

Eleventh Meeting of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment 19 April 2005, United Nations, New York

SUMMARY RECORD

1. Commonwealth Ministers and Senior Officials met on 19 April 2005 as the eleventh session of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGE). The meeting was convened to coincide with the Thirteenth Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13) held at UN Headquarters in New York. It was chaired by the Hon Elizabeth Thompson-McDowald, M.P., the Barbados Minister of Housing, Lands and Environment (a list of participants is provided as Annex I).

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Opening Remarks

2. The meeting was opened by Dr Indrajit Coomaraswamy, Director, Economic Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, who introduced the Chair. The Chair welcomed Ministers and Senior Officials and spoke about the value of the diversity of the CCGE in its discussions.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the Agenda

3. The CCGE adopted the revised provisional agenda [document CCGE(05)2(Admin) of April 2005].

Agenda Item 3: Policy Coherence and Co-ordination for Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements

4. Before moving to the debate on policy coherence and co-ordination for water, sanitation and human settlements [document CCGE(05)2], the Chair invited Ambassador Ashe of **Antigua and Barbuda**, Chair of CSD-13, to address the CCGE on progress within the CSD. Ambassador Ashe spoke about the need for a concise outcome from the CSD with a concrete set of policy options on water, sanitation and human settlements.

5. The **Representative of Canada** congratulated the Commonwealth Secretariat on the publication of its Plain Language Guide to the WSSD, noting the importance of such materials in engaging stakeholders, including young people, in the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. On the theme of policy coherence and co-ordination, the representative noted that it was not always easy for a federal government to press ahead on environmental issues, but that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities had been particularly effective in promoting action on environmental concerns. She inquired whether others had similar organisations that worked with local authorities and other stakeholders.

6. The **Representative of Ghana** said that the Ministry for Environment and Science had a cross-cutting and co-ordinating role. However, a major concern was the lack of sectoral co-operation from other ministries and a lack of appreciation for environmental issues. The Ministry was fighting for environmental concerns to be addressed in all development plans. The Minister highlighted the case of a recent water crisis in her constituency: while some saw it as a spiritual issue and a matter for God, there were also good scientific reasons at the root

of the problem, including deforestation, which needed to be effectively addressed through co-ordinated and coherent policy approaches. The Minister spoke about the issue of equity and difficulties around cost recovery for water and sanitation services when poverty levels were high. She called for the establishment of a World Sanitation Day to focus attention on these issues, and spoke about the importance of local authorities in the provision of water and sanitation. The Minister expressed her concern that town and country planning departments did not have the capacity to co-ordinate all aspects of human settlements. She recognised the need to involve all interested parties, from the most local to the national level, because governments can do little without broad-based support. Finally, the Minister spoke about transboundary water resources in West Africa, which the region was trying to manage on an ecosystems basis.

7. The **Representative of Zambia** said his government was putting measures in place to attain the MDGs and supported international policy options on the MDGs. The Minister said that experts had stated that a number of countries would fail to implement the MDGs in time. There had been slow progress on international sustainable development plans, and a slow pace by the international community in meeting the MDGs. A number of priorities needed to be addressed: effective housing policies linked to water supply; reform of the water sector; water resources management underpinned by integrated water resource management approaches; and finding ways to serve the urban poor while leaving rural water management at local level. The government was developing a sanitation policy and had adopted a policy of upgrading human settlements linked with water supply, sanitation and education.

8. The **Representative of Canada** said there was no global treaty on water issues and that 24 agencies of the United Nations were working in this area. Canada sought to strengthen the inter-agency process within the UN on these issues and had put forward a non-paper to the CSD with this in mind. The Representative said it would be useful to examine the potential for creating a 'UN Water' and strengthening co-ordination between the 24 agencies, especially since CSD would not examine these issues again for another decade. The Representative also outlined Canada's four key strategies with respect to integrated water resources management, working: across areas of jurisdiction; applying the right mix of tools; using science to inform decision making; and having a strong information base.

9. The **Representative of Guyana** sought practical ways to support countries in their efforts to create integrated water resource management policy frameworks. He said that Guyana had first formed a National Sustainable Development Council, but there had been many policy conflicts and the Council had not really worked. Since then, Guyana has completed a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, co-ordinated by the Office of the President, dealing with social and economic aspects of sustainable development. Natural resources and environmental management issues were addressed by an advisory body, chaired by the Prime Minister and including the heads of forestry, mining and other bodies. The Representative called on the UN Commission on Sustainable Development to look at ways in which the MDGs were undermined by conditions established through multilateral funding agencies, especially with respect to costs recovery in the water sector.

