Interregional Preparatory Meeting of SIDS for SIDS4
30 August – 1 September 2023
Praia, Cabo Verde

Session 4 (Parts 1 & 2)

Operationalizing the SIDS4 Outcome

Thursday 31 August 2023, 3:00 PM – 4:45 PM and

Friday 1 September 2023, 9:00 AM – 10:45 AM

Background Note

Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for SIDS4

Monitoring and evaluation are necessary to track progress, assess the effectiveness of implemented actions, and ensure accountability. While the SAMOA Pathway provided a comprehensive framework for addressing the needs and aspirations of SIDS, it lacks robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the SAMOA Pathway had several implications, such as lack of accountability - difficulty in holding countries and stakeholders accountable for their commitments; limitation in tracking progress - the absence of defined indicators made it challenging to track progress in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway; and inadequate resource allocation, as monitoring and evaluation plays critical role for assessing whether the allocated resources are being effectively utilized and whether additional support is needed to achieve the agenda.

To address this limitation, the United Nations Secretariat developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for the SAMOA Pathway in 2021.[1,2] At its seventy-sixth session, the United Nations General Assembly welcomed the progress on the framework and encouraged SIDS to utilize the framework for reporting ahead of the fourth international conference on

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[1] Requested by the United Nations General Assembly resolution, *Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*, A/74/217 (21 January 2020), available from undocs.org/en/A/74/217, para 20

[2] Final Report - Development of a Framework for Monitoring the SAMOA Pathway, available at https://sdgs.un.org/documents/final-report-development-framework-monitoring-samoa-pathway-43955

SIDS.[3] In addition, some of the SDG indicators have been utilized to assess the progress of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

At the global level, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the high-level political forum on sustainable development devoted time to the discussion of the sustainable development challenges facing SIDS in order to enhance engagement and implement commitments. [4,5] The progress of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway has been analyzed and informed through the Secretary-General's report[6] and required actions have been called for by the UN member States through the General Assembly resolutions.[7] The SIDS Partnership Framework, called for by the SAMOA Pathway and subsequently established by the General Assembly, played an important role in monitoring the progress of existing partnerships and encouraging the launch of new, genuine and durable partnerships.

The data requirements for the indicators are vast and constitute a tremendous challenge to SIDS, as evidenced by the extensive data gaps across most thematic areas as well as the lack of recent data. Reliable data is critical in supporting governments to systematically monitor and review progress, and in supporting planning and decision-making at all levels. However, the national statistical systems in SIDS continue to face chronic underfunding, resulting in persistent difficulties in collecting and managing data. SIDS continue to face challenges due to their constrained human and financial capacities. Insufficient institutional structures worsen the problem of data being scattered across government bodies, making it difficult to make informed decisions. As such, support to SIDS in addressing their persistent data challenges ought to be a priority in the outcome document emanating from the fourth

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[3] GA resolution 76/203, para. 22.
[4] Requested in the Samoa Pathway paragraph 123
[5] A session dedicated to the discussion on SIDS during the HLPF and the Global Multi-Stakeholder Small Island Developing States Partnership Dialogue are convened annually.
[6] Report of the Secretary-General on *Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*
[7] General Assembly Resolution on *Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*

international conference on SIDS. When designing monitoring and evaluation framework, it is important to consider limited capacities of SIDS and to reduce their reporting burden.[8]

Ensuring Localization and Coherent Implementation:

The need to enhance coherence of SIDS issues in United Nations processes, including at the national, regional and global levels has been underscored as a key objective of the SAMOA Pathway. Policy coherence is critical to deal with the main implementation challenges that SIDS face: (i) ensuring integration, where, for example, actions across sectors or dimensions of sustainable development are mutually reinforcing; (ii) fostering alignment across local, national and international actions; and (iii) overcoming fragmented or siloed policy actions.

For SIDS, sustainable development challenges have global-domestic interlinkages that need to be addressed at different levels. For example, combating climate change, as well as other systemic risks, need to be addressed globally through international collective action, but also require aligning efforts at national or subnational level. To strengthen policy coherence, more work is needed to ensure that there are coordinated institutional structures, shared information, as well as a collaborative administrative culture that takes into account the sectoral interconnections and their effects for the achievement of the SIDS agenda, in alignment with other global frameworks like the SDGs. Certain preconditions have been identified for policy coherence including: engendering political will at the highest levels; capacity development; and providing the incentives and resources to all actors to act.

