



## QUESTIONNAIRE

### **Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the MSI, BPOA for the Sustainable Development of SIDS**

Please note that strict word limits have been established for each question. The Secretariat is unable to consider any information beyond these established word limits. In this regard, you are requested to report only on new or updated information. Information conveyed in previous surveys will not be considered. Previous surveys can be accessed at XXXX under reports.

#### **PART A**

#### **VULNERABILITY REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING IN SIDS**

##### **1. Enhanced Support for a resilient Post COVID 19 Recovery in SIDS**

Vulnerability reduction and resilience building are critical issues that must be addressed by SIDS. Briefly elaborate on any resilience building interventions or strategies (proactive or preventative) that have been or are being implemented at national or regional levels that aim specifically at improving resilience in SIDS. Please include financial resources expended in this regard, if available **(750 words)**.

The SIDS National Focal Points Network (NFP), established and inaugurated in 2018, in line with OHRLLS' mandate emerged as one of the key platforms to engage Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on issues related to the pandemic and its impact. The network seeks to ensure "the mainstreaming of SAMOA Pathway and issues related to SIDS in the work of the United Nations (UN) system and to enhance the coherence of SIDS issues in UN processes, including at the national, regional and global levels". Through the NFP network, OHRLLS has fostered the sharing of SIDS experiences and best practices on mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs into national development processes as well as their implementation and follow up, in the context of COVID-19 recovery. The meetings, which includes participation from the UN resident coordinator network and regional commissions, have brought to the fore the unique ways different regions were impacted by COVID-19 including recovery efforts. This access to other actors and platforms aims at ultimately strengthening coherence and coordination of support to all SIDS.

In 2022, for example, the NFP network held its meeting on “Enhancing coherence in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and SDGs: A Focus on SIDS Finance issues and the Fourth SIDS International Conference. The focus on finance issues is a response to a critical challenge that SIDS face, which was amplified by COVID-19, and hence discussions and recommendations were aimed at resilience building interventions and strategies including in the context of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS. In this meeting, SIDS shared some of their strategies for financial resources aimed at resilience building. For example, Seychelles employed two financing products: (1) debt for nature swap and (2) blue bond; Belize’s blue bond is aimed at Transforming Debt for Economic Recovery & Conservation Action; and Nauru’s new avenues for new financial resources aimed at resilience building include three projects: Port Development Project, the Higher Ground Initiative; and Deep-Sea Minerals Development initiative.

OHRLLS continued to promote a coordinated and integrated UN support to implementation of the SAMOA pathway and the 2030 Agenda including through its Inter-Agency Consultative Group for SIDS that OHRLLS co-chairs with DESA. The IACG progressively includes more UN resident Coordinators and members of UN country teams who are instrumental in capacitating countries to implement programmes through Cooperation Frameworks and Multi-country Sustainable Development Frameworks, thus placing emphasis on the use of country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by providers of development cooperation in an integrated and coherent manner.

OHRLLS is also leading a coordination initiative in the AIS region, a region that has lagged in intra-group Coordination - largely due to the fact that most countries in the group belong to different formal regional bodies and also because of the wide geographic spread of the group, from the Atlantic (Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe), to the Indian Ocean (Comoros, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles), and to the South China Sea (Singapore). COVID-19 amplified their challenges. Therefore, strengthening coordination in the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) has become increasingly important to promote coherence, communication, and collaboration to effectively implement the new programme of action for SIDS (2024-2034). Improved coordination is necessary to enable the AIS group to better identify common development issues, concerns, and priorities, areas of interest, development priorities, and shared platforms for implementation to leverage synergies across various stakeholders at the global, regional, and national levels. Equally important, is the need for the AIS to be able to strengthen coordination in the monitoring and reporting of these programmes.

## **2. Enhanced and Tailored Development Cooperation for SIDS**

Improved, tailored development co-operation approaches, calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and economic challenges facing SIDS are necessary if SIDS are to effectively recover from the COVID Pandemic. Briefly elaborate on any planned or ongoing strategies/approaches to improve and deliver on more tailored development support to SIDS. What are the expected results from these interventions in the targeted countries. Please include indications of resource allocations if available **(850 words)**

To support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in alignment with the 2030 Agenda – an OHRLLS mandate - OHRLLS exploits various approaches to improve and deliver more tailored development support to SIDS. These include developing a number of knowledge products and engaging in advocacy activities to better define the challenges of SIDS and provide evidence-based, targeted policy tools, instruments, and solutions. For example, in 2022, OHRLLS published a report on Financing for Development in SIDS. The report focused on the changing financial trends for development finance to SIDS due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the opportunities for developing SIDS capital markets.