10. The **Representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Ministry of Environment Food and Rural Affairs co-ordinated across a range of departments on both national and international issues. Recognising that water and sanitation sectors have strong economic and health implications, the Minister said that existing agencies must work more closely together. The UK was experiencing some problems in its water sector, including water shortages, and

these were addressed in the National Sustainable Development Strategy. The UK has tried to mainstream sustainable development across all departments and address some of the barriers to co-operation. It has also raised the profile of sustainable development across sectors and with the private sector. One recommendation missing from the background paper to this discussion was that of the engagement of people. The concept of sustainable development is not readily grasped and is not well understood – even practitioners see it as an extension of environmental issues. Internationally, water issues involve a large number of agencies. It is important to include science and agriculture concerns in the debate, and to begin a new relationship between water and agriculture at the national level. The UK would support the greater integration of all agencies in this area.

11. The **Representative of Kenya** said that Kenya's national strategies provided for the greater participation of people in planning: the role of government was to undertake strategic planning while allowing others to contribute. Kenya needed greater investment in infrastructure and the development of new water supplies. Its rapid urbanisation was leading to an increase in informal settlements. Kenya was collaborating with UN Habitat to develop a framework for upgrading water and sanitation services. Efforts were also needed to reduce poverty and upgrade informal settlements, including access to water and sanitation. Action on these concerns was being taken through a national housing policy and slum upgrading programme. Another concern for Kenya was the degradation of catchment areas, which needed to be rehabilitated. Debt swaps, relief and cancellation was needed to support Kenya's human settlements, water and sanitation programmes.

12. The **Representative of Tanzania** said that poverty was the main challenge facing the country. It needed to improve the delivery of water services and promote integrated water resources management. Least Developed Countries needed support from the international community, especially in the areas of capacity building and technical transfer.

13. The **Representative of Nigeria** supported the idea of a World Sanitation Day, and called for equal status to be given to water, sanitation and human settlement concerns. Nigeria sought a human settlements target in line with the existing water and sanitation targets. The Representative shared recent strategy and action plan developments, and appealed for debt relief, as well as assistance through capacity building and technology transfer, to address priority concerns in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements.

Agenda Item 4: Follow-up to the Mauritius International Meeting on Implementation of the Programme of Action on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

14. The Chair noted that the meeting had before it document CCGE(04)3 on 'Commonwealth Support to Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy'. She invited His Excellency Mr Enele S Sopoaga, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the United Nations and Vice Chair of the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**, to present an update on follow-up action following the Mauritius International Meeting. The Ambassador's full statement is provided as Annex II to this report. The Ambassador noted that a number of actions had been taken by AOSIS and its members since the Mauritius Summit: a resolution on the process to facilitate implementation of the Mauritius Strategy was being considered by the UN General Assembly; the UNEP Government Council confirmed its close support to implementation of the Mauritius Strategy; Small Island Developing States (SIDS) were working with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs to convene regional

follow-up meetings, and to review and adapt their national sustainable development strategies; and AOSIS had appealed for greater consideration of the Mauritius Strategy in the report of the UN Secretary-General for the MDG review. AOSIS had also reported to CSD-13 on follow-up to the Mauritius International Meeting. It was the view of AOSIS that review sessions of the CSD should dedicate a segment to the review of progress in implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy (BPOA/MS): this would entail special consideration being given to the SIDS-specific elements related to thematic topics. The Ambassador sought the support of Commonwealth member states on these proposals, not only in CSD-13, but also in other international forums and processes to ensure successful implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of SIDS.

15. The Representative of **New Zealand** noted that SIDS were an 'orphan' issue in some respects and supported efforts to examine how CSD could monitor implementation of the BPOA/MS. The **Representative of Canada** supported New Zealand, saying that these matters were particularly important in the light of huge global effects of climate change, which needed to be kept at the front of decision makers' agendas. She highlighted the resonance that exists between the concerns of Inuit and indigenous peoples and other Northern communities, and those of SIDS. The Representative said that there was an important role for communication and outreach mechanisms in discussing the vulnerabilities of all these communities. The **Representative of Australia** said his country had been a very strong supporter of the Mauritius International Meeting process and wanted to continue to work in follow-up to the Summit with Pacific colleagues in particular. He noted that SIDS were a cross-cutting theme in the CSD process, but Australia was interested in working on other potential avenues. Australia was a strong supporter of the BPOA and believed that regional bodies must play a key role in taking it forward. He noted the matrix document that had been produced and supported a sustaining and focused way forward. The **Representative of Fiji** supported the statements made by the Representatives of AOSIS, New Zealand and Australia. He recognised the primary national role in implementation of the BPOA/MS and said that a lack of capacity at the national level was a major constraint to progress. The Representative called for support from regional organisations and global partners in addressing these capacity constraints. He also looked to the Commonwealth Secretariat as a partner in ensuring that the links between the outcomes of the Mauritius International Meeting, the MDGs and national sustainable development strategies were fully operationalised. He said that support was needed for SIDS to enable them to engage in the CSD, and supported the CSD as a review forum for progress on the Mauritius Strategy. The **Representative of Papua New Guinea** supported the AOSIS statement and sought the support of Commonwealth countries in putting forward the concerns of SIDS in international forums, including the CSD.

