



# SAINT LUCIA

## STATEMENT

BY

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OF SAINT LUCIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND  
STATES (AOSIS)

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and to congratulate you Mr. Chairman and the bureau on your election. We in AOSIS are prepared to work productively with you during this session and beyond.

This session of the CSD is of great importance to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) given our sheer vulnerability to climate change and the highly intricate linkages between energy and our sustainable development. AOSIS has been very active in the discussions on energy and climate change in the UN system because of these linkages, and we have sought constructive and practical dialogue with our development partners. The protection of the atmosphere is a broad and multidimensional endeavour involving all sectors of economic activity. Here too developed countries must play their role in assisting developing economies to develop national strategies and relevant regional and subregional initiatives to combat climate change and mitigate especially trans-boundary atmospheric pollution.

AOSIS fully shares the view expressed by the UN Secretary-General in his report entitled "In Larger Freedom" that "one of the greatest environmental and development challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be that of controlling and coping with climate change". It is cruel and ironic that while SIDS contribute the least to global emissions of greenhouse gases, we are the most vulnerable to climate change and least able to protect ourselves from its adverse impacts.

The adverse effects of climate change, climate variability, sea-level rise and associated phenomena such as the increase in the intensity and frequency of hurricanes and other extreme weather events continue to threaten the sustainable development, livelihoods and very existence of SIDS. For example in 2004, over 3000 persons were killed in Haiti as a result of Tropical Storm Jeanne. That same year Hurricane Ivan destroyed or damaged over 90% of the houses in Grenada and caused over US \$815 million in damages or twice the GDP of that country. For SIDS the adverse impacts of climate change are real, immediate and devastating.

The failure of countries, to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions means that the vulnerability of SIDS will continue to increase and that adaptation to climate change must continue to be a major priority for SIDS. We call on States that have not done so, to ratify and fully implement the Kyoto Protocol, and for all States to take further urgent action to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions, including through the development and increased use of renewable energy.

We have undertaken fairly detailed analyses of the energy situation at the national level, through our national assessment reports to the Mauritius International Meeting. The Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of SIDS is very clear on the inter-linkages between energy and Climate change, and the urgent need for real action on renewable energy. This Session must recommend ways to do this. We have further discussed these at the regional and inter-regional levels, and have received in-depth reports and inputs from our experts on how we should proceed. We have, in recent months, presented these views to the international community, and recommended the following for action:

- The need for an urgent application of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, adapted to the special conditions of SIDS.
- The need for special focus be given to renewable energy in the following sectors: wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, hydro and ocean energy.

Indeed, many SIDS are particularly suited to these options because of their geographical location. However, existing technologies may not always be adaptable to the needs and circumstances of many SIDS communities, and we recognize this.

It is in this light that we continue to stress the need to fully take into account local conditions when developing and implementing projects in SIDS. Specific differences will necessitate somewhat different approaches – from large islands to the smaller ones (including the archipelagic SIDS). We have also identified the need to tackle the most urgent issues, mainly the lack of access to energy services, and improvement in efficiency. We recognize that in some of our regions, an efficiency drive based on a combination of demand side management and improvements in technology would actually go a very long way in accruing savings to our countries, and would break what for many SIDS is a vicious cycle of the lack of investments, energy shortages and blackouts, combined with a high energy cost that hampers all our productive sectors and industries.

One of the key technologies for which we have been seeking implementation, is Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC). The ideas surrounding this technology are not new, yet its potentially revolutionary impacts have been hampered by vested interests and a lack of proper financing. With regard to the long-term energy security and sustainable development of SIDS, OTEC provides for an energy technology that converts solar radiation to electric power. OTEC, as an environmentally friendly technology, has the meaningful potential to assist SIDS in their sustainable development process.

SIDS, with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, and to a limited extent, Cuba and Barbados, have no petroleum resources. Also with few exceptions (Barbados – solar water heaters) and the other sugar producing SIDS (St. Kitts, Fiji, Mauritius, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago) that use biomass for electricity generation, during the sugarcane harvesting season, there is no meaningful development of the abundant renewable energy resources that exist. Jamaica has also commissioned a 20 Megawatt windfarm with prospects for expansion. The dependency on imported petroleum, which results in very high electricity prices ranging from US\$0.13 per kWh in the case of Jamaica to more than US\$0.30 in the Islands of the Pacific, is a constraint to development.

I also wish to link the issue of energy to some of the other problems that we in SIDS face. Notwithstanding the reluctance of a few developing countries to engage in any meaningful discussion on renewable energy, we remain confident that we can still find common ground in the context of long-term global energy security which is a goal of all developing countries.

In this connection, we feel certain that the position of the SIDS is supported by most of the developing world and many of our partners. For us, renewable energy and energy efficiency are prerequisites for sustainable development. So too is energy conservation and environmental stewardship, bearing in mind the following:

- If greenhouse gas emissions are not significantly reduced and climate change stabilized, SIDS will be destroyed, and no amount of effort on our part will get us to sustainable development.
- If the cost of energy in SIDS is not reduced, we will never be able to reduce our indebtedness and dependence on ODA and loans, as our exports will never be competitive and our services will be too costly.
- If our economies are thus not enabled to compete and to trade we will never have the wherewithal to make the investments needed for adaptation to climate change – due to the exorbitant adaptation costs caused by the wasteful usage of energy by those industrialized partners that refuse to listen to our concerns.
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency are key to all of our initiatives and efforts for directing sustainable development in our communities.

I have noted with some concern that the report of the Secretary General (SG) makes scant reference to the issue of adaptation to climate change. Ever since the 1992 adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) there has been GLOBAL agreement that in order to counter climate change there must be mitigation AND adaptation measures. Either of these measures in isolation makes no sense. The impact and threats from climate change are real for SIDS and require urgent and immediate action on the part of all countries. Developed countries are encouraged to invest in renewable energy projects in SIDS in order that SIDS can benefit from the lucrative carbon market and assist in enabling developed countries to meet their Kyoto Protocol emissions reduction targets.

The Secretary General's report also fails to identify important adaptation aspects of, for example, renewable energy. The planting of bio-fuels crops could have beneficial effects on soil stabilization and prevention of soil erosion. The use of renewable energy from domestic sources would free up much needed foreign exchange that would otherwise be used for oil imports.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite recognition of the vulnerability of SIDS, we believe that there is not a sense of urgency attached to addressing our concerns. It should be a matter of urgent priority for the international community to support SIDS in the development and implementation of national climate change action plans and strategies. The GEF, the financing mechanism of the UNFCCC must simplify its rules of access and disbursement to take into account the special peculiarities and circumstances of SIDS. As the Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF confirmed the GEF's co-financing requirements are difficult if not impossible for many SIDS to meet, and that more attention must be given to support for the implementation of projects in SIDS that have been identified through years of enabling activities.

Furthermore AOSIS maintains that additional resources within the GEF's own climate change focal area should be directed to support adaptation activities, including pilot projects in particularly vulnerable sectors, regions and communities – through an expanded GEF allocation in the fourth replenishment period.

Within this context, it is the intention of AOSIS to play a constructive role during this session of the CSD and seek to promote solutions to sustainable energy provision and climate change that will promote sustainable development for SIDS with benefits for all of the peoples of our planet.

I thank you.