

UNDESA Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies
(4 maggio 2006)

Statement by H.E. Mr. Aldo Mantovani, Ambassador, Deputy
Permanent Representative of Italy

- At the outset, I would like to thank the DESA Sustainable Development Office, and Mrs. Di Sano in particular, for organizing this event and giving me the opportunity to address the opening session. While these weeks are exceptionally busy for all the member of the sustainable development community, I still thought that it was important to witness, through my attendance, the special importance that Italy attaches to this workshop. As you know, this is the “kick-off event” for our ambitious programme, designed and implemented by DESA, for the support to the formulation of sustainable development strategies in the South Pacific, with particular attention to the regional and sub-regional dimension.
- I am convinced that this event assumes an even more meaningful value as it takes place during the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, on the eve of its “SIDS-Day”. We fully recognize that this session of the CSD is of great importance to the Small Islands Developing States, given their vulnerability to climate change and the close linkages between energy and their sustainable development. We look forward to the outcomes of CSD 14 and 15 as a potential, further boost to the development of programmes and initiatives to meet your legitimate expectations. We agree with your assessment that the sense of urgency, in this regard, should be increased.
- Our leaders have affirmed on several occasions that the adoption of national sustainable development strategies is an essential driver to ensure coherence, consistency and predictability of the assistance to be provided by the international community. All our guiding documents, from the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to the World Summit Outcome, from the Barbados Programme of Action to the Mauritius Strategy, stress the need to support developing countries, with the Small Islands Developing States at the forefront, in the formulation and implementation of such strategies. I don't need to stress here once again that national development strategies must be truly owned and driven by local governments, and that their importance is particularly pivotal in the specific context of the South Pacific States. The special needs and challenges of your countries, including adaptation to climate change, must be properly reflected in their development plans, so that development projects can be tailored on their specific circumstances. As national focal points for the

formulation of the said strategies, I believe that the responsibility lying on you is of considerable magnitude.

- In connection with my reference to the required suitability of development projects to the specific circumstances of SIDS, let me mention an idea that the Italian Government is developing in collaboration with UNIDO, namely the exploitation of tidal and marine current resources for energy generation, through the installation of specific turbines. Prototypes of such turbines are already in place in Italy, and plans for their production in other coastal countries are in an advanced stage. We recognize that the high costs for the provision of grid connection for remote islands or coastal zones requires the urgent application of renewable energy technologies adapted to the special conditions of SIDS: we therefore strongly believe that it is worth considering the extension of this project to some of the SIDS. For this reason I would be glad if your countries and organizations could join me at a special lunch event that will be organized by UNIDO, Italy and Indonesia on the 8th of May for the launch of the project, in the presence of its initiators. All your Missions and offices in New York have already received an invitation for this event.
- All these initiatives prove the determination of Italy to play a proactive role in international processes to support the sustainable development of SIDS, and in particular of the South Pacific countries. Let me remind on this occasion that Italy, as member of the group of the Friends of the Chair, has played a central role in the preparation of the Mauritius Conference, as well as in its follow-up: after having co-sponsored the GA resolution which endorsed the Conference outcomes, we had the pleasure to host in Rome the only inter-regional follow-up meeting held so far. Combined with other initiatives, including our funding to FAO for its programme on food security in the area, the said efforts underpin our sentiments of friendship towards your countries, that - I hope - will be reflected in an even closer partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum.