

**The Permanent Mission of Iceland
to the United Nations**

Statement by

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Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

**Outcome of the High Level Roundtable on
International Cooperation for Sustainable Development
in Caribbean Small Island Developing States**

Bridgetown, Barbados, 25-27 March 2008

5 May 2008

It is a privilege and an honour to present to you and our distinguished colleagues at the Sixteenth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, the conclusions of the High Level Roundtable on International Cooperation for Sustainable Development in Caribbean Small Island Developing States, held in Bridgetown, Barbados, on 25-27 March 2008.

The roundtable was co-organized by the Governments of Barbados, the Government of Iceland, and the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. It was attended by representatives of the Governments of sixteen Small Island Developing States and low-lying coastal states (SIDS) in the Caribbean region, as well as the Government of Iceland, the Caribbean Community Secretariat and other regional intergovernmental and technical institutions, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other organizations of the United Nations system, and representatives of civil society, including business leaders from Iceland and the Caribbean and other invited stakeholders.

I will not enumerate all the conclusions, which are available in a document for this meeting, but it is worth touching briefly on the most salient issues.

Firstly, the meeting supported the need to strengthen the Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean.

Secondly, the participants welcomed the Island Growth Initiative presented by the Government of Iceland as a framework mechanism to advance Iceland's commitment to development collaboration with Caribbean SIDS partners in support of implementation of the BPOA and the Mauritius Strategy.

Thirdly, they welcomed initiatives to strengthen private sector cooperation, and reaffirmed the importance of increased investment, economic diversification, new and innovative

business partnerships and greater technical and financial resources in the promotion of development cooperation. These innovations and approaches were acknowledged to be invaluable in overcoming common developmental challenges of Caribbean SIDS such as a narrow resource base, small domestic markets, high cost of energy, transportation and communication, vulnerable infrastructure, and vulnerability to natural hazards.

And fourthly, they appreciated the commitment of the Icelandic International Development Agency in exploring possible development cooperation for supporting sustainable development in Caribbean SIDS.

The participants identified some key areas of mutual interest and strengthened cooperation between Iceland and the Caribbean, including:

- Investment in, and the development of renewable energy resources, including geothermal.
- Sustainable and responsible use of marine resources.
- Capacity building through training, technical assistance, appropriate transfer of technology and financial mobilization, including micro-credit.
- The disproportionate impact of accelerated climate change on SIDS. The participants resolved to continue their close collaboration in addressing the issue at all levels.
- Advancement of women in society, and commitment to giving greater attention to gender issues as a whole, recognizing that these benefit society as a whole. In this context, further cooperation with UNIFEM was welcomed.

The participants welcomed ongoing collaboration between the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme (UNU-FTP) and the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism Secretariat (CRFM), and they look forward to the future establishment of a programme of cooperation between the two organizations under an agreed Memorandum of Understanding.

They also welcomed in particular the key role of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Office of the High Representative of Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLSS) and the United Nations system support in this cooperative effort.

It was decided to work towards a partnership agreement between the Caribbean SIDS and the Government of Iceland at the earliest opportunity, and requested DESA and UNDP to follow up on implementation.

Finally, I would like to highlight the successful Business and Investment Forum, held on 27 March 2008, the last day of the event. The Forum sought to identify concrete projects for possible cooperation and implementation, particularly in the fields of fisheries management and renewable energy development.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Barbados, and the Department of Social and Economic Affairs for the cooperation in preparing the event and the participants for their valuable cooperation.