16. The **Representative of Kenya** said her government had participated in the Mauritius International Meeting and supported the aspirations of the Millennium Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy. The priorities addressed in the Mauritius Strategy, such as climate change, were a concern to countries with coastal areas, as well as to SIDS. Kenya fully supported the requests made to the UN out of the Mauritius International Meeting and sought assistance for poor countries in Africa and that experienced similar problems. The **Representative of Nigeria** supported Kenya's statement, noting the problems that Nigeria faces with respect to debt, and the lack of capacity and appropriate technology. She called for the same assistance that is being offered to SIDS, to also be given to countries in Africa.

Agenda Item 5: Any Other Business

Arrangements for CCGE-13

17. Ministers asked the Commonwealth Secretariat to liaise with member states on the date and venue of the next session, and to identify a suitable Chair, giving due consideration to rotation between geographical regions, size (small, medium, large states), and type of economy (developed/developing).

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

18. The CCGE adopted, without amendment, the summary record of their tenth session of 28 March 2004, presented in document CCGE(05)1.

Iwokrama Rain Forest Programme

19. The **Representative of Guyana** outlined the work of the Iwokrama Rain Forest Programme in Guyana, which had been established following the Commonwealth Summit in Malaysia in 1989, at which President Hoyte of Guyana offered 360,000 hectares of virgin rainforest for a project, under Commonwealth auspices, to develop and demonstrate methods of sustainable tropical forestry and of conserving biological diversity. The Representative called for support in efforts to mobilise funding for the Iwokrama International Rain Forest Programme, which is threatened by a lack of funding for essential activities.

Close of the Meeting

20. Dr Indrajit Coomaraswamy of the Commonwealth Secretariat thanked all the members of the CCGE for their attendance and active participation. He also paid warm tribute to the Chair who had stepped in to the role at very short notice. The Chair brought the meeting to a close, thanking representatives for their contributions, and undertaking to prepare and circulate a Summary Statement of the discussions the next day (this is provided as Annex III).

LIST OF DELEGATIONS

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

H.E. Dr John ASHE
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the UN

AUSTRALIA

Mr. Thomas ROTH
Director Environment Strategies Section
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Barton ACT 2600
Tel: 61-2-6261 3045
Email: thomas.roth@dfat.gov.au

BARBADOS

Hon H Elizabeth THOMPSON-MCDOWALD
Minister
Ministry of Housing, Lands and Environment

Mr. Lionel NURSE
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Housing Lands and Environment
S P Musson Building
Hincks Street
Bridgetown
St. Michael
Tel: 1 246-467-5721
Email: pshousing@barbados.gov.bb

CANADA

Miss Nancy HAMZAUR
Director, International Policy and Co-operation, Environment
Canada
Tel: 819 997 4046
Email: nancy.hamzaur@ec.gc.ca

CANADA (cont'd)

Mrs. Karen KRAFT SLOAN
Ambassador for the Environment
Department of Foreign Affairs
125 Scesser Drive
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0G2
Tel: 613-944-0784
Email: Karen.kraftsloan@international.gc.ca

CYPRUS

Mr. Anreas HADJICHRYSANTHOU
Deputy Permanent Representative
Republic of Cyprus to the UN
13 East 40th Street
New York, 10016
Tel: 212 481 6023
Fax: 212 685 7316
Email: dprcyprus@un.int

DOMINICA

Ms Zilpha THEODORE
Attache/Consul General (Ag)
Dominica Mission
800 Second Avenue, Suite 400H
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212 949-0853
Fax: 212 661-0979
Email: domun@onecommonwealth.org

FIJI ISLANDS

Mr. Filimoue KAU
Deputy Permanent Representative
Fiji Mission to the United Nations
630 Third Avenue (7th Floor)
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212-687-4130
Fax: 212-687-3963
Email1: fkau@fijiprun.org
Email2: mission@fijiprun.org

