new and old poverty and the lack of resources to address HIV/AIDS, narco-trafficking, youth alienation,

food insecurity, lack of adequate water supply and sanitation and increase of communicable diseases, just to mention a few of our critical problems.

- Some SIDS are those countries most vulnerable to climate change and sea level rise. The Maldives, as a SIDS without much industrialisation, and which contributes to less than 0.001% of global emission of CHG's, is particularly at risk, but others such as Seychelles could also lose most of their territory and infrastructure if the current scenarios are correct. There is a strong need to develop international solidarity in order to assist Maldives and other SIDS to adapt themselves to the current situation. The climate change impact on Maldives reinforces the necessity for countries like the US and Russia to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.
- We especially want to note the militarization of the Indian Ocean and the strategic use of SIDS in the AIMS region. The Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia must be re-united to the Mauritian territory. In this context the militarization of the region constitutes a serious threat to sustainable development.

We pledge

- To continue and consolidate the regional review process until the international meeting and to finalise a common political declaration, a strategy document and a plan of action for implementation after the International Meeting.
- To strongly support the suggestion that the Indian Ocean commission become the official regional monitoring mechanism for the AIMS region. However, such a mechanism must make provision for the active participation of civil society, in decision making, implementation and monitoring.
- To work with governments, partners and donors to set up a regional funding mechanism to enable the implementation of regional projects and programme in the context of the International Meeting guidelines and outcomes. Civil society should play a central role in the planning and implementation to do with this mechanism.
- To look into the accessibility and affordability to internet connectivity and the use of IT, new generation mobile phones and other similar means in the context of the implementation strategy. The UNESCO commitment to the popularisation of the use of internet for sustainable development must be adopted by the SIDS of the AIMS region. For example, community multi-media centres should be developed as a means of promoting local empowerment in SIDS of the region. The private sector should be mobilised to work in partnership to facilitate this and the necessary incentives provided by governments.
- Finally, we strongly believe that we should forge more solidarity within the AIMS SIDS around various issues of concern to SIDS of the region. In this context, a strong political commitment from the governments of the region is a necessity.

IV. DECLARATION OF THE MAURITIUS CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM, JANUARY 10, 2005, MAURITIUS

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.

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.

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.

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 Islands 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 Islands 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.

