

## **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)**.

- Promoting the foundations of the digital economy in the Pacific will support economic transformations and build greater resilience of communities across social, environmental and economic dimensions. UNOPS in collaboration with other UN agencies (ITU, ILO, UNICEF, FAO, UNESCO, UNODC, and OHCHR) is advancing this agenda through 2 Joint SDG funds in 2022 across Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga.

- **Timor-Leste** is increasingly under threat from climate change impacts common to tropical SIDS – rising mean temperatures, warming and rising seas, ocean acidification and deoxygenation, less predictable and more extreme rainfall, tropical cyclones, flooding, landslides and prolonged droughts. Climate variability and change has direct impacts on the health and well-being of Timor-Leste’s population. Timor-Leste needs accurate, timely and actionable information and early warnings on local weather, climate and ocean conditions and related risks to human and environmental health. Investments in infrastructure and institutional frameworks must be informed by high quality climate information and science based advice on planning adaptation to longer term climate impacts. In this regard, UNOPS is working with UNEP, FAO and other partners under a GCF project, to develop timely and actionable climate information, impact-based forecasting, people-centred multi hazard early warning systems.
- The **Maldives** economy emerged much reduced and damaged from the COVID-19 pandemic which exposed vulnerabilities in health services. WHO, UNOPS, UNFPA and UNDP have assisted the Government of Maldives and the Ministry of Health in particular with a) emergency procurement during the pandemic (from wearables to vaccines) and, b) post-pandemic planning and normative upgrades. UNOPS in particular generated significant savings from COVID-19 related loans and grants, and has assisted the Ministry of Health in repurposing said funds into resilient health infrastructure projects in remote island atolls to enable access to medical services and strengthen resilience to future pandemics and transmissible diseases.
- Building resilient infrastructure is crucial for SIDS in the Caribbean. This includes constructing or retrofitting critical infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, and water and sanitation systems to withstand natural disasters and climate impacts. Additionally, efforts are being made to enhance coastal protection through measures like beach nourishment, dune restoration, and the use of natural barriers. UNOPS is engaging with the governments of **Barbados**, **Sint-Maarten** and **Saint-Lucia** to provide assistance in ensuring the construction of resilient infrastructures.
- Building resilience also requires strengthening the institutional capacity of SIDS. This includes improving governance structures, policy frameworks, and legal frameworks to integrate resilience considerations into decision-making processes. Capacity building programs and training initiatives are often implemented to enhance the skills and knowledge of government officials, emergency responders, and community leaders. UNOPS is supporting the governments of **Sint-Maarten** and **Antigua & Barbuda** in the strengthening of institutional capacity for the planning and delivery of resilient infrastructures.

- UNOPS is building hybrid energy systems in the **Haiti** healthcare system, to allow the Government to reduce its dependency on the fossil fuel energy matrix and increase the services being provided to the population. This shift will lead to a more reliable health energy system that will enhance patient care, improve operational efficiency and contribute to the safety and well-being of both the patients and the healthcare professionals.
- UNOPS is working with key government entities in **Haiti** such as the Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, National Water Agency, Government Energy Unit and key international financial institutions to identify existing infrastructure gaps, vulnerabilities and areas for improvement. Following the 2021 earthquake, UNOPS supported the Government to assess damage to more than 200,000 buildings in the greater South, inform the reconstruction strategy, and train technical specialists for the early recovery period. UNOPS is currently reinforcing over 30 schools damaged by the earthquake, permitting thousands of children to return to school in safe and secure conditions.

## **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)**

- Recognising the funding gap of 3-4 billion USD needed to achieve net zero carbon emission by 2030, in Maldives UNOPS is developing a large-scale resource mobilisation strategy focussed on resilient and adaptive infrastructure. While this strategy is still in a development phase, UNOPS aims to present a PPF (Project Development Fund) to facilitate the transition from Funding to Financing in line with the Addis Ababa Agenda.