At the national level, localization of the SIDS agenda, anchored on the principle of multi-stakeholder coordination and collaboration, is recognized as a key approach for more inclusive and coherent implementation. The achievement of sustainable development in SIDS will depend to a great extent on how global goals and targets fit pragmatically into national and local contexts. In this context, the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

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[8] Joint Inspection Unit 2016, Comprehensive Review of United Nations System Support for Small Island Developing States: Final Findings, available at
https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_document_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2016_7_English.pdf

(OHRLLS) created the SIDS National Focal Point (NFP) network, with a key aim of supporting the localization and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs in SIDS.

Since 2018, the SIDS NFPs have played an important role in national and sub-national institutional frameworks for mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs into national priorities, policies, and development plans, as well as their implementation and follow up. One of the major challenges for the NFPs has been integrating the SAMOA Pathway into national, regional and global processes largely driven by SDG implementation. This, together with other issues, including orienting national and sub-national institutional mechanisms, inconsistent multi-stakeholder engagement and coordination, as well as limited capacity, financial resources and stakeholder awareness have served to hamper progress in localizing and implementing the SIDS agenda.

As a new programme of action for SIDS carries forth progress from the SAMOA Pathway into the next decade, the SIDS NFP network, which also includes the engagement of SIDS Resident Coordinators, Regional Commissions, and other regional and global organizations within the UN system and beyond, is uniquely placed to support its operationalization, including through localizing a new set of development priorities for SIDS, and strengthening coherent implementation at the national level, regional and global levels. As such, it will be crucial for the new programme of action to recognize the lessons learned from the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in this regard, and effectively address the importance of localization and coherent implementation. It will need to include clear guidance for action at all levels, including to the United Nations system, on supporting the localization and coherent implementation of the new programme of action in alignment with the SDGs and other relevant global frameworks.

Capacity building

The SAMOA Pathway emphasized the importance of bolstering education and training initiatives in SIDS to enhance their societal and economic resilience. This involves enhancing United Nations system-wide capacity-building programs, strengthening national institutions, integrating capacity-building in cooperation frameworks, launching intensive sustainable development training, collaborating with UN agencies for technical assistance, implementing

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cost-benefit analysis for policymaking, meeting reporting requirements for international commitments, establishing information and communications technology platforms, fostering regional cooperation, and ensuring gender parity in capacity development.

Many programmes and initiatives have been undertaken since the adoption of the SAMOA Pathway. The most recent examples reported include capacity-building activities through ODA on climate and risk reduction and facilitating access to global climate funds as well as reducing dependence on concessional finance; technical cooperation on sustainable maritime transport training programme; national training programmes on disaster loss database and on monitoring, reporting and risk assessment in relating to the Sendai Framework; capacity-building actions on innovative renewable energy and energy efficiency business models; assistance in accessing to scientific and technical information and skills-building on using intellectual property for economic growth and sustainable development; the Aid for Trade initiative to enhance trade capacity; and a training course in data science for development.[9] Additional examples include a project for strengthening sargassum management capacities in the Caribbean; online training course on delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles provided to the stakeholders in the Pacific region; capacity development initiatives in areas related to fisheries, aquaculture, agriculture, conservation of marine ecosystems and disaster risk reduction in AIS region; and other capacity building activities in other areas including trade and human rights-based drug demand reduction.[10]

There was insufficient data to enable analysis to take place for capacity-building and institutional support for SIDS. Insufficient data for several key indicators makes assessing trends difficult in most thematic areas. As SIDS struggle to recover from the confluence of crises dominated by COVID-19 and climate change, timely and high-quality data are more

[9] United Nations, General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*, A/78/222 (24 July 2023), available from undocs.org/en/A/78/222