ANNEX III

CONCEPT PAPER OF MAJOR GROUPS' PLATFORM, MAURITIUS

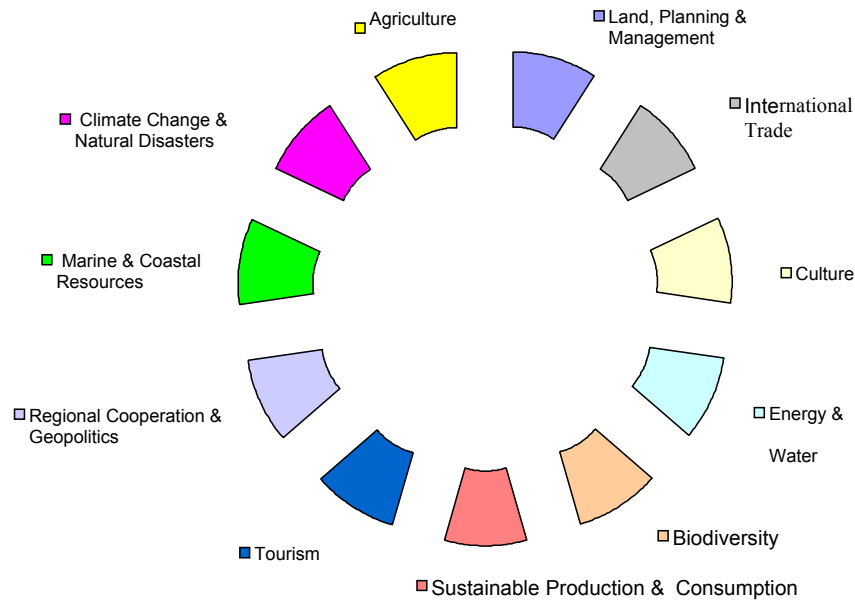
THE CIVIL SOCIETY SIDS PLATFORM

BACKGROUND

The initial idea of setting up a civil society platform originates from the awareness of the CEDREFI members of the need to have serious reflections of issues of national and regional interest. In fact, very few reflections are done within the Mauritian society and especially among civil society stakeholders. While undertaking the study on the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement, the necessity to have a permanent mechanism for discussion and exchange of ideas on issues of trade and development was obvious. This necessity was also reinforced in the context of the preparatory process leading to the review of the Programme of Action on Sustainable development for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The engagement in the implementation process requires a new generation of projects across the globe based on political dialogue and advocacy. As CEDREFI is used to invite on an ad hoc basis its partners in workshops and conferences, it was felt that we should investigate the opportunity to develop a mechanism which would help us to sustain our partnership philosophy with a selective number of serious partners and promote a new form of cooperation within the Republic of Mauritius around a set of issues within the sustainable development domain and regional cooperation processes in which Mauritius is engaged. This led to the commitment of CEDREFI to start such a process of dialogue with the collaboration of the donor community. The initial idea was presented to the CEDREFI partners during a series of consultation with the major groups in Mauritius and with its partners in the Indian Ocean Islands. A consensus emerged around the need for such a forum and to have a long-term perspective and to promote a new form of partnership and dialogue.

The Concept

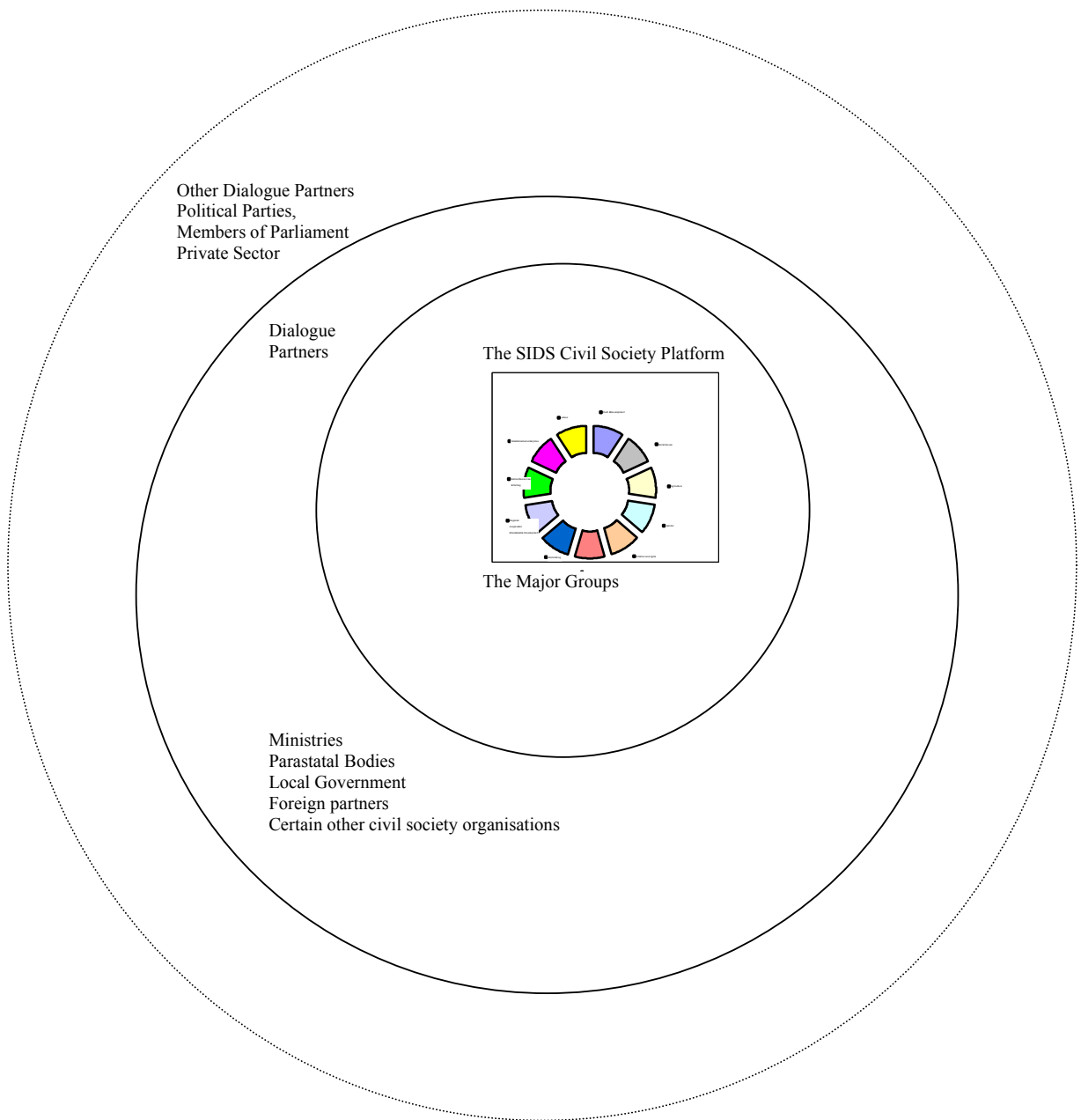
The Platform has the ambition of bringing together the major groups engaged around issues of sustainable development of SIDS as embodied in the Mauritius Strategy to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action as decided at Barbados in 1994. The major groups must specialise themselves in specific chapters of the Mauritius Strategy and the concept of major group is based on the UN concept with the difference that the private sector is not integrated in the platform. This because the private sector is a separate group in its own right. But this does not preclude the platform to engage in dialogue with the private sector. Consequently, the major group include NGOs, CBOs, trade union, organisation working with the artisan fishermen community,, small planters movement, human rights group, researchers and women's group. Each major group will become a reference organisation for the sector on the platform. This will require commitment and expertise in order to response to the various challenges during the operationalisation of the platform. Individual resource person will also be integrated in the platform in order to fill any knowledge or sector gaps on the platform. The graphics below provide an indication on the structure of the Platform.