- UNOPS will build on existing capacities to help governments develop sustainable, resilient, human-centred, and inclusive infrastructure by identifying gaps in their capacity to plan, deliver, and manage their infrastructure systems. Additionally, integrating climate risk assessments into infrastructure planning and development processes is crucial. UNOPS will implement two IRIS projects in **Sint Maarten and Antigua & Barbuda** aimed at developing governments capacities to plan and finance resilient sustainable infrastructures.
- Water protection and usage is one of the most pressing issues in Caribbean SIDS. To that extent, UNOPS will support developing resilient WASH infrastructure, notably in **Saint-Lucia**. Following the COVID-19 Pandemic and the stress put on health systems worldwide, ensuring the resilience of health systems and infrastructures in SIDS will continue to be a priority for UNOPS. Based on demonstrated capacity for procurement of medical equipment and health infrastructure development, UNOPS will increase its support to the SIDS health sector.
- By promoting access to justice, fair legal processes, and effective dispute resolution mechanisms, the rule of law contributes to a more inclusive and harmonious society. It helps prevent social unrest, reduces inequality, and promotes a sense of fairness and justice among citizens. To that end, UNOPS will continue to support the establishment of Rule of Law facilities in **Sint-Maarten**.
- UNOPS is working with UNEP at Macaya National Park (Haiti) to coordinate all stakeholders in better managing the environmental impacts of climate change. The agencies will carry out environmental studies to assess the impact of human activities, promote conservation, address environmental challenges and drive scientific progress toward a more sustainable and resilient future for the region.
- In **Haiti** UNOPS is supporting the government's efforts to develop long term infrastructure plans in all sectors (water, roads, sanitation, buildings, etc). By investing in building a resilient infrastructure, communities can better withstand and recover from disaster and ensure a more sustainable and prosperous future. Discussions are currently being held with the government to rehabilitate rural roads in the North to improve access to markets.
- In the Pacific region UNOPS will focus on following approaches:

- a. **Promoting recovery with greater resilience through sustainable development solutions which are community centred** and support to strengthen community resilience recognizing the ever evolving dynamic nature of communities and the underlying vulnerabilities that challenge them will be one of key UNOPS priorities in the Pacific region. To enable communities to strengthen resilience, these five elements are key: i) Risk informed – to be resilient requires a broad understanding of risk and its consequences ii) holistic approaches, since communities are multidimensional systems within wider systems iii) proposing solutions that are demand-driven – responding to the community's own understanding of its risk iv) People-centred – listening to and understanding people's perspectives iv) inclusive. This will likely be a growing measure to undertake given the region's exposure to cyclones and related damage to local infrastructure, which is resulting in regular repairs to buildings (including households) which are not climate proof.
- b. **Nature based solutions for resilient communities, livelihoods and environments.** Mangrove forests are important bulwarks against coastal erosion, storm surges and in the longer term coastal inundation. They are among the most carbon-rich and biodiverse ecosystems on the planet. Next to their climate adaptation and mitigation benefits, they provide a wide range of ecosystem services, such as water purification, and natural fish hatcheries, as well as important goods for local communities. They also support fisheries and are an important draw for tourism.
- c. **Improving livelihoods in light of climate change**, as warming seas are resulting in fewer fish-stocks and communities are forced to find alternative solutions for livelihoods by building fish ponds.
- d. **Promoting self reliance and sustainable economic development and reducing energy costs and GHG emissions**, through institutional support and infrastructure that promotes more efficient end-user behaviours. Pacific SIDS NDC targets recognize the need for technical expertise and finance to achieve this goal to reduce fossil fuel dependency.
- e. **Protecting and enhancing freshwater resources are a high priority**, as most PSIDSs water catchments come from captured rainwater and groundwater. Possibilities for developing a more secure water supply include both saline water purification technology at the household level and the improvement of rainwater harvesting and storage facilities. Improvement of flush toilets and septic tanks is also recognized as a priority

- f. **Pollution reduction** - With limited land and the expenses of exporting solid waste, PSIDS have unique challenges in dealing with solid waste compared with other countries. Thus, a more streamlined and efficient solid waste collection and handling regime would benefit the efforts in not only reducing emissions but restoring fragile ecosystems and protecting water quality.
- g. **Introducing sustainable coastal protection measures**, in light of rising sea water levels in the Pacific is reducing the overall landmass available for human settlements and livelihoods development.

## 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 be 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)

UNOPS' mandate offers opportunity for assistance in closing the capacity gap that SIDS experience across regions and in facilitating access to adequate financing for critical infrastructures including in early warning systems, energy transition, health system, green transport and other physical systems needed to strengthen resilience. As the UN committed through the Multi-Country Office Review to a larger and more strategic presence in SIDS, UNOPS has continued to expand its support to governments. There is scope for more targeted assistance complementing the policy and programme support of Funds and Programmes and other UNCT members, which UNOPS has identified and reflected in its restated strategic plan, 2022-2025.

#### Pacific Islands:

- **Sustainable energy:** there is a strong need to promote energy efficiency, and

renewable energy, maximising access to energy and promoting energy sector reform, capacity building and governance.