GAMBIA

Mr. Omar FAL
Counsellor
The Permanent Mission of the Gambia to the United Nations
800 Second Avenue
Suite 400F, NY.NY
Tel: 212-949-6640
Fax: 212-856-9820
Email: gambia@un.int

GHANA

Hon Christine CHURCHER
Minister
Ministry of Environment and Science
P.O. Box M232
Accra
Tel: 233-(0)-21 662626
Fax: 233-(0) 21-666828
Email: mest@ghana.com

Mr. Edward Osei NSENKYIRE
Chief Director
Ministry of Environment and Science
P.O. Box M232
Accra
Tel: 233-(0)-21 666049
Fax: 233-(0) 21-666828
Email: mest@ghana.com

Mr. Paul Yaw ESSEL
Minister Plenipotentiary
Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations
18 East 47th Street
New York NY 10017
Tel: 212-832-1300 Ext.291; 212 203-2981
Fax: 212-751-6743
Email1: ghanaperm@aol.com
Email2: eklan49@aol.com

Mr. Rudolph Sandy KUUZEGH
Deputy Director
Ministry of Environment and Science
P.O. Box M232
Accra
Tel: 233-(0)-21 667324
Fax: 233-(0) 21-666828
Email: kuuz2001@yahoo.com

GRENADA

HE Ruth Elizabeth ROUSE
Ambassador/Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Grenada to the UN
800 Second Avenue, Suite 400-K
New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel: 212-599-0301
Fax: 212-599-1540
Email: rrouse@un.int

GUYANA

Mr. Navin CHANDRAPAL
Presidential Adviser on Sustainable Development
Office of the President
New Garden Street
Georgetown
Tel: 592-223-5233
Fax: 592-223-5186
Email: navinc51@yahoo.com

Mr. Garfield BARNWELL
Permanent Mission of Guyana to the UN

JAMAICA

Mr. Donovan STANBERRY
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Land and Environment
16A Halfway Tree Road
Kingston 5
Tel: 876-926-7648
Email: donberry.mle@cwjamaica.com

KENYA

Mrs. Consolata W. KIRAGU
Principal Counsellor
Kenya Mission to UNEP – Nairobi
P.O. Box 34284
Nairobi
Tel: 254-20-221055
Email: ckiragu2000@yahoo.com

KENYA (cont'd)

Amb. Eng. Andrew C. KIPTOON
Ambassador
Kenya Mission to UNEP
10th Floor KICC
P.O. Box 40195
Nairobi
Tel: 254 (2) 221055
Email: kmunep@swift.kenya.com

Mrs. Rachel A. ARUNGAH
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 30126
Nairobi
Tel: 254 202 710120
Fax: 254 202 727622
Email: rachelarungah@yahoo.co.uk

LESOTHO

Ms. Moliehi MTABANE
Principal Secretary
Local Government
P.O. Box 686
Maseru
Tel: 266-22323416
Fax: 266-22311269

Mr. Jobo MOLAPO
Deputy Principal Secretary
P.O. Box 52
Maseru
Tel: 266-22313034
Fax: 266-22310194
Email: jmolapo@mte-c.gov.les

MALAYSIA

Mr. Wan Zaidi Wan ABDULLAH
Principal Assistant Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia
Wisma Putra, Presint 2
62602 Putrajaya
Tel: 60-3-88874000
Fax: 60-3-88891717
Email: wzaidi@kln.gov.my

MALDIVES

Mr. Ahmed KHALEEL
Representative
Maldives Mission to the UN
800 Second Avenue, Suite 400E
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212-599-6195
Fax: 212-6616405
Email: maldives@un.int

MALTA

Mr. Albert J. GHIGO
First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations
249 East 35th Street
New York NY 10016
Tel: 212-725-2345 ext. 111
Fax: 212-779-7097
Email: albert.ghigo@gov.mt

MOZAMBIQUE

Ms. Albertina MACDONALD
First Secretary
MFA and Cooperation – Directorate for International Organisations and Conferences
620 Avenida 10 de Novembro
Maputo
Tel: 212-644-5965
Fax: 212-644-5972
Email: amacdonald@minec.gov.mz

NAURU

Hon Fredrick PITCHER M.P,
Minister
Ministry for Island Development and Industry; Environment
Suite 400A
800 2nd Avenue
NY NY 10017
Tel: 212-937-0074
Fax: 212 937-0079
Email: fpitcher1@cenpac.net.nr

NAURU (cont'd)

Mr Kevin LAL
Advisor/Delegate
Suite 400D
800 2nd Avenue
NY NY 10017
Tel: 212-937-0074
Fax: 212 937-0074

