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COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

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OUTCOME OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING FOR THE TEN-YEAR REVIEW OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005) AND FAO FOLLOW-UP

BACKGROUND

The 1992 Earth Summit called for the United Nations to convene a Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in order to promote the well being of people living in island countries. The Conference was held in Barbados in May 1994, and produced a Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, referred to as the Barbados Programme of Action for SIDS (BPOA). The BPOA presents a basis for action in fourteen agreed priority areas and defines a number of actions and policies related to environment and development planning that should be undertaken by SIDS with the cooperation and assistance of the international community.

In September 1999, a five-year review of the BPOA was conducted at the 22nd Special Session of the UN General Assembly. The particular concerns and specific constraints of SIDS were recognized and it was noted that the means of implementation required taking into account national and regional sustainable development strategies and creating strong and committed partnerships between the SIDS and the international community.

As a contribution to this five-year review, and in the context of the World Food Summit follow-up, FAO organized a Special Ministerial Conference on Agriculture in Small Island Developing States on 12 March 1999 in Rome. The Ministerial Conference, representing a major contribution to the efforts undertaken by the UN to address the particular needs of these States was focused on

the specific problems of agriculture, including fisheries and forestry, a lead sector for achieving sustainable food security.

The Ministerial Conference unanimously adopted a Ministerial Declaration on Agriculture in Small Island Developing States that led to the adoption, by the 116th Session of the Council, of a Plan of Action on Agriculture in SIDS. This Plan of Action focuses on the following five commitments:

- adjusting to changes in the global trading environment;
- moving towards a more intensified, diversified and sustainable agriculture;
- meeting fisheries needs;
- ensuring sustainable management of land, water and forestry resources and environmental protection;
- building capacity and strengthening institutions.

FAO submitted the Plan of Action on Agriculture in SIDS to the 1999 Special Session of the UN General Assembly, which reviewed the implementation of the BPOA. The international community, comprising the UN system, bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector has a key role to play in supporting the implementation of this Plan of Action. Such support is needed to facilitate the adoption of appropriate national policies and, where necessary and appropriate, provide technical and financial assistance to help SIDS in fostering food security and sustainable development.

THE ROAD TO MAURITIUS

In pursuance of the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the UN General Assembly, in its Resolution 57/262, called on the international community to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the BPOA and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius offered to host the International Meeting for this purpose.

A series of preparatory meetings were held before this International Meeting, all of which were attended by FAO, including:

- three regional preparatory meetings for: the Pacific Region (Samoa, 4-8 August 2003); Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (Cape Verde, 1-5 September 2003); Caribbean Region (Trinidad and Tobago, 6-10 October 2003);
- an Inter-Regional Meeting of SIDS (Bahamas, 26-30 January 2004);
- a global Preparatory Meeting during the 11th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (New York, 14-16 April 2004);
- two informal consultations in New York (7-11 October 2004) and Mauritius (8-9 January 2005).

During the Inter-Regional Meeting in the Bahamas, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) produced the “Strategy Paper for the Further Implementation of the BPOA”. This text was the main subject of negotiation between AOSIS and development partners in the successive meetings and consultations. With a view to integrating agriculture-related considerations into this text, FAO held a Panel on “Food Security, Agricultural Trade, Development and Policy in SIDS”, in New York, on 6 October 2004 and actively participated, throughout the preparatory process, in the Inter-Agency Task Force on SIDS, established by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in January 2003.

THE MAURITIUS INTERNATIONAL MEETING

The Mauritius International Meeting (MIM), originally scheduled in August 2004, was held from 10 to 14 January 2005, including a high-level segment on 13-14 January 2005. The Secretary General of the MIM was Mr Anwarul Chowdhury, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and SIDS. Mr Paul Raymond Bérenger, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius was elected as the MIM President and Mr Don MacKay, New Zealand, was the Chair. Some 2000 participants were in attendance, including 18 Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Prime Ministers, some 60 Ministers or high officials from ministries of the environment, foreign affairs or their equivalent from 114 countries, as well as high-level representatives of nine island territories, 23 intergovernmental organizations and 15 UN or multilateral agencies.

Side events and partnership activities as well as parallel events were organized from 10-14 January 2005. The latter were held at an Exhibition Centre, a few kilometres away from the MIM premises. A parallel Civil Society Forum also took place from 6 to 9 January 2005.

While negotiations on the draft Strategy Paper extended throughout the week, the MIM revolved around country statements, four interactive panels and two round tables. During the first two days, the interactive panels addressed: environmental vulnerabilities; challenges in trade and economic development; the role of culture in sustainable development; and building resilience in SIDS. During the last two days, the high-level segment round tables addressed resource mobilization and capacity building.

FAO's contribution during the MIM consisted of: an FAO statement by the Director-General during the opening session; acting as panellist on agricultural trade issues at the interactive panel on trade and economic development; holding an FAO Side Event on Agriculture and Sustainable Development in SIDS under the patronage of the Minister of Agriculture, Food Technology and Natural Resources of Mauritius; participating in the Caribbean/Pacific Partnership Event on Food Security in SIDS, and organizing an FAO exhibit where FAO multi-media documents were widely disseminated.

