

The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations

Statement by

Harald Aspelund, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN

at the

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SIDS Day

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Mr. Chairman

In the course of our CSD sessions so far, we have become more aware of the close interlinkages that exist between the different themes that we have chosen for the CSD's work. Most of those interlinkages are widely acknowledged to be of particular significance to small island developing states (SIDS). That is why we decided long time ago to devote one day to the SIDS during each two year cycle of the CSD; one out of twenty days. I welcome the understanding that one day will be devoted to the SIDS exclusively in future cycles of the CSD.

Iceland is committed to do its part in promoting the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius strategy. As an island state, Iceland shares many of the SIDS concerns in the area of sustainable development and there is indeed scope for cooperation in many areas. Since the Mauritius meeting we have contributed more than four million USD, including this year, under the umbrella of the Icelandic SIDS initiative on many different projects, mainly in cooperation with UN agencies and the World Bank. We have been escalating our efforts and it is foreseen that in 2008 we will contribute at least 1.7 million USD to development cooperation with the SIDS.

One good example of successful cooperation is the agreement reached in 2004 between the Government of Iceland and the Commonwealth Secretariat to support the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, to train government fisheries officials from Pacific Island Countries for an initial period of three years, 2005 to 2008. Through this cooperation courses in fisheries statistics, stock assessment and fisheries policy and planning have been held in the Pacific.

The Government of Iceland has decided to take the cooperation with the SIDS further within the so called Island Growth Initiative, which will be a framework mechanism to advance Iceland's commitment to development collaboration with SIDS partners.

The Island Growth Initiative includes the support of projects and programmes, and financial contributions of Iceland's Official Development Assistance. It focuses on the specific needs and priorities of SIDS partners, including the sustainable use of natural resources, clean energy solutions, capacity building, the common fight against climate

change, fisheries, ocean governance and supporting the advancement of women in society. More information on the initiative can be found in the room.

We look forward to continuing to exchange views with the SIDS during the current CSD cycle and beyond. As small island states we have much in common and much to gain by working together.

Thank you Mr. Chairman