

SIDS AND ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to thank all panelists for their presentation and their vision on this subject.

Coming from a Small Island Developing State, my delegation would like to point out some important aspects related to the question of energy for sustainable development, which are of common concern to all SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

As our countries develop, our reliance on fossil fuels also has increased, in particular for producing electricity. Also, given our geographical settings, transportation is proving to be one of the fastest consumers of petroleum.

The almost total dependence of SIDS on imported petroleum for commercial energy causes a severe imbalance in our trade with other countries. Similarly, the rising cost of fuel imports have put a serious drain on the limited national financial resources and this, for instance, became even worse in the context of the recent hurricanes in the Carribean and tsunamis and typhoons in the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.

That's why Small Island Developing States are trying and want different approaches to be taken in addressing matters pertaining energy.

Mr. Chairman,

Although renewable energy sources such solar, biomass and wind have been utilized in several of our countries in several SIDS and in a number of sectors, there remain significant opportunities and potentials to further develop these and other renewable energy resources and for improving energy efficiency in small island developing states.

Most SIDS have significant renewable energy resources but these resources vary greatly within and among countries. One thing is clear: we have an abundance of solar energy and in a large number of SIDS, particularly in rural and remote areas, biomass is the main source of energy for cooking.

Mr. Chairman,

There is a lot of potential for changing the paradigm of energy and sustainable development in SIDS.

We have to ask ourselves, then, why renewable energy has not made greater inroads in our energy balance?

One of the major reasons is the lack of technical and policy-related knowledge concerning renewable energy within SIDS. For instance, there are a lot of engineers and technicians in our countries who understand the diesel generators but not many who understand the workings of a solar panel. Similar constraint is found at the government level where there is a lack of information and skills to adequately prepare renewable energy policies. Another constraint to the promotion and use of renewable energy in SIDS is the fact that renewable energy development requires affordable credit financing and most SIDS do not have the necessary resources to afford the relatively high up-front costs of renewable energy projects.

Mr. Chairman,

It is crucial that SIDS/SIDS partnerships be supported by an effective cooperation with development partners and the Mauritius Strategy offers an important framework for that. That's why we would like to appeal to the international community to support the effective implementation of that strategy, in line with the commitments that were made during the Mauritius International Meeting, as a means to help them reduce poverty as well as achieving other Millennium Development Goals.

I Thank you.