

**Statement  
by  
Mr Paul V. Desanker,  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)  
at the  
Official Opening of the  
Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Workshop on the Implementation of  
UNFCCC Article 6 (Education, Training and Public Awareness)  
Tuesday, 3 July 2007  
Castries, Saint Lucia**

**Honorable Acting Prime Minister,  
Your Excellency Ambassador,  
Distinguished Colleagues,  
Invited guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, I would also like to warmly welcome participants to this workshop in St. Lucia. On the outset, I would like to convey his and our deepest condolences and deep sorrow regarding the tragic death of Ms Marcia Philbert-Jules. When we heard this news, we all experienced a feeling of loss that occurs with the sudden passing of a colleague. It left a deep void in our hearts, and gave special meaning to our efforts to make this workshop a reality, and in St Lucia.

The vulnerability of SIDS to climate change is very real, and for many, adverse impacts have already started to be felt. While many communities and systems in the SIDs are accustomed to dealing with aspects of climate, the projected changes in climate will bring new and intensified adverse impacts. To meet these new challenges, it is critical that we discuss how the public in SIDs can be better educated and made aware of climate change. This will be the focus of this workshop.

Activities on Education, Training and Public Awareness fall under Article 6 of the Climate Change Convention. A five year work programme was developed in New Delhi, India, in 2002, and it is called the New Delhi Work Programme on Article 6 (NDWP). This work programme will be reviewed end of this year at our next Conference of Parties, in Bali.

Let me say how pleased we are to have procured funding to organize this workshop at this opportune time, as it will certainly have important inputs into the review process and the subsequent elaboration of a new framework for action. Several other important meetings took place, or will take place in the SIDS before the end of year, and I had the privilege of attending one such meeting, that of the *Many Strong Voices*, in Belize, end of May. The getting together of many distant SIDS to share experiences and lessons in capacity-building and methods for outreach, is a very valuable tool that teaches us all more than any written word or impressive scientific reports can ever achieve in a short time. This workshop has similar potential.

In terms of the organization of this workshop, I would like to first thank the Government of St. Lucia through its Physical Development, Environment and Housing for offering to host this workshop. Mr. Crispin d'Auvergne, and his staff, have staged an impressive backdrop for our proceedings this week, in spite of having a little less than two months to get going on the arrangements for this event. Mr. Crispin d'Auvergne has personally been very active in our process, having served as Co-Chairman of some of our deliberations during the Conferences of Parties. His talents are valued greatly, and we look forward to his continued participation.

The secretariat would also like to acknowledge and thank the Government of Norway for its financial support to the workshop, as well as that of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP is our long-term partner, and has also assisted us with the arrangements for the workshop. We hope that UNEP's engagement in national Article 6 programmes will be extended to the SIDS countries present here.

SIDS in the Pacific as well as in the Caribbean have already well-developed regional institutions that support a wide variety of climate related issues. Some of them are represented here. These entities can also help in promoting regional synergies for some actions that we identify in this forum. The workshop could therefore also consider what should be the key messages to be transmitted to such bodies and to other important players as well.

We need to make use of this workshop to generate ideas on what are the methods and practices of education, training and public participation and outreach that work in the region, and which are the ones that do not, so that we can learn.

Honorable Acting Prime Minister,

This workshop comes at a critical time in the intergovernmental process, and will enable this most vulnerable group of countries, SIDS, to share important lessons with the rest of the world, on how to best prepare the public to deal with the serious and irreversible effects of climate change that have been predicted.

We look forward to a productive workshop and I would like to reiterate the full support of the UNFCCC secretariat, to all participants during our deliberations. I thank you all for your kind attention.

Thank you.