# MAKING DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION WORK

for

# SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES





## INTRODUCTION

ach country's development pathway is unique, but small island developing states (SIDS) share many common characteristics and challenges that can undermine theirs. Focusing on the 35 SIDS that are currently eligible for official development assistance (ODA), the report "Making Development Co-operation Work for Small Island Developing States" shows that SIDS are an heterogeneous group, exhibiting large variations in terms of population size and densities, geographical spread and relative development progress. However, they also share a number of common and increasing vulnerabilities that have hindered development or put them on fragile growth pathways. In fact, while natural disasters – storms, hurricanes, cyclones, etc. – have been a feature of life in SIDS for centuries, the effects of climate change are exacerbating their intensity and even posing an existential threat to some of these countries. SIDS' climate vulnerabilities add up to the large development challenges that SIDS draw from their structural characteristics (e.g. small populations, spatial dispersion, remoteness) and which include: small and undiversified economies to generate foreign exchange, incomes and tax receipts: high perceived risks and little attractiveness for foreign investors; large recurrent costs and, for some, large debt and narrow fiscal space for development investments. This complex set of challenges leads to higher levels of overall economic vulnerability in SIDS than in larger countries with comparable income levels. In fact, while three-fifths of them are upper middle-income countries, they are among the most vulnerable developing countries: as they grow richer, they retain acute vulnerability to global economic shocks and the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

The persistence of these vulnerabilities and of fragile growth patterns suggests that new development paradigms and solutions are needed to chart the course to sustainable development in SIDS. Achieving sustainable development will be more expensive for SIDS: they will need, more than other countries, resources for building resilience towards increasingly devastating natural disasters as well as to other impacts of climate change. They will also need resources to invest in new development models and solutions that can address their specific vulnerabilities, turning some of their weaknesses into strengths, and charting the course to a new era of sustainable development. Development opportunities to move closer to self-sufficiency lie ahead, especially for some of them: in technological innovations that could lift connectivity barriers to global markets; in the exploitation of renewable energies — sun, wind and ocean waves, all abundant in SIDS — which could break dependence on fossil fuels and create fiscal space to address critical development needs; in the development of the "blue economy" which, by connecting old and new sectors linked to the abundant marine resources of SIDS, could fuel economic growth and help address food insecurity, high unemployment and poverty.

# How does development co-operation respond to the specific needs of SIDS? What could be improved?

For SIDS to seize development opportunities, the international community needs to make development cooperation work (better) for them. Drawing upon new and original statistical sources, the report "Making Development Co-operation Work for Small Island Developing States" contributes evidence to the international efforts to tailor development co-operation and concessional finance to the specific circumstances of SIDS. It sheds light on key drivers of vulnerability for SIDS. It examines the financing for development resources available to them, both domestically and from the rest of the world. The report provides the first comprehensive quantification and analysis of the full spectrum of concessional flows accruing to all 35 ODA-eligible SIDS, examining: the array of development partners involved, the articulation between bilateral and multilateral concessional sources, the sectoral focus and the prevailing co-operation modalities in different SIDS contexts. Finally, the report highlights innovative international co-operation approaches and good practices that can help address some of the key vulnerabilities of SIDS and presents suggestions for making these promising innovative instruments and approaches fully operational, for replicating them and bringing them to scale so as to help SIDS embark on sustainable development pathways. By presenting key highlights from this report, this document aims to inform policy makers, across both development partners and recipient governments, and promote development co-operation that can more effectively support SIDS embark on sustainable development pathways.



## MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

evelopment partners can play a better role than they have in the past to help SIDS secure and invest resources for sustainable development. As highlighted in the OECD report "Making Development Co-operation Work for SIDS", concessional finance from the international community remains a vital source of financing for development for many of these countries. However, a number of challenges remain to better tailor development co-operation to the specific development impediments of SIDS and to exploit its full potential for charting the course of a new era of sustainable development. Overall, concessional finance is strongly concentrated on a few providers and few recipients, with most SIDS receiving the bulk of it as a result of cultural and geopolitical ties with bilateral providers in their same region, or in response to emergencies and shocks. Often, concessional finance follows big shocks in individual countries (such as the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, or a debt crisis in Cuba in 2016), but there is a lack of a more programmatic and predictable stream of funds to address the underlying determinants of vulnerability and to finance new development paradigms to turn some of SIDS' vulnerabilities into strengths, such as the vast ocean resources that surround them. While many SIDS experience dependence on very few providers for the bulk of their concessional finance, they also display a long trail of small projects from multiple sources, which strains alreadystretched institutional resources. Although more sources have become available globally, many SIDS struggle to access these. owing to low absorption capacity and the complex array of accreditation and application processes to access the global climate funds. Access to concessional finance is further constrained by a complex web of eligibilities that includes ad hoc exceptions, and which does not take into account the structural vulnerabilities that SIDS retain even as their national income increases. Despite these challenges, several positive examples also exist of innovations and effective development co-operation approaches and financing instruments, which have successfully helped SIDS make significant progress on development. "Making Development Co-operation Work for SIDS" explores several of these examples, presenting lessons learnt around three areas that are critical for making development co-operation work for SIDS. These areas relate to: enhancing access, modalities and partnerships for concessional finance; using concessional finance more effectively and catalytically to mobilise a broader set of resources for sustainable development; and channelling it where it is most needed, including towards breaking dependence from fossil fuels. building climate resilience, and grasping the opportunities of the blue economy. The report suggests, for each of the areas identified, recommendations to further test, replicate and bring to scale these innovations to effectively help SIDS embark on sustainable development pathways.

#### **Enhancing access, modalities and partnerships for concessional finance:**

To help SIDS manage external resources more effectively and tap into a larger array of resources, development partners will need to invest in more systematic and long-term approaches for strengthening national capacities and releasing absorptive capacity constraints. As part of these efforts, development partners could provide support for assessing which functions could be performed at a regional level, which could be outsourced privately, and which will need to remain at the national level. Development partners could also make use of innovative technologies to tailor capacity building approaches to the specific context of SIDS. In addition, because of the acute capacity constraints in SIDS, using pooled funding mechanisms to reduce transaction costs and modalities to strengthen national capacities is even more urgent than in other developing countries. The revival of budget support in some SIDS, especially in the Pacific, is welcome and could be further expanded to other SIDS where the use of budget support is currently limited. Attention should be paid to the new 'conditionalities' attached to budget support, to ensure that SIDS governments preserve ownership.

Development partners will also need to encourage partnerships with a larger range of actors, including through triangular cooperation, to favour a wider set of perspectives and approaches to the complexity of development in SIDS. These broader partnerships could also provide an alternative source of financing as SIDS move to higher levels of national per capita income.

SIDS that have recently graduated from least developed country status, such as Cabo Verde and Samoa, have quickly moved from a moderate to a high risk of debt distress, signalling that development partners could do more to support and advise countries during transitions. Further, more evidence and policy dialogue needs to be fostered to understand the impacts of different graduation processes on financing landscapes and growth opportunities in order to maintain development gains as SIDS transition through different income levels and development phases.

#### Using concessional finance innovatively to leverage additional resources for sustainable development:

The large financing needs implied by the 2030 Agenda call for effective and innovative policies, approaches and instruments to mobilise resources from a broader set of sources. Opportunities to develop stronger domestic private sectors and to enhance international trade may differ significantly across SIDS, requiring continued efforts to strengthen the contribution of the private sector to sustainable development in these varied contexts. To this end, development partners can support the adoption of adequate policy and regulatory frameworks as well as provide support to increase the economic and financial viability of income-generating activities. Official finance can be used more catalytically to de-risk investments or structure returns in a way to mobilise finance from the private sector through new and emerging blended finance arrangements. Development partners can support the design and implementation of innovative financial instruments, such as green and blue bonds - including by backing them through blending arrangements - to help mobilise financing from private investors.