NEW ZEALAND

Mr Mark RAMSDEN
First Secretary
New Zealand Mission to the United Nations
One UN Plaza
25th Floor
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212 217 3085
Fax: 212 758 0827
Email: mark.ramsden@mfof.gov.nz

NIGERIA

Mrs Ngeri BENEBO
Director Environmental Health
Federal Ministry of Environment
P.O. Box 10028
Garki
Abuja-FCT
Tel: 234 9 4136318
Fax: 234 9 314 1335
Email: nsbenebo@yahoo.co.uk

Ms Anne ENE-ITA
Director, Planning, Research and Statistics Department
Federal Ministry of Environment
P.O. Box 10028
Garki
Abuja-FCT
Tel: 234 9 5234119, 5234014

Mrs. C.A. OWOLABI
Deputy Director (IAEO)
Federal Ministry of Environment
P.O. Box 10028
Garki
Abuja-FCT
Tel: 234 9 5234119, 5234014
Email: caowolabi@yahoo.com

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Mr. Karl SOPOL
Assistant Secretary
Department of National Planning
P.O. Box 631
Waigani, NCN
Tel: 675 328 8570/8539
Fax: 675 323 3147
Email: Karl_Sopol@treasury.gov.pg

Mr. Jimmy OVIA
Minister, Counsellor/Deputy Permanent Representative
201 East 42nd Street
Suite 405
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212 557 5007
Fax: 212 557-5009
Email: jovia@pngun.org

Ms. Matilda TAKAKU
Minister-Counsellor
201 East 42nd Street, Suite 405
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212 557 5007
Fax: 212 557-5009
Email: mtakaku@pngun.org

Mr. Sakias TAMEO
Second Secretary

SAMOA

Ms. Angela Marie ULA
Second Secretary
Permanent Mission of Samoa to UN
800 2nd Ave., Suite 400J
New York, N.Y 10017
Tel: 212-599-6196
Fax: 212-599-0797
Email: aula@un.int

Mr. Aliioaiga F. ELISAIA
Ambassador/Permanent Representative to UN
800 2nd Ave., Suite 400J
New York, N.Y 10017
Tel: 212-599-6196
Fax: 212-599-0797
Email: felisaia@un.int

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

Mr. Carlisle RICHARDSON
Counsellor
St. Kitts and Nevis
Permanent Mission of St. Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations
5th Floor, 414 E 75th Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel: 212-535-1234
Fax: 212-535-6854
Email: clr_skmission@yahoo.com

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Mr Lennox A. DANIEL
Deputy Permanent Representative
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Mission to UN
Suite 400S
800 2nd Avenue
New York, NY 10017
Tel: 212-59-0950
Fax: 212-599-1020
Email: svgun@aol.com
Email2: nydan01@yahoo.com

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Mrs Vanessa KENILOREA
Third Secretary

SOUTH AFRICA

Ms Pamela YAW
Deputy Director General
Tel: 27 12 310 3955
Fax: 27 12 322 4832
Email: pyalw@dcat.gov.za

SWAZILAND

Mrs Thandi SHONGWE
Minister
Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Communication
Income Tax Building
P.O. Box 2652
Mbabane
Tel: 268 404 6128
Fax: 268 404 1719
Email: tfshongwe@realnet.co.sz

SWAZILAND (cont'd)

Mr Jameson D. VILAKATI
Director
Swaziland Environment Authority
Box 2652
Mbabane
Tel: 268 404 7893
Fax: 268 404 1719
Email: sea@realnet.co.sz

TONGA

Mr. Mahe TUPOUNIUA
Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Tonga to the United Nations
250 East 51st Street
New York, NY 10022
Tel: 917 369 1025 or 646 421 5525
Fax: 917 369 1024
Email: mtupouniua@aol.com

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Honourable Penelope BECKLES
Minister
Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment
Sackville Street
Port-of-Spain
Tel: 868-624-2000
Fax: 868-624-2000
Email: p_beckles@hotmail.com

Mr Anthony D. EDGHILL
Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN

TUVALU

Honourable Saufatu SOPOANGA
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Works and Energy and Minister for Communications and Transport
Private Mail Bag
Funafuti
Tel: 688 20 051
Fax: 688 20 722
Email: minwectra@tuvalu.tv

TUVALU (cont'd)

Mr Pusineli LAAFAI
Permanent Secretary (Acting)
Ministry of Works and Energy
Private Mail Bag
Funafuti
Email: minwe@tuvalu.tv

