

Remarks by
the Hon. Christopher P. Sinckler, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade
and International Business,
at the Closing Session of the High-Level Roundtable on
International Cooperation for Sustainable Development
in Small Island Developing States

Barbados Hilton Hotel
March 26, 2008

Colleague Ministers,
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Government and Private Sector Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by formally welcoming to Barbados the Hon. Ingibjörg Gísladóttir, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Iceland. Her journey has been long, and fraught with many delays, but I am confident that she shares my assessment that it was for an excellent cause.

When I participated in the opening session yesterday, I sensed that there was overwhelming feeling of anticipation and expectation pervading the meeting with regard to the potential of this High-Level Roundtable. I now have the feeling that this potential has been

largely realized. We have had a series of excellent, insightful and in-depth presentations which have provoked a dynamic exchange of views. This active interaction among participants, both within and outside the meeting rooms, has given rise to the identification of a number of specific areas where fruitful collaboration can be undertaken which will be beneficial to all parties concerned.

I also understand that although the Business and Investment Forum will take place tomorrow, already contacts have been initiated and arrangements put in place to seek to ensure that there exists the most ample opportunities for future business development and trade.

Yesterday I highlighted the importance and relevance of the Island Growth Initiative, which is the avenue through which Iceland seeks to implement its programmes for development cooperation with SIDS. I also urged that the Caribbean positively explore this possibility of advancing our sustainable development, which is a major priority for our regional governments.

Barbados strongly believes that the time is ripe for the Caribbean to advance its own programmes for the development of some of its key productive sectors in collaboration with a sister small state and like-minded ally such as Iceland.

Now is the moment to act. We have the momentum to elaborate a strong platform for advancing the issues related to the sustainable development of SIDS with the input and participation of the public sector, the private sector and civil society. Yesterday I outlined some possibilities for Iceland's engagement with regional entities and mechanisms. I will now add the Regional Development Fund to that list.

An ocean separates Iceland from the Caribbean. However, our friendship is strong and we share similar hopes and aspirations. I hereby invite the government of Iceland to fully explore all options for bringing its work and activities closer to the shores of the Caribbean. I eagerly look forward to that time.

Thank you for your attention.