Development partners will also need to work with SIDS to address debt sustainability issues and to free fiscal space for investments in sustainable development. Development partners could further explore and expand debt relief opportunities and innovative countercyclical instruments, such as loans that automatically postpone debt servicing in the event of a major shock (e.g. through "hurricane" clauses). To increase domestic resource mobilisation, development partners could support the enhancement of tax collection systems, including through greater support towards international initiatives, such as the Tax Inspectors Without Borders initiative. While in several SIDS there has been a focus on enhancing tax revenues through the collection of indirect taxes, development partners could provide further support to favour progressive taxation systems and expand tax coverage, especially to include high revenue-generating segments of the economy. Tangible opportunities exist in many SIDS to expand the mobilisation of domestic resources through enhanced management of key revenue-generation sectors, including fisheries, tourism and natural resource extraction. Policies to reduce "leakages" from key sectors — especially tourism — and to support backward and forward linkages with other domestic sectors (e.g. food and agriculture, consumer goods, and construction) could effectively expand the taxable production base. Support from the international community could also target curbing illicit, unreported and unregulated fishing, which reduce the domestic resources available for development in many SIDS.

Given the importance of remittances as a source of finance in SIDS, the international community needs to consider co-ordinated measures to reduce the cost of remittances, including through appropriate regulations and a development-focused forum where regulators could come together to share the perspectives of sending and receiving countries. Labour mobility programmes in the Pacific led to an increase in remittance flows, developed new skills for migrant workers and met a capacity gap for companies in the country. Providers could explore the scope for further expanding such schemes in the Pacific as well as in other SIDS regions. Diaspora investment schemes could be promising sources of development finance for SIDS, and development partners can do much to support the design and implementation of these instruments.

#### **Channelling concessional resources to priority areas:**

Development partners can help SIDS explore new development paradigms and approaches to break dependence from fossil fuels, build climate resilience, and grasp the opportunities of the blue economy for sustainable development. Development partners need to encourage a transition to low-carbon economies, including by helping SIDS address barriers to investments for renewable energy, such as high initial costs. This would in turn significantly reduce the import bill for SIDS, with positive impacts on the fiscal space available for sustainable development investments. Development partners could also do more to help SIDS integrate climate and disaster risks into national policies and planning, and into project design, and to facilitate greater access to climate financing by encouraging the adoption, by global climate funds, of streamlined procedures for accessing funding, to take into account SIDS' capacity constraints.

A sustainable and innovative use of ocean resources can provide new opportunities for SIDS to boost economic growth and tackle critical challenges such as high unemployment, food insecurity and poverty. While unsustainable human activity is already posing serious threats to oceans in the form of pollution, ecosystem degradation, climate change and excessive exploitation of fish stock and maritime resources, a balance between going for growth in marine economic spaces and conserving healthy oceans is possible. The international community could provide advisory services to SIDS for developing blue economy strategies and innovative investment plans to integrate activities in land-based sectors, coastal zones and Exclusive Economic Zones, as well as legal and regulatory support to address critical cross-border policy issues. Development partners should also support the development of appropriate financing instruments, including innovations such as blue bonds. Specific attention could be dedicated to developing instruments that finance the conservation of marine protected areas, linked to national blue economy strategies.

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION WORK FOR SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES



ENHANCING ACCESS, MODALITIES & PARTNERSHIPS FOR CONCESSIONAL FINANCE

## Capacity building and technical assistance

Support long-term approaches to capacity development, innovative uses of technology, assess functions to be performed at different levels (e.g. regional, national, privately outsourced) & make greater use of pooled funding mechanisms.







Encourage partnerships
with a larger set of
stakeholders to bring
diverse perspectives &
approaches to
co-operation with SIDS,
as well as alternative
sources of financing for
SIDS moving to higher
levels of national per
capita income.



