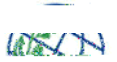




UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS



I. Introduction

1. As part of the process leading to the high-level five year review of the Mauritius

sustainable development principles into sectoral strategies or to reflect them in poverty reduction strategies. Inter-agency or cross-sectoral coordination remains a challenge in most countries of the region.

7. Countries felt the need for an intra-regional mechanism to support AIMS-SIDS in their national pursuit of sustainable development and to facilitate the development of regional programmes, initiatives and partnerships.

III. Assessments of Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in Addressing Vulnerability in the AIMS region

A. Progress Achieved

8. Notable advancements have been made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the region, which provided a good indication of progress made by the countries in implementing the MSI. In some cases, however, the inadequacy and unavailability of consistent and reliable data have hindered the accurate assessment of progress made in this regard.

9. The political commitment within each country as well as public awareness have been enhanced on the importance of sustainable development issues including climate change, education, health, water and sanitation, waste management, transport, energy, trade and disaster management.

10. Several countries have embarked on economic reforms to enhance their resilience to the impacts of globalisation (e.g. Mauritius, Seychelles). Measures have been taken to improve natural resources management, early warning systems, and to address land-based sources of marine pollution. On climate change, LDC AIMS SIDS have prepared National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), whilst non-LDC AIMS SIDS are planning adaptation measures and aiming to develop their long-term adaptation strategies – although their implementation and means of accessing the necessary financing remain as a challenge. These NAPAs focus on immediate and urgent adaptation needs. They also focus on development of critical infrastructures as part of the overall sustainable development of the concerned SIDS. Some countries have specifically focused their development pathways towards low-carbon development.

11. There have been some institutional and legal development and reforms in the region. For example, Guinea-Bissau has created the Secretary of State for Environment. In Seychelles : a Climate and Environment Services Division was created within the Department of Environment in order to oversee the implementation of the new Climate Change Strategy; the Sea Level Rise Foundation was established and aims at providing a mechanism for leveraging global attention on the impacts of sea level rise on SIDS; the recent establishment of a university. In Maldives, a Climate Change and Energy

guidelines for waste management for the hotel industries have been adopted (Maldives), and land use planning improved (Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles) to control the use of land for tourism development, construction and agriculture to ensure the conservation of natural resources. Comoros has set up the COSEP (Centre des operations de secours et de protection civile).

12. There are efforts to promote sustainable buildings and lifestyles through greening of the building codes, education for sustainable development, green procurement in the public sector, enhancing consumer awareness, all in relation to the concept of promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns. There is increased involvement of the private sector, NGOs and the population in decision-making and the implementation of sustainable development initiatives.

B. Challenges Encountered

13. Despite the multilaterally recognised economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS since the Barbados Programme of Action (1994), no SIDS dedicated and effective response measures, such as financing and technology transfer mechanisms, have been established by the international community. The inherent vulnerabilities and priority concerns of AIMS SIDS, such as

which they could convert to renewable energy sources (such as wind, solar, hydro, biomass, geothermal energy and ocean technology) have been seriously constrained by limited financial resources, commercial viability, the issue of intellectual property rights that hinders access to cleaner technology, and the need for security and reliability in energy supply. Faced with these challenges for promoting renewable energy, some governments have focused on demand side management, enhanced sustainable buildings using natural lighting and ventilation and are addressing building codes, but require assistance to support those initiatives.

18. Most counties do not have appropriate capacity and infrastructure to sustainably manage solid wastes including hazardous wastes. Water quality and availability constitute serious constraints in most SIDS of the region. Although some countries are attempting to implement measures like demand side management, waste water treatment, enhancing water efficiency and increasing public awareness, these efforts are however hampered by financial and capacity constraints. Coastal and marine resources management remain challenges, such as requiring logistics for resource monitoring, utilisation and development.

28. The other issues highlighted under this section are those identified as of particular importance to the AIMS region.

29. Access to development financing has been extremely challenging for SIDS of the region despite SIDS being recognized as a special group in the context of UNCED and other fora, but not in ECOSOC. Despite the international commitment made on Goal 8 Target 8c of the MDG1 in recognition of SIDS' specific development challenges, SIDS are still not treated as a special country group category and no special provision is made to enable them to access dedicated financing or to benefit from special concessionary conditions. There is a need for the special circumstances of the SIDS to be considered in

the aim to establish an inter-regional centre of excellence for climate change and development.

34. To address the need for intra-regional mechanisms to support AIMS-SIDS in their regional and national pursuit of sustainable development, it is important to build on existing mechanisms such as the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions which offer examples of appropriate regional frameworks and platforms.

35. Given the need for assessing progress in the implementation of the MSI in the region, the meeting welcomed the initiative of the Indian Ocean Commission and UN-DESA to work out a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. This mechanism will be extended to cover all SIDS.

36. The revitalization of the SIDSNet and the University Consortium of the Small Island States (the University of Mauritius is currently a member from the region and the University of Seychelles has expressed interest to join) being implemented by UNDESA are expected to help promote education for sustainable development and networking among SIDS.

37. The meeting concluded by making an appeal for the international community to fulfil its commitments under different international sustainable development instruments in the implementation of the MSI, especially focusing on the Monterrey Consensus, the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, as well as new, additional and predictable financing under the UNFCCC for climate change adaptation.

Participating countries

1. Comoros
2. Guinea Bissau
3. Maldives
4. Mauritius
5. Sao Tome and Principe
6. Seychelles
7. Singapore

Observers

1. Commonwealth Secretariat
2. United Nations Environment Programme
3. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (SIDS Unit)
4. United Nations Development Programme