The MIM adopted the Mauritius Declaration and Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS. The Declaration reiterates the vulnerability of SIDS and affirms the world's commitment to support small island states for their sustainable development. It further reaffirms that SIDS continue to be a "special case" for sustainable development and that particular attention should be given to building resilience in SIDS. It further recognizes that international trade is important for building resilience and calls upon international financial institutions to pay appropriate attention to the structural disadvantages and vulnerabilities of SIDS, including enabling them to integrate fully into the multilateral trading system in accordance with the Doha mandate on small economies.

The Declaration also addresses women and youth, conservation of marine biodiversity, the importance of cultural identity and HIV/AIDS. It commits to timely implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, a 30-page text that elaborates a wide variety of actions under 20 broad headings. In particular, the Declaration expresses appreciation for the efforts of the UN and its specialized agencies in helping to advance the sustainable development of SIDS, and invites them to strengthen their support to the Strategy through enhanced coherence and coordination.

RELEVANCE OF THE MAURITIUS STRATEGY TO FAO

The Mauritius Strategy² states that the BPOA remains the blueprint for the sustainable development of SIDS. The fourteen priorities of the BPOA include: climate change and sea level rise, natural and environmental disasters, management of wastes, coastal and marine resources, freshwater, land, energy, tourism, biodiversity, national institutions and administrative capacity, regional institutions and technical cooperation, transport and communication, science and technology and human resources development. It is to be noted that while sustainable fisheries are covered under the chapter on Coastal and Marine Resources, agriculture is not adequately treated in this document – apart from one reference to FAO's work under the chapter on Land.

The Mauritius Strategy identified, in addition to the BPOA, new and emerging issues which required urgent international attention. These are: graduation from least developed country status; globalization and trade liberalization; sustainable capacity development and education for sustainable development; sustainable production and consumption; national and regional enabling environments; health; knowledge management; culture, and implementation. Reference to FAO's work or related areas of action are essentially included under the chapters on: Coastal and Marine Resources (fisheries); Land Resources (agriculture and forestry), and Implementation.

Among other issues, the Mauritius Strategy recommends the following to SIDS, with the support of the international community:

- **Fisheries.** Build technical, financial and enforcement capabilities for the effective monitoring and control of fishing vessels and the sustainable management of fisheries, consistent with international agreements such as the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the FAO High Seas Fishing Compliance Agreement. National and regional efforts in the sustainable management of marine resources of SIDS should be promoted through appropriate assessment and management of fish stocks and effective monitoring and surveillance of fishing effort, including appropriate enforcement measures to minimize illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and overharvesting, mapping of their exclusive economic zones and improving and strengthening existing regional mechanisms.
- **Agriculture.** Promote agricultural competitiveness through long-term development of efficient agricultural systems, diversification and value-added activities and to ensure food security and self-reliance. Initiatives such as the FAO sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD) and programmes such as seed production and integrated pest management, food processing and quality control, improved husbandry, sustainable aquaculture and the use of modern technologies for smallholder agriculture are encouraged. Also, synergistic linkages between tourism and the agriculture sector are recommended for promoting island foods and beverage supply chains, rural hospitality and agrotourism.
- **Forestry.** Safeguard the rights of forest resource owners, legitimate or licensed users through increased awareness, partnerships, stakeholder participation and adherence to national forest policies and legislation. The United Nations Forum on Forests and other international programmes (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation) are encouraged to propose actions for sustainable forest management, including rotational logging practices and replanting initiatives.

² www.un.org/smallislands2005/pdf/sids_strategy.pdf

- **Trade.** In seeking to integrate into the global economy, focus on specific trade and development-related issues of special concern to SIDS, such as, among others, erosion of preferences and trade and food security. High priority actions related to agriculture include: recognition of the importance of long-standing preferences and the need for steps to address the issue of preference erosion; developing human and institutional capacity on trade facilitation and niche marketing, agriculture, forestry and fisheries and natural resources product development; improving infrastructures related to sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and building on national poverty reduction strategies in order to mainstream trade into SIDS development plans.
- **Sustainable development.** Incorporate guiding principles of sustainable development into all sectoral policies and strategies, including national targets and indicators for sustainable development, in order to respond to the development goals agreed in the Millennium Declaration. In this respect, “the 2005 FAO conference of SIDS ministers of agriculture is urged to consider endorsing priority actions for an enhanced contribution of agriculture, forestry and fisheries to SIDS sustainable development policies, in light of the importance of nutrition and food security needs to SIDS”.

SPECIAL MINISTERIAL EVENT ON FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

The Thirty-second Session of the FAO Conference requested that a Conference of SIDS be organized in Rome, in 2005, to further review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS. In response to the Mauritius Strategy, and as an important means towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, it is proposed to hold a Special Ministerial Event on Food Security and Sustainable Development of SIDS in Rome on 21 November 2005. All FAO member countries and inter-governmental organizations related to SIDS will be invited.

The overall objective of the Special Ministerial Event is to review the commitments made in both the Plan of Action on Agriculture in SIDS endorsed in 1999 by the FAO Council and the Mauritius Strategy endorsed in January 2005 (as it relates to agriculture and food security), with a view to identifying implementation needs and propose concrete action.

Recommendations will be made for relevant programmes and project ideas, with specific attention to cross-sectorial linkages (such as with tourism, environment, and rural development). Funding sources will be identified for project implementation.

The outcome of the event will be a Ministerial Declaration on Food Security and Sustainable Development in SIDS with recommendations for follow-up actions by SIDS and the international community.