[10] United Nations, General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*, A/77/218 (25 July 2022), available from undocs.org/en/A/77/218

essential than ever. New investments in data and information infrastructure and human capacity are needed to get ahead of these crises and trigger earlier responses, anticipate future needs and design the urgent actions needed to realize the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[11] The international community should reflect further on how to address the data challenges and needs of SIDS. There is a great need for meaningful partnerships to assist with strengthening capacities of national statistical institutions and for appropriate support to improve data collection and statistical analysis, including high-quality and disaggregated data.[12]

Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) – digitalization transformation

Stimulating STI sectors within SIDS is essential for catalyzing a transition in SIDS' technological development. Such technological advancements are necessary for SIDS to have the proper tools to combat the regional-prone, adverse effects of climate change in tourism and agriculture-fishery sectors. Over the past years, international society has dedicated efforts to mobilize financial resources to promote technology transfers in SIDS and facilitate its sustainable development. However, there is an overall decline in such efforts. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic led to reduction in foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow to SIDS due to a significant downturn in the tourism industry and the postponement of projects on technology advancement. Similarly, official development assistance (ODA) has declined in recent years as some developed countries had to allocate funds to respond to the pandemic as well as refugee-related efforts. ODA promotes resilience in times of unprecedented shocks, which is of greatly important to vulnerable populations like SIDS. As such, it is critical to prevent funds from being redirected from STI investments to shock

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[11] Ibid.

[12] United Nations, General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*, A/78/222 (24 July 2023), available from undocs.org/en/A/78/222

recovery. ODA needs to adjust its usual business to build resilience in times of crisis and further promote its flows for STI advancements in SIDS.[13]

Digital technologies and e-commerce have significant potential to facilitate the participation of SIDS in global and regional markets. They play a pivotal role in enhancing resilience and facilitating robust post-disaster recovery. However, the progress of the digital economy within SIDS is in its early stages of development, as they face challenges to digital transformation such as lack of access to affordable infrastructure and information and communication technology (ICT). The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified existing limitations within the e-commerce ecosystem of SIDS, such as inadequate legal framework on digital economy and lack of capacity of governments in regulating it.

Innovation arises from complex interactions involving both the public and private sectors, influenced by policies, laws, norms, and routines, which can either enable or restrict innovation. Creating effective coordination mechanisms on innovation activities between public and private sector could significantly improve the creation, diffusion, and adoption of new knowledge and technology. It could also optimize the use of available resources without requiring a substantial increase in investment. [14]

Means of Implementation and the Future of Partnerships

The SAMOA Pathway noted that empowered, genuine, and durable partnerships are based on mutual collaboration and ownership, trust, alignment, harmonization, respect, results orientation, accountability and transparency. It emphasizes that political will is required to undertake and implement long-term, predictable commitments. Partnerships in all their forms, regardless of size and economic value, should be utilized, enhanced and strengthened to ensure the meaningful engagement of various actors (including local authorities, civil

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[13] UNDESA, 2022, Financial Flows to Promote Technology Transfer and Gender Inclusiveness for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), available from https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/5th%20UN%20Policy%20Brief%20on%20STI%20roadmaps%20-%20SIDS%20finance_0.pdf

[14] Cambridge Industrial Innovation Policy 2021, How small island states can create successful innovation policy, available from https://www.ciip.group.cam.ac.uk/reports-and-articles/how-small-island-states-can-create-successful-inno/

society and non-governmental organizations, foundations, the private sector and international financial institutions). Partnerships should work to achieve the SIDS vision of self-reliance and to cooperate in the implementation of national policies and to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments. The 2030 Agenda also emphasized that the scale and ambition of the new Agenda require a revitalized Global Partnership to ensure its implementation and that this Partnership will facilitate an intensive global engagement in support of the implementation of all the Goals and targets, bringing together governments, the private sector, and civil society.

The SIDS Partnership Framework was formally established in December 2015 by General Assembly resolution 70/202. Guided by a member States driven Steering Committee, the framework has ensured that SIDS partnerships have remained high on the UN's agenda and provided a multi-stakeholder platform for reviewing progress made by SIDS partnerships, the launch of new partnerships, and for sharing of good practices and lessons learned among all stakeholders, on an annual basis.

