

2022 UN Ocean Conference – Side Event

"Ocean Action in Support of SDG 14 - The AIS SIDS Perspective"

Concept Note & Agenda

*Tuesday 28 June, from 16:00-17:15 pm in the Committee Room of the Conference venue
(Altice Arena) in Lisbon*

The event will also be live streamed on UN Web TV



CONTEXT

The UN Ocean Conference, taking place from 27 June to 1 July 2022, comes at a critical time as the world is seeking to address many of the deep-rooted problems of our societies that were laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic and which will require major structural transformations and common shared solutions that are anchored in the SDGs. To mobilize action, the Conference will seek to propel much needed science-based innovative solutions aimed at starting a new chapter of global ocean action.

SIDS as Big Ocean States. While SIDS are internationally recognized as a special case for sustainable development ([SAMOA Pathway](#)), they are also considered Big Ocean States (BOS) due to their large ocean areas and resources that lie within their jurisdiction and that principally underpin their national economies: 3.5% of SIDS is land, and 96.5% is ocean. SIDS' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is on average 28 times the country's land mass. Overall SIDS' combined EEZ area covers about 23.2 million square kilometers and collectively SIDS make up a vast share (14%) of the world's coastline ([OECD](#)). Under these perspectives, SIDS are also a special case for marine and coastal ecosystem management, blue economy and, overall, for Ocean Action.

COVID-19 impact on SIDS narrow resource-based economies. SIDS' vulnerabilities and development challenges¹ have now been amplified by the current global COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic fallout. As a [2020 OECD](#) study demonstrates, SIDS with higher Gross Net Income (GNI) per capita levels are not more resilient to confront the present crisis. The social and economic effects of shutdowns of the global economy have affected SIDS disproportionately. With blue tourism accounting for up to 80% of total export revenues in SIDS, globally, the unprecedented fall in blue tourism drastically reduced external earnings of SIDS. According to a [2021 UN Secretary General's report](#), “[i]n 2020, while the gross domestic product (GDP) of developing countries decreased by 3.3 per cent, that of Small Island Developing States decreased by around 9 per cent.”

¹ Although countries worldwide are faced with accelerating change and challenges, for the 38 SIDS it tends to be more intense and rapidly felt because of their small physical scale, geographic isolation, extreme vulnerability to climate change, remoteness from international markets, and reliance on tourism, trade and remittances. Non-LDC SIDS have limited access to concessional financing. Those SIDS unique structural and endogenous development challenges are undermining SIDS' capacities to achieve the 2030 agenda, including SDG 14.

SIDS biodiversity under threats. Despite the blue economy potential, the fragility of islands' natural environment, marine resources and ecosystems in SIDS such as coral reefs, seagrasses and mangroves are significantly impacted by failures of management in land-based sectors such as agriculture, resource extractions and urban and tourism development, pollution, as well by marine activities such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, shipping industry, mining, offshore infrastructure, and other maritime activities.

Although all SIDS face similar structural constraints that increase their vulnerability to exogenous shocks, each of them has their own particularities and have adopted a set of measures to better overcome their vulnerabilities. In this vein, it is of paramount importance that AIS SIDS can come together to share their experience and best practices regarding the preservation of marine ecosystems and sustainable use of marine resources, as well as interact and learn from other partners, as they aim to build more resilient societies.

It is in this framework that Cabo Verde, Maldives, Seychelles, and Singapore decided to seize the opportunity of the UN Ocean Conference to organize a ministerial side event titled: “Ocean Action in Support of SDG 14 – The AIS SIDS Perspective”. Other than offering an enhanced coordination setting amongst AIS SIDS, this event will constitute an opportunity to improve joint advocacy through better, harmonized participation in SIDS networks and dialogue with some common, key international and multilateral partners. Furthermore, this event will be a space to exchange and co-build sustainable development solutions to advance the transition towards blue economies, access to sustainable finance, including climate finance, and digital transformation.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SIDE EVENT

The objectives of the side event will be:

- (i) To show progress, as well as consider challenges, on Ocean Action by SIDS in the AIS region and discuss successful solutions.
- (ii) To identify opportunities to further cooperate to address common challenges on Ocean Action through SIDS-SIDS regional cooperation.
- (iii) To enhance participation of AIS SIDS in SIDS global networks and agendas, alongside the Caribbean and Pacific SIDS and with a harmonized approach amongst AIS SIDS.

PARTNERS / SPEAKERS AT THE SIDE EVENT

The speakers (TBC) will be:

- President of the UN General Assembly
- Ministers of SIDS Member States from the AIS region
- Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

TENTATIVE AGENDA, SPEAKERS & LOGISTICS

The side event will be hosted by Cabo Verde, Seychelles, Maldives and Singapore, and co-sponsored by all the other AIS SIDS.

The agenda will feature high-level political statements stressing progress and challenges related to Ocean Action and highlighting the needs and commitment by AIS SIDS to collaborate in the achievement of SDG 14 in line with the SAMOA Pathway. Each country will choose a different, specific focus on Ocean Action, and present a policy solution that is being designed and implemented successfully in the country to overcome ocean-related vulnerability and strengthen coastal resilience. The event will involve Ministerial-level participants, the

President of the General Assembly and the Chair of AOSIS. A press release will be produced in advance of the event.

Considering the high-level participation, the side event will be in-person and will take place in the Committee Room of the Conference venue in Lisbon to ensure highest visibility. Interpretation (English - Portuguese) will be provided in the Conference venue and the side-event will also be live streamed on UN Web TV:
<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1i/k1i1psruax>

The Moderator (for the country-level interventions and the question/answer session) will be HE Julio Morais, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cabo Verde to the United Nations. The Facilitator will be the UN Resident Coordinator of Maldives: Ms Catherine Haswell.

| Hour (NYC time) | Intervention <i>(5 minutes for EACH intervention)</i> | Speaker |
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| 7 min (Facilitated by Ms Catherine Haswell – Maldives RC) | Opening remarks | HE Abdulla Shahid President of the General Assembly |
| COUNTRY-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS (by alphabetical order) | | |
| 30min (Moderated by HE Julio Morais, Cabo Verde PR) | <i>Ocean Action Theme for the Intervention: Ocean science, innovation and partnerships to boost (blue) economic transformation.</i> | ⇒ Cabo Verde HE Abraão Vicente Minister of the Sea |
| | <i>Ocean Action Theme for the Intervention: Forging partnerships for the sound management of coral reefs through a network of marine protected areas: strengthening SIDS that are heavily dependent on reef resources.</i> | ⇒ Maldives HE Aminath Shauna Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Technology |
| | <i>Ocean Action Theme for the Intervention: Blue Jobs and Sustainable Economic activities</i> | ⇒ Seychelles HE Flavien Joubert Minister for Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment |
| | <i>Ocean Action Theme for the Intervention: Integrated Urban Coastal Management</i> | ⇒ Singapore HE Dr Vivian Balakrishnan Minister for Foreign Affairs |
| QUESTIONS & ANSWERS | | |
| 30 min (Moderated by | 4Q & 4A (with a focus on SIDS to SIDS collaboration) | |

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| <p>HE Julio Morais, Cabo Verde PR)</p> | | |
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| <p>7 min (Facilitated by Ms Catherine Haswell – Maldives RC)</p> | <p>Closing remarks (Possible joint statement/commitment on SIDS-to-SIDS collaboration)</p> | <p>HE Walton Alfonso Webson, Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States</p> |