



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

GENERAL DEBATE ON THE MAURITIUS STRATEGY -
STATEMENT BY
THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS MISSION
TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
DURING THE 16th MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT NEW YORK, 12 MAY 2008

check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

The Republic of the Marshall Islands aligns itself with the statements made today by Grenada on behalf of AOSIS, and by Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States.

Mr. Chairman,

As with all of our fellow SIDS, my delegation is deeply saddened regarding the present organization of this year's CSD. What appears, on its face, to be only an unfortunate scheduling conflict is, in reality, a burning symbol of the daily barriers which often prevent SIDS from taking a vocal role in global policy discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

Much can be done to improve the relevancy of the CSD for SIDS, as a means of follow-up to the Mauritius Strategy. We are proud that AOSIS member states will take a greater role in the planning of SIDS discussions during future CSD meetings.

My delegation asserts that, for many SIDS, the present structure of the CSD does not facilitate interactive discussion, nor does it result in a sober evaluation of progress towards development goals, as expressed in the Mauritius Strategy. Instead, the CSD has too often become a political "traffic jam," packed with rapidly-read, prepared statements, such as the one I am reading to you right now. We observe that member states often appear to be simply talking past each other, with little direct response to the valuable expertise of guest speakers. My delegation believes this format is particularly restrictive for SIDS, who have both the greatest need for progress on sustainable development goals, but the fewest individual resources by which to vocalize our complex issues in such a formal setting. In addition, the annual ritual of political muscling by powerful member state groups over the CSD Chair's outcome document again marginalizes SIDS voices, and further diminishes our participation on the very issues dearest to SIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

The CSD has the potential to be not only more relevant, but, indeed, transformative, regarding its viability as a mandated platform for SIDS to better discuss progress towards the Agenda 21 and Mauritius goals. Indeed, the margins of the CSD have often served as a valuable opportunity for SIDS in communicating across sectors, and in building new partnerships with action-oriented approaches to sustainable development goals. When SIDS delegations initiate conversations within informal and cooperative group settings, we move quickly towards both revealing the underlying complexity of thematic topics, as well as towards identifying specific, action-oriented strategies to overcome development obstacles.

We sincerely hope that our fellow AOSIS members will work with the cooperation of other member states in reforming the structure of future CSD SIDS activities, and in defining creative formats during the CSD which, even with our limited time, engage in a positive, meaningful and active dialogue which best utilizes our voices.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation – and others – have spoken for years about the barriers which we believe SIDS face regarding sustainable development goals within the Mauritius Strategy. These issues include:

- A challenge in translating regional or global goal-setting into specific implementing actions or results at the national level;
- The need to strengthen both regional coordination and national capacity to capture and manage implementation projects; and
- The lack of efficient access to funding mechanisms for sustainable development goals,.

Our delegation, and those of other SIDS, has spoken many times during previous CSD meetings, and in other forums, about both specific structural or managerial reforms needed to address the above-listed barriers, as well as the means of implementation and possibilities for donor support within the context of key thematic issues.

Thank you.