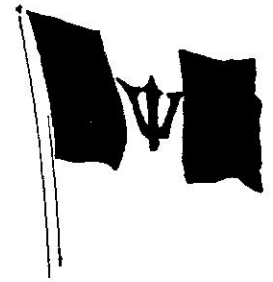




*Permanent Mission  
of Barbados to  
the United Nations*



**STATEMENT BY**

**SENATOR THE HON. MAXINE MCCLEAN  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE  
BARBADOS**

**AT THE**

**GLOBAL LAUNCH**

**OF THE**

**INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES 2014**

**ON**

**24 FEBRUARY 2014**

**United Nations Headquarters  
New York**

*please check against delivery*

**Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon**  
**President of the General Assembly, Ambassador John Ashe**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Heads of Delegations**  
**Government Officials**  
**Representatives of the Private Sector**  
**Representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is indeed a distinct pleasure and honour for the Government of Barbados to be invited to participate in this the official launch of the International Year of Small Island Developing States. As I undertake this most important task on the behalf of the Government and people of Barbados; for Caribbean SIDS and the entire SIDS Community, I do so with mixed emotions.

Today we reflect on a journey which began at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and was consolidated in Barbados in 1994. First we must ask, are we satisfied with the progress made in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island States (the BPOA)? Have we done enough at the national level in our respective countries? Similarly, have we done enough at the regional and international levels, to implement this BPOA blueprint and its complementary initiative the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the BPOA?

Secondly, as we prepare for the convening of the Third International Meeting on SIDS and the opportunities this presents, we ask: have we demonstrated the efforts required in all spheres to identify the opportunities that moment provides? Have we taken the necessary actions to put in place the mechanisms and programmes required to yield tangible benefits to the peoples of SIDS?

Taken together, these questions are a major cause for serious concern on the one hand, and signal the recognition of many opportunities to be seized on the other.

My perspective that we need to be concerned is echoed in the following words of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in an address to SIDS leaders on September 25, 2013:

“We need to bring more attention to the problems that Small Island Developing States face. “Many of your countries are isolated. Your markets are too small to realize economies of scale. All small island developing states are

exposed to high risks from environmental threats, especially climate change... We need to bring more attention to the problems that Small Island Developing States face." This very important reminder provides the backdrop for the International Year of SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Barbados believes that the designation of 2014 as the International Year of SIDS is cause for a global reflection and celebration. Together, SIDS and the rest of international community can showcase their achievements and resilience in overcoming the unique development challenges they continue to face.

I reflect first on the recent SIDS Interregional Preparatory Meeting where AOSIS members expressed the hope that the International Year be used as an opportunity. We see this as a year to raise awareness and galvanise action on behalf of an agenda that fulfils our development aspirations and unleashes the potential of the population of small island developing states, especially the youth and leaders of tomorrow.

The role of the youth in the development of SIDS cannot be overstated. We must ensure their involvement not only in the activities surrounding the International Year of SIDS, but also in envisioning and *actualising* the "SIDS We Want" for years to come.

Mr. Chairman,

In this global celebration, we would like to see a **well coordinated and structured approach by the United Nations system to the promotion of and participation in activities of the International Year of SIDS**. Such a structured approach should include the visible participation of all of the agencies and programmes of the UN system. Barbados is of the view that the United Nations Development Group, present in all three SIDS regions, is well placed to play a proactive role in supporting the operationalisation of this suggested approach. Much can be achieved should there be such collaboration between the UN and the governments of SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite our size, SIDS have been blessed with a number of internationally recognized personalities in a number of areas including sports, music, literature, entertainment and science. We must engage these celebrities in helping us to deliver key messages to our global audience. In this regard Mr. Secretary-General, we call on the UN system to scale-up its work with **SIDS in**

**providing a framework at the international level** within which these personalities can be invited to participate in a meaningful way in celebrating the International Year of SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

An examination of reviews of the implementation of the BPOA and the MSI/BPOA reveals a major gap. Noticeable is the absence of effective, inter- and intra-regional institutional mechanisms to support the successful implementation of these instruments to address the Sustainable Development of SIDS.

I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that together the International Year of SIDS and the Third International Conference of SIDS provide a vital opportunity to address the issue of institutional building. In 2013, this issue was highlighted in a statement made by Her Excellency, Ms. Marlene Moses, Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States at the Caribbean SIDS Regional meeting.

This perspective is also captured in the phrase coined by the Rt. Hon. Freundel Stuart, Prime Minister of Barbados, in his speech to the Inter-Regional meeting in which he called for **“SIDS Collectivity”** as an engine for more effective implementation of the BPOA and MSI/BPOA. This concept was also embraced in the call made in 2005 by His Excellency Mr. Paul Raymond Berenger, Prime Minister of Mauritius. He stressed the importance of SIDS speaking with one voice, to ensure that their concerns are taken on board in international fora.

Mr. Chairman, the message conveyed by my Prime Minister, in his statement at the international meeting, is that the twin activities of the International Year of SIDS and the Third International Conference must of necessity contribute to the building of institutional mechanisms within the SIDS regions that contribute to effective **inter- and intra-regional SIDS cooperation and collaboration**, a fundamental principle **underpinning** both the BPOA and the BPOA/MSI.

Mr. Chairman,

As we reflect throughout this International Year of SIDS, celebrating the resilience of “Island People”, we are reminded that there is much to be done. The year 2014 must be the beginning or continuation of an exchange and sharing of tried and tested home-grown policy and technological solutions designed specifically to address some of the challenges many still face even after 20 years. Unfortunately, such solutions go largely unnoticed. Barbados believes such successes have wide-spread application to many of the world’s

challenges. These provide a positive and timely narrative worthy of sharing with the global community. The UN System and the international media are well placed to collaborate with AOSIS Member States in this respect.

Mr. Chairman,

As we are aware, the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference commences later today and the Government of Barbados looks forward to fully engaging in the process. We will be ambitious in our expectations for the outcome of the Conference. Our very survival and viability as SIDS depend on it.

The Conference also takes place at a pivotal moment in the history of the United Nations, as we consider the design of the Post-2015 Development agenda. We are expecting the crafting of a new, fully integrated global agenda, that directly addresses the strategic priorities of SIDS, and incorporates a concrete programme to implement the outcome we expect to be articulated in Samoa.

I also use this occasion to recognise the Champions of the International Year of SIDS- of which the distinguished Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations is one. The Member States of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) endorsed the Ambassador, along with Permanent Representative of Micronesia and the Ambassador for Climate Change and SIDS issues of the Permanent Mission of Seychelles to the United Nation. These three Representatives, drawn from the three regions of SIDS, are symbolic of the unity among the Group. I am sure that, throughout the year, they will provide the leadership, guidance and dedicated attention to the strategy of the SIDS International year and its related activities in collaboration with SIDS delegations, Member States, the UN System, regional organisations and relevant stakeholders.

In closing, as we embark upon this International Year of Small Island Developing States, let me acknowledge all persons participating in this launch. To everyone gathered here today and those watching from various locations across the globe - in your offices, homes, schools - I say welcome. To SIDS and non-SIDS alike, in the spirit of genuine and durable partnership, let us truly seize this moment to renew our commitment to celebrate and affirm the global agenda for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing states and their people.

I thank you.