



**UN Steering Committee on Partnerships for
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
Expert level Meeting
Tuesday 21 February 2023, 10:00am – 12:00pm, CR11**

Summary

Opening

The Co-chairs of the United Nations Steering Committee on partnerships for SIDS, Mr. Afonso Lages, Permanent Mission of Portugal and Mr. Isaia Lautasi, Permanent Mission of Samoa opened the expert level meeting with brief opening remarks. They stated that the main purpose of the meeting at Expert Group level was to hear updates on the activities of the Committee in 2022, discuss the Programme of Work for 2023 and exchange views on how the Steering Committee can continue to play its role as an accelerator of existing partnerships and a catalyzer for new partnerships in the context of preparatory processes towards the fourth International Conference on SIDS, and on how the Committee can contribute to the way forward. The Co-chairs also noted that the outcome of the Expert Group's discussions will inform the next meeting of the Committee, which will take place at Ambassadorial level on April 4th from 10am in ECOSOC Chamber.

Review of 2022 achievements

Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief, SIDS Unit, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) presented the Committee's main achievements of 2022. He recalled that the Steering Committee's meetings at expert level took place on 24th of February and at ambassadorial level on 14th March 2022. The ambassadorial meeting discussed and agreed on the work 2022 programme. Mr. Navoti also noted that in support of the SIDS Partnership Framework and in line with the [General Assembly resolution 70/202](#), various activities were undertaken in 2022 to promote partnerships for SIDS, including the organization by the Co-Chairs of a side event in the margins of the 2nd UN Ocean Conference and a couple of Events organized by UNDESA at the UNFCCC COP27. The annual Global Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Partnerships (GMSD) for SIDS was held on 11 July 2022. The GMSD included the presentations of the first ever UN SIDS Partnerships Awards. Mr. Navoti also briefed the meeting on UNDESA's capacity support initiatives at national and regional levels under [the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator programme](#). Mr Navoti's presentation materials can

be accessed from the UNDESA Division for Sustainable Development Goals webpage: <https://sdgs.un.org/events/expert-meeting-steering-committee-sids-expert-2023>

Ms. Tishka Francis, Head of SIDS Sub-Programme, UN-OHRLLS, recalled that 2022 – a year of the Ocean - saw many partnerships in the ocean sector. The 2022 SIDS Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN) Forum took place on 12 April 2022 on the margins of the Our Ocean Conference hosted by Palau. The forum renewed the call for private sector partnerships for ocean-based sectors, to unlock new, sustainable economic opportunities that can foster diversification and resilience in SIDS. The report “Private Sector Partnerships in SIDS: Better Collaboration for Sustainable Ocean Development”, which was launched at the Forum, includes case studies in the three regions as well as expert interviews and a cross-sectoral survey. It explores the private sector’s role in the sustainable blue economy of SIDS and touches on previous guides about measuring, managing and sustaining partnerships, and what a truly sustainable blue economy means. UN-OHRLLS also co-organized with UNDESA an introductory training course on partnerships for SDG 14 Life below Water and for driving ocean action. This training course provided participants with the fundamental skills and tools to build new, and improve existing, multi-stakeholder partnerships for SDG 14. Ms. Francis also noted that UN-OHRLLS has a podcast with five episodes on SIDS entitled “Island Voices”.

Programme of work 2023

The Co-chairs stated that the work of the Steering Committee started this year (2023) with organization of a side event on “[Addressing the challenges of climate-induced human mobility in SIDS through effective partnerships, in a context of recovery from COVID-19](#)” in the margins of the ECOSOC Partnership Forum. The event was co-organized with IOM, UNDESA and UN-OHRLLS and was very well attended, with several Permanent Representatives present, together with the Director-General of IOM, the High Representative for LDCs LLDCs and SIDS, and ASG of DESA. A number of representatives of civil society were also present, giving the Event the type of multistakeholder interaction that the co-chairs wanted to foster.

The Co-chairs reiterated that the Steering Committee will meet at Ambassadorial level on 4th April 2023 in the ECOSOC Chamber and the goal of this meeting will be to review activities from 2022, to endorse the 2023 programme of work, and to launch the discussion on what the SIDS Partnerships Framework should look like after 2024. In July 2023, in the margins of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF23), the Steering Committee will convene the GMSD 2023. The Dialogue will be an opportunity to hear directly from partnerships that are (i) addressing vulnerability and fostering resilience (including in a context of recovery from COVID-19), (ii) promoting the sustainable blue economy, and (iii) addressing structural needs, such as human development, sustainable infrastructure, or data collection. This will also be the occasion where the second UN SIDS Partnerships Awards ceremony will be taking place.

From July to October, the co-chairs intend to contribute to the preparations of the fourth International Conference on SIDS, by organizing partnership dialogues during each of the Conference's preparatory meetings at regional and inter-regional levels. The idea is to discuss such dialogues on how the SIDS Partnership Framework has contributed to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, how it can be strengthened, what are some of the policies that enabled the development of successful partnerships, remaining gaps, lessons learnt, useful tools, and next steps.