OHRLLS, together with the Rocky Mountain Institute's Climate Finance Action Network (RMI/CFAN), also published a report on “Accessing Climate Finance: Challenges and Opportunities for Small Island Developing States”. The report provides an overview of the main challenges faced by SIDS in accessing climate finance and puts forward realistic, concrete, and actionable recommendations that can support and inform policymakers, funders, and leaders as they prepare for the upcoming climate finance decision milestones at the UNFCCC and in the lead up to the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

OHRLLS, together with UN-DESA, is providing focused support to advance the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI) for SIDS. Specifically, OHRLLS and DESA are supporting the High-level Panel serving as the Panel's Secretariat within their respective mandates. Among others, the secretariat supports the substantive work of the HLP, providing technical expertise, organizing panel meetings, and coordinating the important contributions from across the various stakeholders, member states, international financial institutions, and development partners. OHRLLS is also leading an advocacy strategy that seeks to impart in a more accessible language the MVI and aims to encourage the adoption and use of the MVI, including among International Financial Institutions. In 2022, this work produced an Interim Report on the High-Level Panel on a multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI) targeting Member States, International Financial Institutions (IFI), multilateral development banks (MDB) and other relevant stakeholders to review and provide their views and comments on the interim report to help further develop and refine the Panel’s final report. When completed, the MVI could potentially be used in development support, including concessional finance.

The office continues to support AOSIS in their climate advocacy, including on Loss and Damage which achieved a significant milestone at COP27 - a historic deal to create a new loss and damage fund. This work, which is underpinned by a strategic plan, will shift focus into the implementation of the Loss and damage proposals, to ensure SIDS, the most impacted, could benefit.

OHRLLS will continue its collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to advance the implementation of a debt-for-climate-adaptation-swap initiative. This initiative aims to address the high levels of indebtedness and vulnerability to climate hazards faced by Caribbean small island developing countries. The collaboration involves the creation of a Caribbean Resilience Fund (CRF) and the implementation of three pilot swaps in Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The CRF will serve as the operational vehicle for these swaps. OHRLLS is providing technical and organizational support for the initiative and mobilizing resources from donor institutions to facilitate debt-for-adaptation swaps. Additionally, OHRLLS will fulfil its role of coordinating the UN system by ensuring that the experience gained in the Caribbean is shared with the Pacific and Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and

South China Sea (AIS) SIDS regions. This will include cooperation with the respective regional economic commissions (ECA and ESCAP).

OHRLLS supported AOSIS, Canada, the UK and other stakeholders in the development of the guidance document: “Improving Development Impact in Small Island Developing States: Implementing Effectiveness Principles”, which was launched in December 2022. This document aims to complement and build on existing agreements and frameworks, by providing concrete and actionable advice to development stakeholders, with the aim of accelerating inclusive, green, and sustainable development in SIDS. OHRLLS will continue to work with partners to mainstream these issues into the development of a new sustainable development agenda for SIDS.

OHRLLS continues to strengthen the engagement of the private sector in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, mobilizing private sector partnerships through the SIDS Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN). Drawing from some of its flagship publications, including on better collaboration for sustainable ocean development, the GBN continues to stimulate the development of private partnerships that are Ocean related and beyond. The network will have its biennial meeting in March 2024, in Barbados, which will aim to share best practices in private sector development for SIDS.

Following the Secretary-General's meeting with Pacific Island leaders during the high-level week of the UN General Assembly's 77th Session, in which Pacific Island leaders presented the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, OHRLLS, as tasked by Secretary-General, has begun holding consultations with relevant stakeholders on mainstreaming inter-agency support at the global level for the 2050 Strategy.

## **PART B**

### **IDENTIFYING POLICY PRIORITIES IN SIDS FOR THE NEW AGENDA**

**The SAMOA Pathway contains a number of action areas which require policy formulation, programmes or projects to implemented at national, sub regional and/or regional levels. While SIDS have made a fair amount of progress with actioning these over the last decade, a number of gaps remain. As the international community prepares for the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on SIDS, what are the key priority policies, programmes and projects that are needed to further advance the SIDS development agenda and why? (750 words)**

Key priority policies, programmes and projects that are needed to further advance the SIDS development agenda, including in the context of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on SIDS, continue to emerge in various fora. Facilitated by or with OHRLLS and other stakeholders including DESA, AOSIS and RCs they offer insight on the critical issues facing SIDS. The most recent are the SIDS Stakeholder meeting (March 2022) and Wadadli Action Platform (August 2022).