- **Water and sanitation:** a very small percentage of the Pacific's population has access to clean and safe drinking water, coupled with small catchments, shallow aquifers and inadequate water storage. Lack of water is accompanied by hygiene issues.
- **Health and NCDs:** Currently hospitals and clinics do not have the necessary services to cater to a good diagnostic and clinical care.
- **Climate change:** Sea level rise is increasing coastal flooding, storm surges, more devastating impacting cyclones and land loss. This calls for better preparedness for disaster risk reduction strategies and early warning management. Additionally, the region has experienced an alarming rate of decline in biodiversity.
- **Digital connectivity:** Geographic isolation, scattered location, small size, and limited availability, quality and type of infrastructure and resources of SIDS contributes to the vulnerability of their people, especially in communities that live in remote areas and outer islands. High cost of electricity and lack of affordable connectivity rank among the region's biggest challenges.
- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:** Violence against women; low levels of women's political representation; lower levels of economic participation and culturally-enforced discrimination and inequality of women.

### **Maldives:**

- **Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Programs:** Priority should be given to policies and programs that enhance adaptation and resilience. In the context of distressed government debt, priority should be given to lessening import dependency and easing the fiscal burden on the public purse. Domestic electricity production from renewable sources is being prioritised with the aim of reducing exposure to fossil fuel imports, with portentous investments from the World Bank in particular. On the consumption front, a concerted effort to enhance agricultural domestic production should be adequately resourced.
- **Fisheries and blue water economy.** Protection of biodiversity should accompany a smart management of marine resources. Protection of fish stocks is adequately regulated, but economic diversification via viable alternatives

should be promoted, like mariculture, fish farming and other forms of sustainable fisheries.

- **Management of Freshwater Resources.** Unregulated overuse of freshwater resources has compromised the freshwater ecosystems. UNOPS has installed and operationalised numerous rainwater harvesting systems, but a more systematic approach to infrastructure development should take preservation of the natural water reservoirs.
- **Post-pandemic mental health and gender equity investments.** The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated underlying health issues exposing social inequities. Mental health and gender-based violence are salient social grievances that have escalated in importance and magnitude, requiring adequate resources.

### Caribbean region

- **Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Programs:** Priority should be given to policies and programs that enhance adaptation and resilience. This includes initiatives such as coastal protection and management, climate-smart agriculture, improved water resource management, disaster risk reduction measures, and early warning systems.
- **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiatives:** Priority should be given to the development of solar, wind, and geothermal power projects, implementation of energy efficiency standards for buildings and appliances, and the promotion of energy conservation practices.
- **Sustainable Tourism and Blue Economy Development:** This includes promoting eco-tourism, supporting community-based tourism initiatives, implementing sustainable tourism standards and certifications, and investing in infrastructure and services that enhance visitor experiences while protecting natural and cultural heritage. Additionally, focusing on the blue economy, including sustainable fisheries, marine conservation, and coastal zone management, can provide opportunities for economic diversification.
- **Infrastructure resilience:** Strengthening infrastructure is crucial for economic growth, disaster risk reduction, competitiveness and social development. Investments in water management, sanitation, waste management, roads, buildings, telecommunications, and technology will improve access to essential services and diversify the national economy.
- Haiti needs to focus on **diversifying its economic base**, to move from its



reliance on agriculture. The impact of climate on agriculture is also a key component of the worsening food insecurity across the country. This shift will also support Haiti's economy through the development of new industries.

- **Good governance practices**, anti-corruption measures and institutional capacity building will create favorable conditions in Haiti to attract investments and enable an environment for sustainable development.
- In the next 10 years, SIDS must focus on strengthening climate resilience through risk modeling and extensive investments in disaster-proof infrastructures including in energy, water, housing, waste management, transport and health systems as part of their accelerated adaptation journey.
- To achieve the SDGs and preserve gains through increasingly frequent extreme events, SIDS will need adequate institutional capacities, access to finance and robust data systems through state of the art public governance.
- Natural capitals including ocean resources, forests, mangroves among others must be economically accounted for and optimally managed to sustain growth while honoring people's fundamental right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.
- To enhance human capitals, SIDS would need to transform their education systems to deliver better outcomes and provide relevant skills to their economies.
- The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda's overall objective of resilient prosperity in all SIDS by 2034 requires a redesign of SIDS' growth models to optimize use of resources through strengthening regional public goods and economic complementarities. Technology intensive, smart island systems have the potential to offer income opportunities and generate resilient growth while generating valuable real-time data for improved service delivery. Given the little time SIDS have to reach a safe state of resilience, integrated solutions are required in a continuum of policy - programme - infrastructure and system building. UNOPS offers its expertise in infrastructure, procurement and project services to ensure policy and programmes do make an impact on the ground, improve people's lives and strengthen human security.