The Chief of SIDS Unit, Mr. Navoti from UNDESA briefed the meeting on the preparatory process for the fourth International Conference on SIDS. He underscored that the regional and inter-regional meetings are great opportunities to discuss how the SIDS Partnership Framework should look under the next SIDS programme of action and that the timing of those meetings is under discussions among potential host countries. He recalled the General Assembly resolution 77/245 that decided to establish a Preparatory Committee and its Bureau consisting of two members from each regional group to make the organizational, procedural and substantive preparations for the Conference. To this end, a Joint Letter was dispatched by UN DESA and OHRLS to each of the five Regional Groups of Member States, requesting the nomination of two candidates each, to be members of the Bureau of the Committee. The following are the nominations received:

African Group - Cabo Verde, Seychelles;

Asia Pacific Group – Fiji, Maldives;

Eastern European Group – Latvia, Romania;

GRULAC -Barbados, Dominican Republic;

WEOG – Italy, New Zealand.

Under [the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator programme](#), there will be a training workshop on partnership effectiveness for a selected number of stakeholders from SIDS in the Asia-Pacific region which will be held in Bangkok, Thailand on 30 and 31 March 2023, as part of the 10th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. The in-person 2-day training workshop aims to train the participants to become “Partnership Accelerators” and create a network of partnering champions in the Asia-Pacific region for SIDS. Through the workshop, the Accelerators will gain hands-on training experience and the necessary skills to share partnership knowledge in their own networks and constituencies. Following the workshop, the participants should be equipped to building new - and improving existing - effective multi-sectoral partnerships for sustainable development. Mr. Navoti noted that upon request by governments or Resident Coordinators, UNDESA would be happy to explore organizing additional partnership trainings to build partnerships at the national level.

Mr. Navoti highlighted that the second UN SIDS Partnerships Awards ceremony will be held during the Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnerships Dialogue on the margins of the HLPF23 and that application for the Awards 2023 will be open soon. He emphasized that the registration in the [SIDS Partnerships Database](#) is prerequisite to apply for the Awards and those partnerships that are not registered in the SIDS Partnerships Database are encouraged to register as soon as possible. This year, the winning partnerships will be invited to New York to receive a certificate. As a follow-up activity, the winning partnerships will also be invited to participate in a virtual partnership training course organized by UN DESA's 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator programme to discuss in-depth how they are contributing to the sustainable development of SIDS. This will be recorded and posted online as good examples.

Ms. Francis from UN-OHRLLS said that the SIDS Global Business Network Forum (SIDS GBN) 2024 will be held in the Caribbean region and its preparatory process will begin this year. The Forum will bring together SIDS, private sector actors and other stakeholders to set new priorities and areas of focus to feed into the fourth International Conference on SIDS. One of the thematic focus areas will be on a Public-Private Partnerships in sustainable tourism in SIDS. OHRLLS will develop a knowledge product on public-private partnerships for sustainable tourism in SIDS in collaboration with the UN World Tourism Organization and SIDS tourism organisations from each SIDS region. The knowledge product will result in concrete recommendations for forming public-private partnerships in the sustainable tourism sector. This initiative will also include a co-creation session with relevant stakeholders to incubate partnerships in this context and implement the recommendations of the knowledge product.

Interventions and Comments by Member States

Most comments made by member States supported the Committee's programme of work 2023 and the idea of having discussions on strengthening partnerships for SIDS during the preparatory meetings of the fourth International Conference on SIDS. Some member States noted the importance of participation of the civil society organizations and ensuring interlinkages between regional and inter-regional meetings. In relation to the Ambassadorial level meeting in April, a member State highlighted the need to have the clarity on how the Steering Committee could contribute to the preparatory process of the Conference, for example, by having a clear timeline and agenda items. In response to a question on the appointment of the Secretary General of the Conference, the UN Secretariat noted that they are still waiting on the official appointment by the UN Secretary General. UN Secretariat also informed that they are looking at April to hold the one-day organizational session of the preparatory committee for the Conference. UN Secretariat will work with members of the Inter-agency Consultative Group on SIDS to identify entry points to focus on SIDS in activities towards the Conference as well as other major conferences such as the 2023 SDGs Summit.

In reference to the Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue, some member States stressed the need of addressing structural challenges in SIDS such as data collection as well as building resilience of SIDS to multiple external shocks. Member State expressed their support in addressing climate change in SIDS in relation to health issues and decarbonization of shipping.

A member State made an announcement of the SIDS Coalition for Nature, which was launched at high level during COP15 and made a Call for Action underlining 3 gap-bridging priorities to be urgently addressed through strategic partnerships for SIDS for the implementation of the biodiversity objectives: (i) Increasing SIDS' access to concessional finance and mobilizing private investment and financing solutions for biodiversity conservation; (ii) Supporting SIDS' technical cooperation, technological transfer, data management capacities; and (iii) Accelerating biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors and synergies amid Conventions. The Coalition is also encouraging the development of SIDS-SIDS peer learning and cooperation schemes to facilitate scaling up of best practices and innovative nature-based solutions by SIDS and for SIDS. Some member States expressed their support for linking various UN processes together.

Closing

The co-chairs thanked the participants for their active discussions and valuable inputs which will guide and inform the work priorities as set out in the Committee's work program 2023. They emphasized the importance of continuing the work towards achieving common actions, engaging all stakeholders and securing new and lasting genuine partnerships for SIDS.