



Delegation of the European Union



Permanent Mission of Spain

Statement on behalf of the European Union

By

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CSD18 - 18th session of the COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SIDS day – morning session on the review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy (Prep-Com for MIS+5)

United Nations

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I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

1. Please let me first thank the Secretary- General and the High representative for the LDC, LLDCs and SIDS for their contribution in organizing this Prep-Com meeting and for the initial global synthesis report that has been prepared to support us in our discussions regarding the first 5-years of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

We understand that prior discussions have taken place at the regional level on progress reached after the first 5 years of implementation and, more recently, at the inter-regional meeting held last Saturday in New York, on the SIDS views on their expectations from the Prep-Com and the High-Level Review. In this context, the European Union will listen very carefully to the Elements of position presented by the Small Island Developing States. Of course, as it is certainly the case for other delegations, we will need some more time to submit fully informed comments and we reserve the possibility of doing so in writing during the next few weeks. On the basis of the SIDS input, of today's debate and of those written contributions, we understand that the President of the General Assembly will be sufficiently informed to submit to Member States a draft Concise Political Declaration that will be subsequently negotiated.

2. The Mauritius Strategy provides a unique partnership and cooperation framework between the SIDS and the wider UN membership, aimed at addressing specifically and exclusively the problems of Islands States. The EU therefore enters into our debate today recognizing a clear sense of ownership from the SIDS on the process, but above all with a firm commitment to thoroughly promoting and implementing the priorities set forth in the Mauritius Strategy and fully convinced of the importance of Sustainable Development, poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs.

According to the report that the Secretary General has made available, SIDS have progressed in terms of the gender, health and certain education and environment goals but progress has been slower in terms of economic growth, poverty reduction and debt sustainability. However, adverse impacts from the global food, financial and fuel crises have clearly damaged progress and showed the high level of economic and social vulnerability of these countries. Their small size, remoteness, trade dependence (many of them food importers), narrow resource base, and high exposure to environmental degradation have worked against the achievement of sustained progress in these countries. We noted with interest the vulnerability analysis presented in the report of the Secretary General. We are also expecting the report that the Committee on Development Policy will forward to the ECOSOC in a few weeks.

3. Let me, in the meantime, express a few words on implementation, on the long standing cooperation and specific support measures that the EU has put in place to help SIDS in addressing their most vital challenges: adapting to climate change, increasing access to cleaner energy among the poor, promoting renewable energies, shifting to more sustainable agriculture, protecting fragile ecosystems, improving market access and overcoming isolation and vulnerabilities (such as expensive transport costs in the context of soaring oil prices). SIDS, indeed, receive a large part of EU development aid either through direct bilateral aid or through multilateral aid programmes, such as within the framework of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific nations (Cotonou Agreement).

Such cooperation has been increasing and is expected to continue in the context of the commitments entered by the EU under the Mauritius Strategy through technical and financial cooperation. Furthermore, the EU has already recognized the special vulnerabilities of SIDS, for example through initiatives such as the Global Climate Change Alliance, in which SIDS, together with Least Developed Countries, are identified as the priority group for cooperation on climate change or the Vulnerability- FLEX instrument- a series of measures taken by the EU to cushion the human impact of the economic crisis and to boost economic growth in developing countries (including , inter alia, honoring aid commitments and leveraging new resources, acting counter cyclically, improving aid effectiveness, sustaining economic activity and employment, revitalizing agriculture, investing in green growth, stimulating trade and private investment, supporting governance and stability and protecting the most vulnerable).

4. The EU is committed to being active in all developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries and to supporting their efforts towards the achievement of the MDGs. In this context, we will prioritise support for those countries lagging farthest behind, the LDCs and countries in situation of fragility, where poverty prospects are of particular concern.

The EU also has special and advanced relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries in the framework of the abovementioned Cotonou Agreement. In the 2005 revision of this Agreement, a specific reference to MDGs was included, and the provisions on Island States were reinforced, emphasizing their increased vulnerability brought

about by new economic, social and ecological challenges. The special situation of Island States will be further taken into consideration in the EU 2010 mid term review of ACP programming of aid.

Climate Change is undoubtedly one of the major challenges that SIDS face. Extreme weather conditions and rising sea levels threaten the very existence of some island and their livelihoods, posing additional development challenges and may have significant security implications for this group of countries. We are well aware of climate change challenge and its increasing impact and that there is a need to reach, in the upcoming negotiations, a comprehensive and global legally-binding agreement under the UNFCCC that builds on the Kyoto Protocol, incorporates all its essentials and includes all countries that are major emitters.

For the "fast start" funding, developed countries have committed themselves to providing resources approaching 30 billion USD in the period 2010-2012, with a balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation and with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable, such as the least developed countries, small islands States and Africa in accordance with the Copenhagen Accord, which provides the basis for significant short term and long term financing of climate action.

In line with the Accord, the European Council, in December 2009 and most recently in March 2010, recognised that immediate action on climate change requires scaled up financial support for adaptation, mitigation, forestry, technology development and transfer and capacity building for enhanced implementation of the Convention, with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable countries. It committed the EU and its Member States to contribute with fast-start funding of 2.4 billion euros annually over the period 2010-2012. In this respect the EU and its Member States are working collectively to provide by the next UNFCCC session in June a progress report on the implementation of their 2010 fast-start funding commitments, setting out their overall fast-start financing priorities including along geographic and thematic lines. The intent is to provide an overview of how much aggregate finance will flow from EU partners to key thematic areas and activities.

Part of the EU fast start will be devoted to initiatives aimed at enhancing the integration of climate change into development strategies and implementing concrete adaptation measures through initiatives such as the abovementioned EU Global Climate Change Alliance and other bilateral ones. We need to strengthen our efforts to promote action in the area of adaptation aimed at reducing vulnerability and building resilience in Small Island Developing States and in this respect the support to the Mauritius Strategy is crucial.

The EU has supported the process leading up to the adoption in June 2009 of the UNGA resolution A/RES/63/281 on Climate change and possible security implications, an initiative led by several SIDS, and will remain supportive of further initiatives aiming at increasing UN efforts in addressing this very crucial issue including by the Security Council.

Besides climate change programmes, the EU also plays a key role by providing financial and technical assistance for developing transport, telecommunications, energy and water infrastructures in developing countries, including SIDS.

However, the private sector also plays a decisive role in financing these infrastructures. In this respect, promoting public-private partnerships, specially, by creating an investment friendly environment is essential. Technical cooperation on the ground is also needed. The Small Island Developing States Information Network must play a crucial role in developing technical cooperation to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. This is the reason why EU countries have contributed to support during 2009 the revitalization of this Network.

Let me conclude, by reiterating once again, the fully engagement of the EU in the preparation of the High level review and by expressing our readiness to contribute to a fruitful outcome in September which helps SIDS to better adapt to climate change impacts and to put their population in the path of the achievement of the MDGs.