HE Enele S. SOPOAGA
Ambassador/Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Tuvalu to the United Nations

UNITED KINGDOM

Lord WHITTY OF CAMBERWELL
Minister for Farming, Food and Sustainable Energy
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Mr Robert LOWSON
Director of Environment Strategy Unit
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Mr Andrew SOPER
Head of Sustainable Development and Commonwealth Group
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Mr Ali Juma HAMAD
Director of Environment
Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
Zanzibar-Tanzania
P.O. Box 159
Zanzibar
Tel: 255 24 747 429269
Fax: 255 24 223 7008
Email: doe-zuz@yahoo.com

Mrs Mary MUSHI
Permanent Secretary
Vice-President's Office
P.O. Box 5380
Dar-Es-Salaam
Tel: 255 (0) 22-2122470
Fax: 255 (0) 22-2113856
Email: makamu@ud.co.tz

ZAMBIA

Hon Patrick K. KALIFUNWA M P
Minister
Ministry of Tourism Environment and Natural Resources
Kwacha House
P.O. Box 34011
Lusaka
Tel: 260-1-225463
Fax: 260-1-222189
Email: menr@zamnet.zm

Dr Kenneth NKOWANI
Director
Department of Environment and Natural Housing
Kwacha House
P.O. Box 34011
Lusaka
Tel: 260-1-229417
Fax: 260-1-229417
Email: kapalakonje@yahoo.com

COMHABITAT

Ms Kim MULLARD
ComHabitat Programme Co-ordinator
Homeless International
Coventry, United Kingdom

CHEC

Ms. Zena DAYSH

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

Rosalie CALLWAY

SOPAC

Mr Russell HOWORTH
Deputy Director

SPREP (Secretariat for Pacific Environment Programme)

Mr Amena YAUVOLI
Senior Policy Advisor

COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

Dr Indrajit COOMARASWAMY
Director
Economic Affairs Division

Ms Janet STRACHAN
Chief Programme Officer (Sustainable Development)
Economic Affairs Division

Ms Constance VIGILANCE
Senior Programme Officer
Economic Affairs Division

COMMONWEALTH JOINT OFFICE

Ms Tania TUPOU
Manager

Mr Michael MITCHELL
Senior Executive Officer

Ms Janet G. JOHN
Administrative Assistant

**Remarks by His Excellency Mr Enele S Sopoaga
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the United
Nations, Vice-Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) at the
Commonwealth Ministers Meeting
New York 19th April 2005**

***Report on the Follow Up to the Mauritius International Meeting on the Sustainable
Development of SIDS***

Madam Chairperson
Honourable Ministers
Excellencies
Colleagues

I have the honour to provide an update of the follow-up to the outcome of the Mauritius International Meeting on the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, held in Mauritius January this year.

First allow me to reiterate the AOSIS deepest gratitude to the Government and people of Mauritius for successfully hosting the International Meeting; to the development partners for their generous financial support to SIDS and to the IM; to the IM Secretary General, the negotiations Facilitator, and all Members of the UN for their leadership and commitment.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the Commonwealth Secretariat, to Secretary-General Don McKinnon and the Commonwealth staff, for the Commonwealth's continuing support and partnership with the AOSIS in the lead-up to, and during the actual International Meeting. The AOSIS greatly values this partnership with the Commonwealth, and looks forward to working closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Mr Chairman

Predominant in the lead up to and at the Mauritius International Meeting on SIDS was the central concern of small island developing states on the lack of actions in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS agreed in Barbados more than ten years ago. However, AOSIS believes that the Mauritius Strategy adopted at the IM in Mauritius is the culmination of a very success outcome as it now provides for a revitalized roadmap of practical and doable actions to address the unique challenges facing the sustainable development of SIDS, particularly to address their economic, social, and environmental vulnerabilities. In partnership with the international community, AOSIS believes the Mauritius Strategy is now the vehicle composing of concrete and workable mechanisms by which actions on the ground in SIDS can be advanced.

Since the Mauritius IM, a number of initiatives have been undertaken by members of the AOSIS, individually and as a group some in partnership with development partners and UN agencies and offices, to advance the Strategy's implementation.