The list of issues is not exhaustive and other issues, which are part of the Mauritius Strategy, will be gradually integrated as the activities of the platform are developed. Other potential issues are:

- Waste Management
- Science and Technology
- Sustainable Capacity Development & Education for Sustainable Development
- Health
- Knowledge management and information for decision-making
- Transport & Communication

It is important to note that certain issues are cross-cutting and consequently a cross-sectoral approach will be used.



The Objectives

- To create a space for political dialogue among civil society organisations on issues of relevance to sustainable development including trade issues and the Cotonou Agreement.

- To develop as far as possible common position on key issues of national, regional and international interest
- To put at the disposal of stakeholders of the Platform the experience and expertise available within the reference organisations of the Platform participants.
- To put at the disposal of the civil society at large information and knowledge on issues of concern to the Platform
- To act as a think tank for civil society partners in Mauritius
- To develop an advocacy strategy in order to enable stakeholders to engage with government, the private sector, regional bodies and international organisations on priority issues of the Platform.

The Criteria

- The person invited in the forum is based on his/her individual experience and expertise. As a representative of his organisation on the Platform, he/she must master the issues that his/her organisation considers as priority issues. Expertise in a sector is not necessarily based on academic qualifications but on the capacity to make critical analysis of issues and policies.
- An active involvement in a serious organisation is a necessity.
- Adherence to the Platform is not automatic and is subject to negotiation with the Platform Secretariat in consultation with its partners on the Platform.
- The stakeholders should see the Platform as a priority and is consequently prepared to participate actively in the work of the Platform on SIDS issues. This would imply contributing on a regular basis in the debate of the Platform and preparing papers as the need arises on issues of interest to their sector.
- Stakeholders of the Platform who belong to other networks or civil society bodies should avoid promoting competing activities on similar issues or act as a free rider.
- Individuals on the basis of their experience and expertise may be invited to become active participants of the Platform.
- People involve in party politics will not be allowed as a stakeholder within the Forum.

The Dialogue Partners Concept

This concept will enable a certain number of organisations and institutions to be invited on an ad hoc basis to attend certain specific sessions on the basis of their interest. This concept will also allow certain NGOs and trade unions that do not see this process as a priority or do not have the required resource person to be active on the Platform to be invited to dialogue with the stakeholders of the Platform.

On a regular basis the Platform can decide to have an open discussion with the dialogue partners and it can also be an opportunity to extend the debate to a larger group.

Implementation Strategy

The Platform will operate on a trial run of two years and CEDREFI will ensure the coordination and provide the administrative back up during that period.

The Platform will meet every three months in a one-day workshop to address issues of concern to the Platform.

In between the Platform meetings, caucus group on each issue of the Mauritius Strategy, as agreed by the Platform, will be set up under the responsibility of a lead partner of the Platform in that specific sector.

Stakeholders should take the commitment to share with their respective organisation/network or constituencies the knowledge and information generated by the Platform or initiate actions around these issues. The Platform will not engage itself in activities that fall under the responsibility of the stakeholders or put itself in a situation of competition with them. Naturally relevant acknowledgement should be made to the Platform.

An annual session will be held to review the work of the Platform and produce an annual report that can be made public. Documents and other form of publications can be released by the Platform.