According to a study,[15] the common partnership challenges across the three regions included sustainable financing; capacity (human and institutional); an enabling environment dictated by the national social and political context; enabling conditions for the participation of all stakeholders in partnerships; ensuring that the right people with the right expertise are involved in each partnership; lack of trust between partners; and weak institutional, legal and governance structures. Under-represented partners included the private sector, civil society, local governments and academia/research institutions.

Partnerships become much more effective when there is an enabling environment that can foster collaboration across all societal sectors, including policies to incentivize and support multi-stakeholder partnerships, capacity building efforts, financing to drive incentives for cross sectorial partnering, and platforms for brokering partnerships and engagement of all stakeholders. Effective partnering is about leveraging and optimizing the combination of

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[15] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2019, *Partnerships for Small Island Developing States, available from*
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24591SIDS_Partnerships_May_2019_web.pdf

available resources to achieve mutually agreed objectives and goals. This is particularly challenging in SIDS with limited human and financial resources.

In this connection, strengthened engagement of the private sector in the sustainable development of SIDS is key. Private sector support is critical to building resilience and economic prosperity for SIDS, including through providing innovative solutions, financial resources and necessary skills. Additionally, the SIDS private sector can bring contextual knowledge and deep investment in local communities and ecosystems. According to a study[16], effective private sector partnerships, require, *inter alia*, predictable and sustainable financing, proper assessment of risk, clarity on specific opportunities and needs in the SIDS, clarity on best practices, proper regulatory frameworks as well as monitoring and evaluation. Under the SIDS Partnership Framework, the SIDS Global Business Network (GBN), is an initiative by OHRLLS which serves as a platform to create more effective private sector partnerships in SIDS. It brings together SIDS, private sector actors and other stakeholders to share best practices, discuss ways forward, and form new collaborations. The 2024 GBN Forum will be held prior to the fourth International Conference for Small Island Developing States and will provide a unique opportunity to hear from the private sector on the new Programme of Action for SIDS.

SIDS-SIDS cooperation is another key enabler in driving sustainable development. It refers to the technical cooperation among SIDS, and is a tool used by the states, international organizations, academics, civil society and the private sector to collaborate and share knowledge, skills and successful initiatives in specific areas.[17] Many SIDS with limited human, financial and natural resources can greatly benefit from SIDS-SIDS cooperation as it promotes sharing of experiences and could leverage resources and expertise. A successful example at inter-regional level is the South-South Cooperation between Pacific and Caribbean SIDS on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management (DRM), which facilitated the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practices as well as the technology

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[16] United Nations Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS 2022. *Private Sector Partnerships in SIDS available from*
https://www.un.org/ohrlls/sites/www.un.org.ohrlls/files/sids_gbn_report_ocean_partnerships.pdf
[17] United Nations, What is 'South-South cooperation' and why does it matter?, 20 March 2019, https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/intergovernmental-coordination/south-south-cooperation-2019.html

transfer between SIDS in the Pacific and the Caribbean, in order to find suitable solutions and replicate best practices for addressing the various threats posed by climate change and natural disasters. [18] The Global Island Partnership (GLISPA), an initiative by SIDS to accelerate the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), mobilized financial resources of over USD 150 million.[19] Most recently, SIDS Coalition for Nature was launched to advocate for enhanced means of implementing ambitious objectives for nature in SIDS, including SIDS-SIDS cooperation on financing solution. [20] Promoting SIDS-SIDS cooperation requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses knowledge sharing, capacity building, and joint initiatives among SIDS. By fostering strong partnerships at interregional and regional level and by utilizing existing resources effectively, SIDS could collectively address their challenges and accelerate the implementation of sustainable development.

Institutions and governance

The 2030 Agenda highlights the need to build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels, in line with SDG 16. Without effective, accountable, and inclusive public service delivery, there will be little progress in realizing the SDGs and ensuring that no one is left behind. However, references to such institutions have been sporadic in the SAMOA Pathway, mentioned in relation to oceans and seas, water and sanitation, peaceful societies and safe communities, forest and capacity-building.

