

**United Nations**  
**Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) 16/17**  
**The Government of Barbados' Statement on**  
**Cross-cutting Issues**

**Friday May 9<sup>th</sup> 2008**

**Madame Chair**

The Government of Barbados is honoured to present this statement, and wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Barbados, as a SIDS and ranked among the topmost water scarce countries in the world, recognizes the complexities and interconnectedness of the thematic issues to the pursuit of sustainable development and more specifically to sectoral development. These complexities have been clearly articulated in the Barbados Sustainable Development Policy; and, action plans built on the national sustainable development principles of equity, conservation of natural resources, economic efficiency, participation and quality of life call for concrete activities to address such.

Madame Chair

With respect to the agriculture sector, in an effort to meet the growing demands for water in agriculture, and to improve the island's food security status, there is the need to increase water productivity by harnessing all available sources of water, enhance water availability and improve irrigation and drainage. The country has therefore instituted a number of cross-cutting, integrated policies and programmes to tackle these issues.

A strategic planning framework, namely the Integrated Rural Development Project, for the protection and sustainable management of ecosystems in drought prone areas has been developed and integrated into the national development strategies and action plans.

The national strategy and contingency arrangements for drought preparedness to deal with drought related food and water deficiencies is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. These include:

- Conducting comprehensive studies to support efficient development and management of water resources for irrigation.
- Instituting an island-wide water metering programme.
- Continuing the refurbishing existing irrigation districts and the establishments of new irrigation districts.
- Introducing measures to reduce water consumption and improve water use efficiency. These will include the introduction of short-age crop varieties, establish salt-tolerant crops in areas served by arid, saline or brackish water, adopting water saving irrigation techniques, modernising irrigation systems and promoting use of commercial and organic mulching.

Drought-relief studies, and their implications for national development and planning have been examined by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre in Belize, and some studies have been done by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Barbados Water Authority (BWA). A drought relief scheme has been put in place, given the water scarceness of Barbados. The findings of the study have been integrated into national development planning. Government has established incentives to encourage

farmers to design reservoirs to harness well water, rainwater and surface runoff and to establish irrigation systems only if they are water saving.

Afforestation and reforestation programmes using drought-resistant, fast growing species are implemented by the Soil Conservation Unit. It is important to note that legislative measures and policy incentives to encourage forestry development in drylands have been put in place including the preservation of Trees Act, 1981.

In terms of lessons learnt, Madame Chair, a multi-stakeholder approach in planning and implementing of projects and programmes increases the chances of success and greater probability of long term sustainability. Drought relief programmes are expensive and require specific expertise.

With respect to the constraints and challenges, the issues of forecasting and assessment of droughts are two priority areas. The challenge is, in expanding the hydrological and hydro-meteorological network that, would assist the work of the BWA in monitoring and evaluating the water resources and drought.

Finally, we wish to reiterate the need for the international community to honor its commitments for the full implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS. We also attach great importance to the Marrakech Process

Madame Chair, We thank you.