

Discussion Paper for AOSIS Plenary

The Plenary meeting of AOSIS held on 25 August 2003 tasked the open-ended Working Group of the Alliance to prepare a discussion paper on the various issues pertaining to the preparation of the BPOA + 10. Pursuant to that decision, the open-ended Working Group met on 3 September 2003 and after a rich exchange of views, the Working Group came with the following recommendations:

1. **Involvement of the UN Department of Public Information in the context of a communication strategy to create more awareness for the International Meeting in 2004**

Ms Pragati Pascale from the DPI informed the Working Group that based on the DPI's experience on the WSSD held in Johannesburg, the Department is working on its basic communication strategy for the International Meeting. She added that the DPI has requested a special budget of US\$200,000 for the communications aspect for the International Meeting. The DPI would need to know our priorities and our audiences to finalise its communication strategy.

The Representative of DPI also informed the Working Group that the Department had covered the Apia and Praia regional meetings and they would do same for the regional meeting of the Caribbean region as well as the inter-regional meeting.

In light of the information provided by the DPI, the Working Group came with the following proposals.

- (i) The need for AOSIS members to work with DPI in order to ensure that the Fifth Committee approves the special budget of US\$200,000 requested by DPI.
- (ii) Encourage DPI to play a greater advocacy role in the regions. In this regard, it was suggested that the special case of SIDS needs to be

promoted. It was also noted that the issue of vulnerability of SIDS was not made as effectively as required.

- (iii) The DPI could be requested to provide running coverage of the regional, inter-regional and international meetings through the presence of a staff from that Department in those meetings.
- (iv) The use of a dedicated website by SIDSNET for dissemination of information about the BPOA+10. However, the point was also made that owing to a low internet connectivity in Member States of the AOSIS, the DPI could be encouraged to use radio and TV in addition to printed material for its communication.
- (v) The possibility of launching of a logo competition, as identified in the Belize Paper, was raised.
- (vi) It was expected that all AOSIS members would mention what they expect from the BPOA + 10 in their respective statements at the general debate of the UNGA in order to sensitize the international community. It was also suggested that AOSIS Ambassadors could sensitize their counterparts from the UN who are not AOSIS members during bilateral meetings, lunches, receptions and other social gatherings.
- (vii) The need for regular consultations with the President of the General Assembly who could play an important role in helping to promote SIDS issues.

2. **Draft Resolution for the 58th Session of the UNGA**

- It was pointed out that unlike the SIDS resolution (which was more procedural in nature) adopted during the 57th session, the draft resolution for the 58th session will have to be very substantive and focused in terms of issues expected from the International Meeting.
- It was recommended to seek the assistance of the SIDS Unit to prepare the first draft as early as possible. In this respect, it was proposed to invite AOSIS

members to submit to the Chair, any proposal which they would like to see included in the draft.

- The need to have a time-frame for the draft resolution was also stressed.

3. **Profile of the Secretary-General for the International Meeting**

There was total agreement to have a Secretary-General for the International Meeting whose role should be defined well in advance. It was felt desirable for the Secretary-General of the International Meeting to have the following qualities, amongst others:

- familiarity with SIDS issues,
- ability to play an advocacy role for SIDS,
- has very good contacts, political clout and influence,
- ability to deliver for SIDS,
- ability to continue to play his role beyond the Mauritius meeting.

The Working Group also felt that there was need to decide on the time frame as to when the Secretary-General should be appointed.

4. **Coordination between AOSIS and the Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS**

Prior to looking at coordination between AOSIS and the Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, the Working Group considered it important to have a clear indication of the respective roles of the SIDS Unit and the Office of the High Representative. Once the respective roles and functions of these two offices were known, AOSIS could then decide how to effectively use the Office of the High Representative.

It was proposed that the Office of the High Representative could be requested to carry out specific requests for SIDS, especially from other UN Agencies.

The practice of inviting a representative from the Office of High Representative to attend and participate in all AOSIS meetings was felt necessary.

5. **Consultation with the Chairman of G-77 regarding Spokesman for negotiations on SIDS issues**

The Working Group was of the opinion that the AOSIS needs to have an arrangement with G-77 regarding negotiations on SIDS issues leading to the International Meeting. In this regard, it was proposed that the Bureau of AOSIS meets with the Chairman of G-77 and China. The Bureau could either propose that the Chairman of G-77 and China himself or any other member from the G-77 be appointed to negotiate for SIDS during negotiations for CSD-12 and beyond. It was stressed that AOSIS members need to be present, as much as possible, during those negotiations. The possibility of an AOSIS member leading the negotiations could also be explored.

6. **How to deal with trade as mentioned in the Belize Paper**

With respect to trade, the idea of having a strategic document which addresses all our concerns and oriented towards implementation was mooted. However, it was proposed that this issue be kept in abeyance pending the outcome of the WTO meeting in Cancun.

7. **Security of island States in light of recent terrorist activities**

It was felt that security issues in island States divert scarce resources from developmental programmes. It was therefore pointed out that the security of island States must be viewed in a wider context and not only from the aspect of threats from terrorism.

It was mentioned during the meeting that OAS has an item on security of small States on its agenda. AOSIS could find out more about what is being done by the OAS on this issue before developing its own position.

AOSIS members could also be invited to make submissions on the subject of security of island States.