



*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



STATEMENT BY

HON. H. ELIZABETH THOMPSON
MINISTER OF HOUSING, LANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT
OF BARBADOS

TO THE

13th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ON

TURNING POLITICAL COMMITMENTS INTO ACTION

APRIL 21, 2005

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK

Please check against delivery

Mr. President:

Barbados fully supports the statement made by Jamaica on behalf of G77 and China.

Our collective commitments to the sustainable development process have been numerous over the past 13 years. With little resistance, we agreed to implement Agenda 21, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Millennium Declaration, which, if realized, will ensure that within our own generation, the great disparity in living conditions between the rich and the poor would be significantly diminished. Despite these commitments, it should be a matter of regret for us all that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment has confirmed that the road to sustainable development is now littered with our failures to implement these programmes, resulting in abject poverty and degraded environments across the world.

Many changes have been proposed within the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and we are poised to move forward with those new changes in this first policy cycle.

In pursuing the goals of sustainable development, we have concentrated on the thematic cluster of water, sanitation and human settlements for this cycle but can we afford to move to the next thematic cluster without achieving the targets in this cluster?

Barbados has already begun the process of implementation, and we are seeing results in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Permit us therefore to make a few recommendations.

First, developing countries must take a look inward:

1. Good governance is a *sine qua non* for achieving sustainable development. We must ensure accountability in strong, stable governance structures such that our developed country partners have confidence that their funding will be properly spent, but more important good governance is a prerequisite for the efficient and effective use of our own resources. The Caribbean Single Market and Economy is therefore an important mechanism for our regional governance and economic management.
2. Some developing countries hold good records with respect to the subject areas. They should assist others with technical exchanges, training, dissemination of information and the sharing of best practices.
3. We need to empower local authorities, national populations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Community-based Organizations to help national Governments in our programmes, especially in the elimination of unsustainable practices.

4. National strategic action plans must be developed in each of the three sectors in the thematic cluster.

Second, to our developed country partners:

- 1 Issues related to water, sanitation and human settlements are too large for developing countries to tackle alone. We need partners to fulfill previous commitments of Official Development Assistance in order to better enable developing countries to achieve Goals 1 and 7 of the Millennium Development Goals.
 2. Appropriate technology transfer in the form of low-cost water-efficient systems and wastewater treatment facilities would be welcomed, together with assistance in capacity building to properly maintain such systems once installed.
 3. The collection and use of current data is critical to decision-making, ensuring good potable water quality and evaluating progress towards achieving established targets and goals. Small Island Developing States, in particular, require assistance in the design and implementation of information systems for sustainable development.
-

4. Developed countries can choose action or inaction. You can choose not to give support. Remember however, that we all live on the same globe and the social and environmental problems of the developing world will eventually impact on your environment, economy and society. Further marginalization of developing countries will also result in swathes of immigrants seeking to escape their own countries and coming to live in yours.

Finally, may I make some recommendations in relation to the United Nations Institutional arrangements:

1. It is vital that the role of the United Nations agencies responsible for water issues be enhanced and that these agencies report back to CSD.
2. United Nations Habitat must increase global monitoring for the achievement of the human settlements targets and tangibly support developing countries in the upgrading of slums,

Barbados believes that a commitment to action, instead of commitment to talk about action, and the cooperation of all countries and stakeholders within the United Nations framework is not beyond us. Would it not be a tribute to us all if next year delegates can speak more to the achievement of our goals and targets rather than our failures?

| thank you.