ANNEX IV

CONCEPT PAPER ON SUSTAINABLE ISLAND LIVING

AIMS CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM CEDREFI, Republic of Mauritius

From Sustainable Island Living to Sustainable Development: Time for Action

Background

Following the International Meeting on the review of the Programme of Action Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in January 2005 and its principal outcome which is encapsulated in the document entitled the *'Mauritius Strategy'*, a series of initiatives have been taken at various levels to implement the strategy and enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action for SIDS. Civil Society from the three major regions made a commitment, at the Civil Society Forum held in Mauritius prior to the International Meeting, to continue to play an active role in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy through the development of their own strategies, plans of action, programmes, and the consolidation of their existing coordination mechanism. Indeed the Mauritius Strategy underscores the need for action at the regional level and the active participation of civil society. It is from this perspective that civil society from the AIMS region is proposing a regional strategy to fulfil its role as a key stakeholder in the process.

Sustainable Island Living Concept

Sustainable development is a difficult concept for many people to understand and capture. Various terms have been used in the developmental literature and sustainable development has become a rather popular cliché. However, there has been limited progress on the ground. In the context of the current commitment for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, it is proposed to borrow the concept of 'Sustainable Island Living' from UNESCO (in the context of the work of Small Islands Voice) and 'Nature Seychelles' (Seychelles civil society focal point for SIDS). Sustainable Island living personalizes a process that enables everybody to enjoy a decent living and a good quality of life in terms of satisfying their needs (economic, social, ecological and cultural) and creates an enabling environment for the future generation to fulfil its aspirations. In so doing, sustainable Island living addresses the control and distribution of resources and the decentralisation of decision-making. Furthermore, it is based on core values such as a culture of partnership based on shared vision, good governance, autonomy of the community, and participatory approaches. The intention is to build a solid foundation on core issues and challenges. A thorough analysis of stakeholders' socio-cultural context, existing vulnerabilities and potential for resilience is an essential step in the process which ideally leads to an appropriate forum for multi-stakeholders dialogue and decision-making. In spite of the heterogeneity and diversity of the AIMS region¹ in terms of

¹ The complexity is reflected in the fact that the region is made up of five? Islands sub-regions namely the African SIDS of the South West Indian Ocean (Mauritius, Comoros and Seychelles) and Atlantic sub-

different geopolitical affiliations, history and culture, as SIDS they share common problems and issues as emphasised in the Programme of Action for SIDS and the Mauritius Strategy.

Multi-Stakeholder Approach

The multi-stakeholder approach is based on the experiences derived and lessons learned from the civil society regional preparatory process prior to the Mauritius International Meeting. One of the major achievements in the regional process has been the building of bridges between major groups of the region² and creating an enabling environment for them to move the preparatory process forward. On the basis of these experiences, the AIMS region is structuring itself through the setting up of an integrated cross-sectoral platform. This will allow for a regional monitoring and dialogue mechanism for civil society in the context of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. In each of the SIDS in the region, a focal point will be set up to coordinate the national and regional processes. Currently, national focal points already exist in Maldives, Comoros, Seychelles and Mauritius. Others will be established as the regional platform is operationalised.

This platform has the advantage of putting each partner on an equal footing and it also creates conditions for the development of a cross-sectoral approach for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Provision is also made for the institutionalisation of a division of labour among the national focal points such that each will be responsible for a certain number of specific chapters of the Mauritius Strategy. This approach will strengthen a sense of common ownership for the implementation process and ensure the collective engagement of regional civil society partners.

Way Forward

The way forward should contribute to changing the mindset of policy makers and the citizens through regional actions and projects to promote sustainable Island living. These projects should be rooted in the realities of the communities and avoid 'one size fits all' approaches. Consequently, the development of regional activities will be based on the principle of subsidiary and variable geometry and will aim at the mobilisation of existing regional expertise. When needed, expertise from other SIDS regions will be utilised.

The priorities for civil society are the following: (i) Organisation of a foundation workshop for the launching of the platform and setting up of regional coordination (ii) Development of a regional database on the SIDS stakeholders and available expertise (iii) Popularisation of the Mauritius Strategy through a multimedia toolkit (iv) Development of training programmes (v) Creation of a regional civil society event based on the

region (Cape Verde, Sao Tomé & Principe, Guinea-Bissau), the Mediterranean (Malta and Cyprus), South China Sea (Singapore) and Bahrain from the Persian Gulf.

² The UN concept of major groups has been adapted to the reality of the region and comprises trade unions, fishermen community, small farmers, women groups, youth, NGOs and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) etc.

outcome of regional research and actions on sustainable Island living. The proposed implementation strategy, combined with policy analysis and problem-solving actions, should consolidate and strengthen sustainable Island living.