Evidence base & policy dialogue around the complexity of development in SIDS



Promote more evidence and policy dialogue to understand the impacts of different graduation processes on financing landscapes and growth opportunities, so that countries can maintain development gains as they transition through different income levels and development phases.



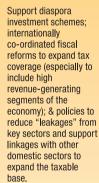
USING CONCESSIONAL FINANCE INNOVATIVELY TO LEVERAGE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

# Access to new and existing financing, including climate finance & private sector investments



Support the design and implementation of innovative financial instruments, including green and blue bonds & blending arrangements, and back these new products with guarantees and co-financing schemes to encourage economic diversification & invest in building long-term resilience.

#### Domestic resource mobilisation







#### Debt sustainability

Promote international responses to debt sustainability issues in SIDS & further explore debt relief opportunities (such as debt for nature swaps) & innovative counter-cyclical instruments, such as loans that automatically postpone debt servicing in the event of a major shock (e.g. through "hurricane" clauses),



CHANNELLING RESOURCES TO PRIORITY AREAS

## Transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient economies

Help SIDS integrate climate & disaster risks into national policies & planning; encourage global funds to adopt streamlined approaches for accessing finance; & help remove barriers to investments for renewable energy sources.





## New growth opportunities such as the blue economy

Provide advisory services & legal & regulatory support to address cross-border policy challenges relating to the development of the blue economy & support the development of appropriate financing instruments, including blue bonds.





## Private sector development, trade & private finance

Support the promotion of policy & regulatory frameworks & measures to increase the economic and financial viability of income-generating activities to strengthen the role of the private sector & its contribution to sustainable development in varied SIDS contexts.







# **KEY FACTS** ABOUT SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES' VULNERABILITIES AND FINANCING LANDSCAPE

## VULNERABILITY

SIDS are on average the most vulnerable among developing countries.

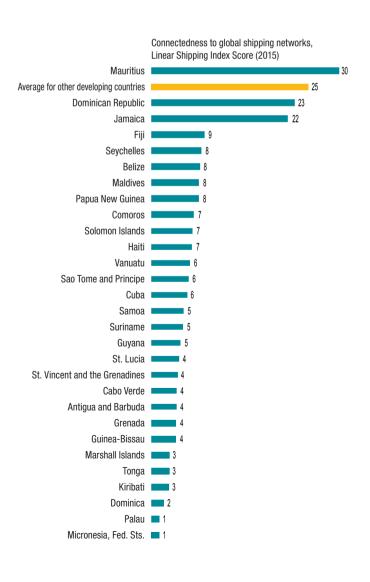
Upper middle-income SIDS are 73% more vulnerable than other upper middle income countries.



## **2** REMOTENESS

SIDS are less than one third as well-connected as other developing countries.

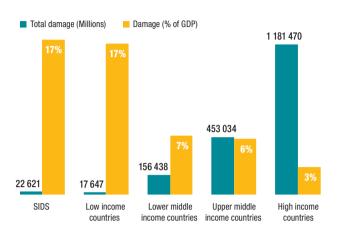
Remoteness is an issue especially for SIDS in the Pacific, which include some of the most remote countries in the world.



# **KEY FACTS** ABOUT SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES' VULNERABILITIES AND FINANCING LANDSCAPE

# 3 IMPACTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS

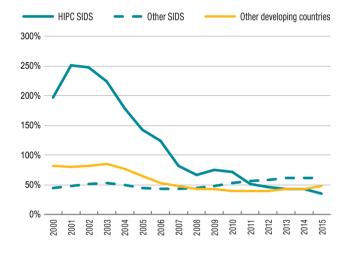
While the monetary value of damage from natural disasters is much larger in advanced economies due to the accumulation of valuable assets, SIDS have the largest losses as a percentage of national output.



## 4 DEBT

Domestic revenues are volatile and several SIDS have debt issues: on average the debt over GNI of SIDS (57%) is significantly higher than for other developing countries (47%).