- In the UN, a SIDS resolution on the Mauritius Strategy is being considered for adoption by the UNGA, which focuses primarily on the process to facilitate the Strategy's implementation;
- In the UNEP Governing Council meeting in February this year, the MS was well incorporated into the Council's Nairobi Ministerial Communique, and a decision on SIDS was adopted, which specifically requires the UNEP's close support to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in its work programme;
- At the national and regional levels, SIDS members are currently working together with the UNDESA on the convening of regional meetings in all AOSIS regions to follow up the MIM outcome, and particularly also to help SIDS review and adapt their national sustainable development strategies in line to the MS;
- With reference to the review of the MDGs, while the AOSIS/SIDS were encouraged by specific references to the vulnerabilities of SIDS in the reports of the MDGs Project and the High Level Panel on UN reforms, we were disappointed by the lack of considerations given to the Mauritius Strategy in the report of the Secretary General "In Larger Freedom". We have appealed that this serious oversight be properly rectified in the proposed outcomes for the Leaders Summit in September;
- At the CSD13 currently in session, the first CSD after the MIM, the AOSIS have provided an update on the follow-ups to the MIM with particular focus on:
 - i. Outcomes of direct relevance to the discussion on water, sanitation and human settlements; and
 - ii. directly related policy options and possible action.

On the first area of focus, we underscored the freshwater chapter in the Mauritius Strategy which clearly captures the special vulnerabilities of SIDS where water resources are concerned. AOSIS appreciates the fact that these particular challenges were given the attention by the international community, for example "deficiencies in water availability, water catchment and storage, pollution of water resources" and "saline intrusion" amongst others.

Support was also requested specifically for "capacity-building for the development and further implementation of freshwater and sanitation programmes, and the promotion of integrated water resources management, including through the Global Environment Facility focal areas, where appropriate, the World Water Assessment Programme, and through support to the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office and the EU "Water for Life Initiative".

In relation to sanitation this was not only linked to water, but also to the waste management chapter of the Mauritius Strategy. Support was sought particularly for financial and technical support to the implementation of the specific activities agreed under the MS.

On human settlements, the AOSIS highlighted at the CSD13 the recognition in the MS for the need to develop “capacity for sustainable land management and self-generating agro-ecosystems by building on communal tenure systems and traditional land-use planning and practices for crop, livestock and aquaculture production, taking into account the increasing competition for land resources by tourism, urbanization and other activities”.

In regards to the second aspect of the AOSIS report to CSD13, the necessity for policy actions to maintain the linkages between the sectors was advocated emphasizing the reaffirmation in the MSI of the special case of the SIDS for sustainable development, and that SIDS must integrate sectors in order to achieve resilience building in the face of their vulnerabilities.

For example in the smaller islands, particularly atolls, having water catchment systems attached to housing is an important strategy, either with household storage facilities or aquifer recharge. It is also important to integrate water and sanitation, to reduce the amount of water used and to avoid contamination of the aquifer.

AOSIS also asserted the strong linkages between the availability of water and climate change – as it is widely predicted that global climate change will severely exacerbate the problem of global water scarcity particularly in SIDS.

Madam Chairperson

A recommendation for action emanating from the MIM is that there is the need for CSD to continue to be the forum for reviewing the implementation of the BPOA and for the MSI. The AOSIS feels that this review should not only include the topics of the day for CSD, but also new and emerging issues, and specific progress or major obstacles to progress. It is the view of AOSIS that the review sessions of the CSD should dedicate a segment for a review of the progress in the implementation of the BPOA and the MSI on a regular and predictable basis. This would entail that certain special consideration be given to the SIDS specific elements related to the thematic topics.

We have requested that a special committee or an open-ended working group be set up under CSD for this purpose in our resolution adopting the MSI being currently proposed before the General Assembly. We strongly believe such a monitoring process and body to review the implementation of the MS is critical to avoid repeating the failure and lack of implementation experienced in the follow ups to the BPOA on SIDS over the past ten years. These together with specific proposals on financing assistance and technology transfer support for the SIDS, urgent need to address SIDS vulnerabilities to climate change and natural disasters as they relate to the addressing of SIDS water, sanitation and human settlements challenges have been submitted for decisions of the CSD13.

We seek the kind support of the Commonwealth Member Countries to the SIDS proposals not only in the ongoing CSD13 but also in other international forums and processes to ensure successful implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of SIDS.

I thank you

Summary Statement by the Chair

Commonwealth Ministers and Senior Officials met on 19 April 2005 as the eleventh session of the Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment (CCGE). The meeting was convened to coincide with the Thirteenth Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13) held at UN Headquarters in New York. It was chaired by the Hon Elizabeth Thompson-McDowald, M.P., the Barbados Minister of Housing, Lands and Environment.

Ministers had a wide ranging discussion on challenges, policy approaches and mechanisms to support a fully integrated approach, across government departments, and between central government, local government and other groups, in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements. The Chair of CSD-13, H. E. Ambassador John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda, presented some outstanding issues that were before the Commission and stated his wish to see CSD 13 agree a clear statement of practical policy options on water, sanitation and human settlements, and discuss the Millennium Development Goals ahead of the review of progress that will take place later in the year.

