

STATEMENT

By

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On Behalf Of

THE ALLIANCE of SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

To

**THE 9th MEETING OF THE COMMISSION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

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Mr. Chairmen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the forty-three Members and Observers of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), thirty-seven of which are members of the United Nations.

Energy is one of the fourteen priority issues identified in 1994 in the Barbados Programme of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Our group has raised this issue in previous sessions of the Commission as well as in the context of the Ad-Hoc Working Group. Given the limits of time I will not go into the detailed discussion as to why energy is such a crucial consideration for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States. But I would like to raise some of our key concerns.

The generally isolated and vulnerable situation of island countries has focused our attention on regional and other strategies to promote sustainable energy options and to set the path towards a sustainable energy future. Individually, AOSIS countries are doing what they can with the natural resources they have, or which they do not have. An issue of the UN publication Natural Resources, being circulated in this room, highlights many of these efforts by SIDS across the regions.

Essentially, however, there has been no substantive change in the energy situation of small island developing States (SIDS) since the Barbados Programme of Action of 1994, inasmuch as the following would still largely characterise their position as of today:

- there continues to be heavy dependence on imported petroleum products, largely for transport and electricity generation; and also heavy dependence on indigenous biomass fuels. The current uses of these forms of energy, as we all know, are highly inefficient;
- renewable energy resource endowments vary significantly among SIDS:
 - all have substantial solar resources, but not yet developed to their full potential;
 - wind potential is variable with location;
 - hydroelectric power is a possibility for only some SIDS, but could have tremendous impact;
 - biomass is commonly available, but is unequally exploited; and

- the potential for geothermal, ocean thermal and wave energy remain experimental, but studies show that their impact could be massive;
- overall, there are significant constraints to the large-scale commercial use of renewable energy resources. SIDS do not have the capacity or means to invest in renewables, to develop or obtain the right technology, nor do they have adequate skill or management capabilities.

Earlier this year, AOSIS convened a workshop on climate change, energy and preparations for CSD9. The turnout was impressive, and we were able to reach a common understanding on the key issues before CSD. We submitted these views in writing to the Secretariat. Our hope was that these views would be incorporated into the working paper by the co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group. We were disappointed with the outcome of that working group, and our group feels that it was an opportunity lost to gain ground in the struggle for sustainable development. At the Cyprus workshop our group clearly highlighted that energy for SIDS is much more than our own requirements. Our sustainable development is under threat by the unsustainable consumption of fossil fuels by the developed countries. The direct linkages between climate change and energy use (or waste) has been clearly identified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. While energy use in SIDS, and our greenhouse gas emissions, remain at a very low level, we feel that we should all make a contribution. From an economic perspective then, as well as from the climate change perspective, our group wishes to see a more sustainable global future - a future that can assure Small Island Developing States of their continued survival. Present conditions do not augur well. The dimwitted and nearsighted decision of the US administration leaves us little comfort, especially since the decision shows no comprehension of the basic factors governing the energy equation. The document of the ad hoc energy working group does not give us any practical benefit, and it does not represent to us any meaningful attempt to get solutions for our pressing sustainable development issues.

In conclusion let me stress that SIDS are committed to achieving sustainable development for ourselves, and we will assist others through the experiences we hope to build. The inability of this Commission's working group to produce a meaningful global consensus is disheartening, but not unexpected. For our part we stand by our own report as a more comprehensive indication of the views of SIDS on the issue of energy and sustainable development. We will cooperate with the international agencies and donor community to try to bring these ideas to fruition. As for the G-77, shame on you.