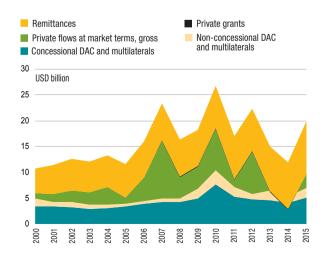
Debt has risen for non-HIPC SIDS and is now double that of other SIDS (62% vs 35%).



# 5 SOURCES OF EXTERNAL FINANCE

Foreign direct investments and other flows of private finance are highly volatile and contribute little to SIDS' external sources of financing: only 12% in 2012-15.

Remittances are the largest flow of external finance representing 52% of the total in 2012-15.



#### **TREND OVER TIME**

5.1

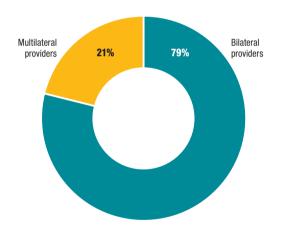
2015

4.2

2014

Concessional finance to SIDS has increased in 2015 after four years of decline – anomaly or the start of a new trend?

The volume peaked in 2010 due to the exceptional international response to the Haiti earthquake.



7.6

5.2

2011

4.8

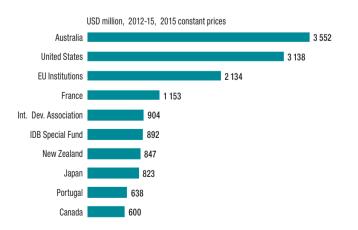
2012

2013

2012-15, 2015 constant prices

USD million,

2010



# BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PROVIDERS

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79% of concessional finance to SIDS was extended by bilateral providers in 2012-15.

Concessional finance from multilateral sources has increased faster than from bilateral sources: +21% from 2012 to 2015.

#### **TOP PROVIDERS**

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72 providers extended concessional finance to SIDS.

The top 5 accounted for 58% of the total.

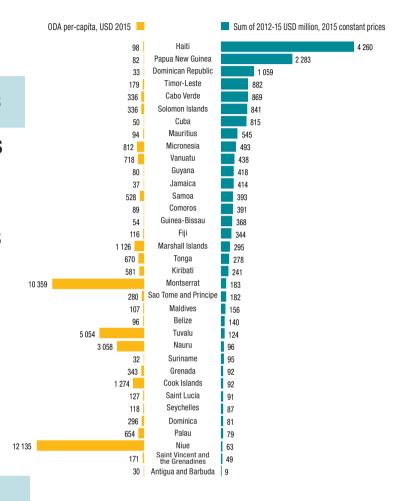
# **KEY FACTS** ABOUT SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES' VULNERABILITIES AND FINANCING LANDSCAPE

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### **ALLOCATION ACROSS SIDS**

Concessional finance to SIDS is concentrated on a few countries.

54% of the total volume of concessional finance to SIDS was directed to just five SIDS.

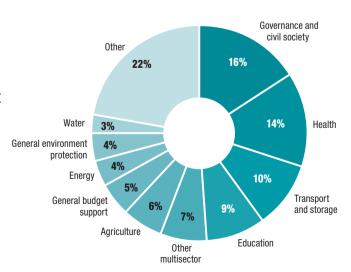


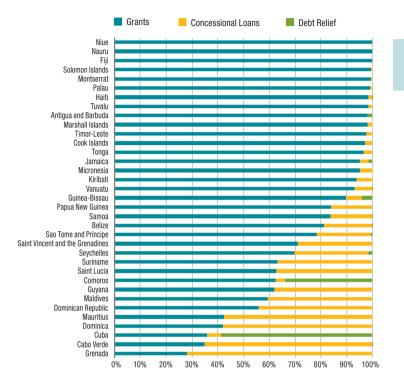
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## **SECTOR ALLOCATIONS**

Concessional finance mainly targets governance, health and infrastructure. This largely reflects donor allocations in main recipient countries.