Many delegations outlined policy approaches and strategies that their governments were implementing to address priority concerns. They also shared their experiences with different mechanisms to promote an integrated approach. This included a discussion of the role of poverty reduction strategies, national sustainable development strategies, national sustainable development committees and approaches outside central government, such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities which was effectively promoting environmental perspectives.

A number of African delegations highlighted the issue of poverty as the greatest challenge that they face in addressing water, sanitation and human settlement concerns. The challenge requires action to: reduce poverty; upgrade informal settlements in a situation of rapid urbanisation; facilitate greater access to water and sanitation; and develop new water supplies. It necessitates greater investment in basic infrastructure; as well as the restoration, conservation and, in some cases, the expansion of often badly degraded water catchment areas, for example by planting trees and building up forest resources. In this context, strategies are needed to address the debt concerns of developing countries, especially the Least Developed Countries, including debt swaps, debt relief and debt cancellation. Ministers also emphasised the need for an ecosystem-based approach and integrated water resources management to underpin and inform approaches, both within countries and across national borders. Ministers highlighted the important role of science, and the need to harmonise the relationship between water and agriculture. A closer integration of all agencies would go some way towards achieving this aim.

Ministers called for approaches that strengthen the inter-agency approach on water within the United Nations system, and effective co-ordination of the many UN agencies that are working on water, including international waters. One delegate called for a practical response to support developing countries in their efforts to create integrated water resources management policy frameworks at the national level. Another delegate called for equal status to be accorded to water, sanitation and human settlements, and for the human settlements target to be set in line with those for water and sanitation. There was support amongst a number of delegations for a World Sanitation Day, to facilitate a clear focus on this concern each year.

Developing countries called for concrete support in their efforts to build capacity and engage in the transfer of appropriate technologies in the water, sanitation and human settlement sectors. One delegate raised concerns about the approach that international financial institutions were taking with respect to development of the water sector, saying that work needs to be done to examine how the attainment of the MDGs was being affected by the conditions established through multilateral funding agencies, particularly with respect to cost recovery in the water sector. Ministers highlighted the need to involve young people from an early age on all the issues, including through education, and to build an appreciation of the concerns, and engagement by, all necessary groups to ensure integrated and sustainable solutions. Ministers highlighted how different strategies and approaches were being used to ensure an inclusive process involving people and different groups. They noted that recognition and understanding of the concept of sustainable development was problematic but essential to building integrated solutions.

In their discussion on follow-up to the Mauritius International Meeting on the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (January 2005), Ministers heard a presentation by the Vice-Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), H. E. Ambassador Enele Sapoaga of Tuvalu. He said that the key concern of SIDS going in to the Mauritius meeting had been the lack of action on the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) on the sustainable development of SIDS. The Mauritius process had clearly expressed SIDS' concerns and produced a Mauritius Strategy that provided a good basis for practical and achievable action. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development should continue as the forum for reviewing implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and the BPOA as well as new and emerging challenges to the sustainable development of SIDS. The Ambassador also called for action on SIDS concerns, not only by CSD-13, but in other international forums and processes. He sought close collaboration between AOSIS and the Commonwealth in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Ministers supported the role of the CSD in reviewing implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and BPOA. One delegate noted the resonance that the effects of climate change on SIDS has for Inuit and other northern communities, saying that these common concerns provided important communication and outreach mechanisms in the discussion of vulnerabilities. Another delegate highlighted the significant role that regional bodies have to play in implementing the outcomes from Mauritius. A number of African delegations expressed their full support for the Mauritius Strategy and hoped that the assistance that is being provided to SIDS through the Strategy would also be extended to African countries and developing countries with coastal areas. A SIDS representative recognised that while the primary responsibility for implementation lies at the national level, SIDS experience serious capacity constraints. SIDS sought support from all their partners to address national capacity deficiencies and ensure that effective linkages are made between the Mauritius Strategy, the MDGs and national sustainable development strategies.

Ministers noted a request by the representative of Guyana for support in efforts to mobilise funding for the Iwokrama International Rain Forest Programme, which is threatened by a lack of funding for essential activities. The Programme was established through an agreement between the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Guyana. Ministers welcomed the launch of the Plain Language Guide to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, an outcome of discussions by the CCGE following the Johannesburg Summit in 2002, and they asked the Commonwealth Secretariat to liaise with governments on convening the next meeting and identifying a Chair for the next session.

New York – 21 April 2005