Effective governance and public administration are critical in delivering basic services to and ensuring the well-being of citizens, and in responding quickly to multiple crisis and external shocks. SIDS have to contend with limited institutional capacities and weak public sector capabilities. This capacity gap is also seen increasingly in the data and statistics fields where

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[18] United Nations Departnemt of Economic and Social Affairs and United Nations Development Programme 2010, *SIDS-SIDS Success Stories: An innovative partnership in South-South cooperation,* available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/961sids-sids_success_stories.pdf

[19] Global Island Partnership, see https://www.glispa.org/

[20] International Institute for Sustainable Development, Launch of the SIDS Coalition for Nature and Call for Action: Advocating for Greater Means for Achieving Ambitious Objectives, 22 December 2022, available form https://enb.iisd.org/launch-sids-coalition-nature-call-for-action

most SIDS lack comprehensive data sets that allow for effective and meaningful monitoring and measurement of SIDS in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs.

Data is important for systematic follow-up and review of progress and to provide evidence for decision-making at all levels. Data still constitutes a tremendous challenge for SIDS, as evidenced by the extensive data gaps across most thematic areas of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway, as well as the lack of recent data. Many SIDS have yet to put in place regulatory frameworks and human capacity for managing and regulating rapid generations of digital data. Data-driven decision-making as well as monitoring and evaluation of public policies in many SIDS is also lagging behind.

While public institutions have a lead role in implementing the SDGs through the policies they make and public services they deliver, some SIDS are not well equipped to address the challenges related to SDG implementation and the multiple intersecting crises they face. A governance system characterized by weak public institutions that do not ensure equitable, fair, resilient, and just access to and delivery of quality education, health, nutrition, social and care services characterize many of the SIDS. They also have weak infrastructure, especially ICT infrastructure, which hampers accessibility and affordability of ICT services. The public sector in SIDS appears to be facing a capacity challenge in delivering change and transformation, with challenges being experienced in relation to mindsets, capacity, processes, and right skillsets. Education and training programmes to enhance the digital skills of the youth and women are especially important.

Role of Civil Society

The SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda emphasized the importance of engaging civil society for the implementation of sustainable development. While the SAMOA Pathway referred to civil society in the priority areas of climate change, partnerships and financing, SDG has a specific target (SDG17.17) calling for promotion of effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships. Civil society plays a vital role in promoting sustainable development and addressing challenges in SIDS. They foster community participation in decision-making processes and often drives innovation by promoting local solutions to sustainable development challenges, leveraging traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and

grassroots activities. They amplify local voices, ensuring that development initiatives are tailored to the needs and priorities of local communities. Furthermore, the civil society plays a pivotal role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge, which helps maintain cultural identities while fostering sustainable development.

Most recently, a global online stakeholder consultation was undertaken by UNDESA in collaboration with UNOHRLLS. Stakeholders, including civil society working in all SIDS regions were asked to identify the key challenges that SIDS encounter in their pursuit of sustainable development priorities. The stakeholders identified the adverse effects of climate change (15.1%), loss of biodiversity (11.7%) and accessing financing for the SDGs (11.3%) as priority challenges for all SIDS regions. Other challenges highlighted include natural disasters (9%), poverty and hunger (8.1%), education (7.7%) and health (5.6%). The stakeholders also indicated that youth empowerment is critical particularly in digitalization and shifting towards more sustainable economies. Likewise, the importance of empowering women and girls and supporting their participation in leadership and decision-making processes was emphasized. The establishment of citizen participation mechanisms through creating spaces for dialogue and public consultations was also recommended.[21]

Centre of Excellence for SIDS

The new SIDS Programme of Action will ideally see greater ownership by SIDS, as the focus shifts towards taking on achievable development aspirations amidst a more conducive environment where SIDS should have better access to financial and non-financial resources that match their actual needs. In support of this vision, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda is proposing the establishment of a Center of Excellence for Resilient Prosperity in SIDS. The Center of Excellence will be designed not just to be a beacon for progress, but also a facilitator of investments driving policy implementation and action through intergovernmental partnerships and shared resources.

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[21] United Nations, 2023, Global Online Stakeholder Consultation, available from https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Global%20Report%20-%20SIDS%20Online%20Stakeholder%20Consultation.pdf