General and sector budget support represents over 20% of concessional finance for 11 SIDS.

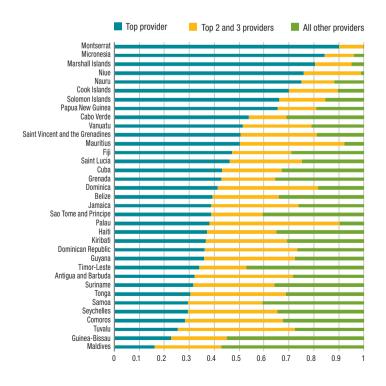




#### **GRANTS AND LOANS**

Grants make for the bulk of concessional finance on aggregate (83%) and for most individual SIDS.

Concessional loans represented over 50% of the total concessional finance only for four SIDS, reaching a high of 72% for Grenada.



# RELIANCE ON TOP PROVIDERS AND FRAGMENTATION

SIDS strongly depend on a single source of financing: on average on the top provider for 46% of concessional finance.

At the same time, the remainder of concessional finance is splintered across small projects, burdening SIDS' capacities:

70% of transactions accounted for 2% of total concessional finance.



### **COUNTRY PROFILES**

The country profiles in "Making Development Co-operation Work for SIDS" present key statistics on the financing for development landscape and key socio-economic and environmental vulnerability of the 35 small island developing states (SIDS) that are currently eligible for official development assistance (ODA). All figures in the snapshots refer to 2012-15 data, unless otherwise specified. Further details on the statistical data are provided in the statistical notes.

#### NOTES ON STATISTICAL DATA AND ON HOW TO READ THE SPIDEGRAMS

In line with OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) statistics, concessional finance in these snapshots are defined as grants and concessional loans from both bilateral providers and multilateral providers that meet the ODA definition. Statistical data on concessional finance is drawn from the OECD/DAC Creditor Reporting System database: http://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/

Data on external financial flows were drawn from OECD DAC Statistics, and IMF and World Bank data. They include: (i) remittances, (ii) private flows at market terms (e.g. foreign direct investments, and total bank and non bank purchases of bonds and other securities, including equities), (iii) private grants, (iv) non-concessional flows from bilateral and multilateral providers (i.e. official flows that do not meet the ODA definition).

The spidegrams are based on the following data:

- Gross national income per capita, atlas method, World Bank;
- Ease of Doing Business Index, World Bank;
- Connectivity, as measured by the 'Liner shipping connectivity index', UNCTAD;
- Human development, as measured by the 'Human Development Index', UNDP;
- Diversification of exports, measured by the Herfindahl-Hirschmann Index (Product HHI), UNCTAD;
- Indebtedness, or debt over GNI. IMF data and IMF estimations for Timor-Leste, Tonga and Palau.
- Environmental vulnerability refers to the Environment Vulnerability Index (EVI), developed by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and their partners.

For the spidegrams, data and indexes were re-scaled through min-max normalisation to obtain values between 0 and 1, where 1 reflects the best position/situation. For variables that are generally associated with preferable development outcomes (e.g. GNI per capita, human development, ease of doing business, diversification of exports, and connectivity) a higher value is associated with better performance, while for indebtedness and environmental vulnerability best performers are countries with the lowest debt over GNI and the lowest EVI score. Therefore, a country that in the spiedegram displays indebtedness below the average line is a country that is performing worse than others in this area, i.e. has a higher debt-to-GNI ration than the average SIDS. Data for the spidegrams are from 2015 (or last year available, but not older than 2012).

The following data was not available for the following countries: (i) GNI per capita and Ease of doing business index for Cuba; (ii) Connectivity data for Timor-Leste; (iii) Ease of doing business index, Connectivity and Environmental resilience for Tuvalu; (iv) Human development for the Marshall Islands; (v) Ease of doing business index for St-Lucia, St-Vincent and the Grenadines and Micronesia.