For OHRLLS, the SIDS National Focal Point network, which held its recent meeting in August 2023, have been particularly instrumental in shining the light on what challenges, opportunities exist, including some of the key focus areas, and emerging priority issues, that could be

considered for the SIDS Fourth Conference. These range from adapting to the adverse impact of climate change, access to finance, including in the context of the MVI, Disaster Risk Reduction, strengthening data collection management, better integration of the multilateral system etc. The following is a brief discussion of the focus areas that have been raised in the various fora:

1. **Food Systems and Food Security:** Develop cooperative frameworks involving governments, international organizations, and stakeholders to enhance food systems and ensure food security in SIDS. This may include promoting sustainable agriculture practices, improving access to markets, investing in agricultural infrastructure, and supporting local food production.
2. **Marine Pollution:** Implement comprehensive strategies to address marine pollution, with a particular focus on plastic pollution including in the context of the new UNEA Resolution, 'End Plastic Pollution: Towards a legally binding instrument'. This could involve strengthening waste management systems, promoting recycling and waste reduction initiatives, conducting research on the impacts of marine pollution, and implementing stricter regulations on single-use plastics.
3. **Renewable Energy Transition:** Facilitate the transition to renewable energy sources in SIDS by creating a supportive regulatory framework. This includes establishing renewable energy targets, providing incentives for private sector investment, promoting the development of renewable energy projects, and enhancing capacity building for local communities to adopt clean energy technologies.
4. **Implementation and Advocacy:** Strengthen the institutional architecture to improve the implementation and delivery of initiatives relevant to SIDS. This involves enhancing coordination among relevant stakeholders, streamlining processes, and ensuring effective advocacy for SIDS' interests within the multilateral system, including the United Nations and international financial institutions, including for effective monitoring and reporting.
5. **Data:** Improve data collection, analysis, and reporting mechanisms in SIDS. Establish a common platform or universal definition to harmonize data reporting, enabling better monitoring of progress in implementation. Additionally, build analytical capacity within SIDS to effectively utilize data for evidence-based policy-making and decision-making processes.
6. **Biodiversity Conservation:** Strengthen efforts to conserve marine biodiversity in SIDS by implementing measures outlined in the BBNJ (Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction) agreement. This may involve establishing marine protected areas, promoting sustainable fishing practices, enhancing scientific research and monitoring, and supporting initiatives that integrate biodiversity conservation into the blue economy.

7. **South-South Cooperation Mechanism:** Establish a permanent mechanism for South-South cooperation among SIDS. This platform would enable SIDS to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices in managing and addressing specific challenges. It would facilitate peer learning and the exchange of expertise, helping SIDS develop long-term development plans tailored to their unique circumstances.
8. **Loss and Damage:** Advocate for the recognition of loss and damage and implementation approaching it as an oversight and governance issue. This would involve exploring innovative governance mechanisms to address loss and damage caused by climate change, including establishing effective risk management frameworks, insurance mechanisms, and early warning systems to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience.
9. **Tourism and Economic Diversification:** Promote sustainable tourism practices and support small and medium-sized enterprises in SIDS to diversify their economies. This may involve capacity building for stakeholders in the tourism sector, fostering partnerships with the private sector, promoting cultural heritage preservation, and integrating sustainability principles into tourism planning and development.
10. **Digitalization and Resilience:** Prioritize digitalization efforts to enhance education, resilience-building, and governance systems in SIDS. This includes providing access to digital technologies, strengthening digital infrastructure, and developing digital literacy programs. Digital solutions can improve access to quality education, enhance disaster preparedness, and facilitate efficient service delivery in remote areas.
11. **External Debt and Financing:** Address external debt, solvency, and liquidity issues faced by SIDS in collaboration with international financial institutions and multilateral development banks. This may involve advocating for debt relief, exploring innovative financing mechanisms, promoting sustainable debt management practices, and ensuring that financing is aligned with sustainable development goals.
12. **Youth Engagement:** Recognize the importance of engaging youth as future leaders in advocating for the priorities of SIDS. Promote their active participation through awareness campaigns, capacity-building programs, and mentorship opportunities. Empower them to contribute to decision-making processes and ensure their voices are heard in shaping the Fourth Conference and the future of SIDS.
13. **Sargassum Management:** Address the emerging issue of Sargassum, which poses environmental and disaster-related challenges, particularly in the Caribbean region. Invest in research, science, technology, and innovation to develop effective strategies for monitoring, mitigating, and managing Sargassum influxes. This may involve collaborative efforts among SIDS, scientific institutions, and international organizations.



14. **Marine Protection and Funding:** Emphasize the role of SIDS as major contributors to the global public good of marine protection. Highlight the critical role played by SIDS in ensuring a healthy ocean and its ability to sustain the entire planet. Advocate for increased acknowledgment of this role and secure funding as necessary to support marine conservation efforts in SIDS.
  
15. **Private Sector Engagement:** Prepare SIDS for private sector investments by creating a conducive environment in the next 10-year agenda. Develop entry points for private investments that align with resilience-building and sustainable development in SIDS. Facilitate access to financial resources and mechanisms that support private sector involvement while ensuring that investments prioritize the well-being of SIDS communities and ecosystems.