



SMALL STATES
CONFERENCE ON
SEA LEVEL RISE
MALE, 14 - 18 NOVEMBER 1989

DRAFT CONFERENCE DECLARATION

Environmental issues facing the world today clearly demonstrate that organisms and all the elements of nature including land, water and air cannot be exploited without far-reaching implications for the earth and its environment. It has been proved more conclusively than at any other time in history that the welfare of mankind is inextricably linked to the state of the environment. It has also been established that atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases have increased over the last two centuries. These increases are threatening to cause climate change, global warming and sea-level rise, which have become common concerns of mankind.

There is now a broad scientific consensus that the global mean temperature could rise by around 1° to 2°C by the year 2030. It is predicted that even if the increases in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases were to be brought to a standstill immediately, however unrealistic that may be, the global temperature and sea-level would continue to rise for decades to come.

Although the entire world would be adversely affected by these processes, the predicament for low-lying small States and coastal zones will decidedly be much worse. Sea-level rise would cause extensive damage to the land and infrastructure of those countries and even threaten the very survival of some island states. The possibility also exists of an increase in the frequency and/or intensity of natural disasters related to climate change, global warming and sea-level rise.

Paradoxically the catalyst in this unhappy state of the global environment has been the rapid development of industrialization that was intended to lead to material progress. In view of the fact that the overloading of the atmosphere with greenhouse gases occurred primarily through the actions of the industrialized nations during the past two hundred years, these nations have a moral obligation to play a leading role in sponsoring a worldwide programme of action to combat the serious implications of climate change, global warming and sea-level rise. Resources and technology should be made available by the industrialized nations, in particular to the most vulnerable States, who may not have the financial and technical means to address these problems.

A continuing dialogue between the small States and the rest of the world on the issue of sea-level rise needs to be initiated. The small States call for an international response, especially from the developed and industrialized nations of the

world. The likely effects of sea-level rise urgently need to be established more accurately, and an effective international strategy for the small States of the world to cope with those impacts should be agreed upon as a separate issue within a global strategy. In this connection, the WMO/UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change is recognized as the main forum for the on-going work on science, impacts and response strategies of climate change.

In the light of the scientific consensus regarding the likelihood of climate change and global warming and deeply concerned over the changing global environment and its possible adverse effects, particularly the threat of sea-level rise, the Small States gathered here in Male' from 14 - 18 November 1989, drew up this Declaration, to work and collaborate and to seek international cooperation to protect the small States of the world from the dangers posed by climate change, global warming and sea-level rise.

THEREFORE, WE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SMALL STATES GATHERED HERE:

1. Decide to develop a programme of action within the small States, for cooperation and exchange of information on strategies and policies in relation to climate change, global warming and sea-level rise which are common concerns of mankind; and in particular, to:

(a) establish an Action Group initially comprising of representatives from the Caribbean, South Pacific, Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean regions to oversee the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Small States Conference on Sea-Level Rise, to coordinate a joint approach on the issues of climate change, global warming and sea-level rise, and to pursue and follow up on global response strategies towards the recommendations of this conference;

(b) consider the establishment of a Climate and Sea Level Centre and a monitoring network as an important component within the global measuring systems;

(c) mount a campaign to increase awareness of the international community of the particular vulnerability of the small States to sea-level rise;

(d) consider a most effective way in which the small States can participate in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change (IPCC); and

(e) seek assistance from UN and its agencies in the implementation of this resolution.

Recommend all States to take immediate measures to establish the institutional framework to manage the coastal zone and to enact legislation to facilitate such management.

3. Call upon all States to take effective measures according to their capabilities and the means at their disposal, to control, limit or reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, and to consider ways and means of protecting the small States of the world that are most vulnerable to sea-level rise.
4. Urge all States to take immediate measures to enhance energy efficiency and to formulate plans and strategies for a change over, as far as possible, to alternative, less environmentally harmful sources of energy.
5. Recommend that all States take adequate measures to maintain their aquifers, particularly in the case of islands susceptible to sea-level rise and, where applicable, to protect vulnerable natural ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves, which can provide protection against the adverse effects of climate change and sea-level rise.
6. Recommend intensifying research in understanding the complex interrelationships concerning climate change, greenhouse effect, sea-level rise and their implications on the environment and also to determine methods of ameliorating the impacts of these changes on coastal ecosystems.
7. Appeal to all States to embark on intensive afforestation and/or revegetation programmes with emphasis on the

selection of plants and trees suitable for the different soil conditions and salt-tolerant varieties for the protection of coastal areas.

8. Call for negotiations for a framework convention on climate change to start as soon as possible after the adoption of the interim report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change.
9. Call upon all States to undertake environmental impact assessment studies for all development projects, review existing development programmes in terms of environmental impact assessment and strengthen environmental management capabilities.