

**Intervention by Vijai Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Environment
and Forests, Government of India, on the occasion of SIDS Day/
Preparatory Meeting for the 5-year review of the Mauritius
Strategy of Implementation during CSD-18,
10 May 2010**

Mr. Chairman,

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77.

It is heartening that the CSD has established a practice of holding a SIDS Day during each review session. The fact that today's meeting will lay the groundwork for the September 2010 review of the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation makes our discussion even more relevant.

It is satisfying that our meeting has been preceded by a comprehensive preparatory process, including regional meetings in Vanuatu, Maldives and Grenada, as well as an inter-regional meeting. Full participation of SIDS in the review process is key to the event.

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary-General for the detailed reports on the subject, which provide updated information for a meaningful review of the progress made. We note that the SIDS have progressed well on MDGs related to socio-economic parameters including health. However, there is reason for concern as economic growth, which is vital for poverty eradication and for achieving MDGs on a sustained basis, has not kept up with the pace required. The debt situation of some SIDS has also deteriorated sharply.

The Secretary-General's reports have correctly highlighted the intrinsic vulnerabilities of SIDS and the income distribution inequalities, not captured in the statistics on per capita GDP and Human Development Indices. At the same time, it is apparent that the global financial crisis, the other external shocks and the adverse

impacts of climate change have had a significant adverse impact on the sustainable development efforts of SIDS.

We concur with the assessment in the Secretary-General's reports that the Economic Vulnerability Index of SIDS demonstrates that incomes do not automatically translate into greater coping ability. There is need for more objective criteria to evaluate vulnerability. We look forward to the results of the vulnerability-resilience methodology being developed by DESA.

The thematic issues of this CSD meet – transport, mining and sustainable consumption & production - are particularly relevant for the developmental effort of the SIDS given their narrow resource base and remoteness. The high cost of transport of goods to SIDS, for example, is clearly a result of small volumes and long distances.

Mr. Chairman,

India recognizes fully the special challenges faced by SIDS in the pursuit of sustainable development. We know the issues on account of the large number of small islands in India and low lying coastal areas. Also, because we have, in recent times, revisited our two-decade-old coastal management system in light of the challenges from climate change induced sea level rise and the growing pressures on both biodiversity and on the unique benefits that coastal ecosystems confer.

We in India have looked at new approaches to secure the livelihoods and habitats of the coastal people through space-technology aids, tighter standards of environmental protection, cumulative assessments at higher levels of sophistication and resolution, and the strengthening of our knowledge base on impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation.

As part of South-South cooperation, India has been privileged to share its development experience and technological resource with SIDS in the belief that human and institutional capacity-building is key to sustainable development. We have also assisted in implementing projects in the areas identified by SIDS. Our cooperation has been in diverse sectors, including adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change, information and communication, waste management, remote sensing, hydrographic survey, telemedicine, public transport,

education, irrigation systems, food and agriculture, and fisheries. Overall, India has committed project aid of US \$ 70 million to SIDS, in addition to US \$ 350 million in concessional loans and credit lines.

Such efforts by sister developing countries cannot substitute the commitments made by our developed country partners that remain unfulfilled for providing financial and technological resources, building capacities and providing market access. This should be remedied, and we hope that the meeting today will help provide the necessary momentum in this regard.

Let me say, as I conclude, that I have felt very privileged to speak at this important meeting.

Thank you.