

**Steering Committee on Partnerships for Small Island Developing States
Ambassador level Meeting
Thursday, 14 December 2023, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 2**

Opening remarks

- Thank you, Ambassador Luteru.
- It is a pleasure to be here with you, marking the conclusion of our co-Chairmanship of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for Small Island Developing States.
- Ambassador Zacarias wished to have been here herself, yet she is currently on leave in Portugal and sends her warm regards to everyone.
- As mentioned previously, we wanted to convene this last meeting for three reasons:
 - To look back on what we have achieved in the past two years and note lessons learned,
 - To look ahead at the future of SIDS Partnerships, following the series of dialogues held at regional and interregional SIDS 4 preparatory meetings,
 - And to welcome incoming co-Chairs.
- I will be brief and focus on key points, so that everyone can take the floor during the interactive segment.
- Looking at achievements and lessons learned, I would highlight:
 - Working methods: Annual work programmes, established and adopted at expert and Ambassador level respectively, were fulfilled to completion, focusing on issues of importance to SIDS. This two-tiered structure worked well.
 - Substance: In addition to fostering dialogue on the SIDS Partnerships Framework and functioning of Partnerships

themselves, the Steering Committee connected the dots to topics of importance to SIDS, from COVID-19 recovery to the protection of the ocean and biodiversity, the fight against climate change and its impact on migration, graduation and financing of development, including a potential Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI).

- Coherence: Each year, we focused our work on unifying topics – in 2022, work on the Ocean enabled us to take full advantage of the Lisbon Conference; in 2023, we avoided “reinventing the wheel”, steering work towards contributing to the SIDS 4 preparatory process.
 - Linking to key processes: We successfully organized side-events in the margins of HLPF, ECOSOC Partnership Forum, UNOC 2 and COP27. As noted previously, the Steering Committee also promoted dialogues on the future of the SIDS Partnership Framework at regional and interregional SIDS 4 preparatory meetings.
 - Continuity and peer learning: Building upon the work of our predecessors, we implemented the first and second editions of the SIDS Partnership Awards, proposed by former Co-Chairs Antigua and Barbuda and Malta. These Awards provide good practices and, as such, an incentive for the establishment of future partnerships with SIDS.
- What else did we learn about partnerships themselves? A few things.
- True partnerships must respond to the “SMART” criteria: Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Resource-based; and Time-bound.
 - To be transformative, they also should be genuine: all stakeholders must be on the same footing and co-create a shared project.
 - Finally, and at the risk of oversimplifying, an enabling environment for partnerships includes: (i) access to finance; (ii) incentives for collaboration with the private sector; (iii) adequate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation; (iv) appropriate training for

beneficiaries; (v) trust amongst stakeholders, bridging cultures and languages.

- In view of the above, what can be done to further improve the work of the Steering Committee? Some suggestions.
 - Partnership registration: Reflect on ways of increasing the number of partnerships registered, monitoring/communicating progress and impact and promoting exchange of best practices, without overburdening MS.
 - Strengthening connection/synergies to other UN bodies/entities: (i) evaluating if appropriate and how best to involve UN Resident Coordinators on the ground in development and monitoring of partnerships; (ii) exploring synergies with the SIDS Global Business Network Forum, further involving the private sector, international financial institutions and multilateral development banks; (iii) exploring synergies with other UN bodies, such as, UNOSSC on South-South and triangular cooperation.
 - Strengthen connection to other processes: (i) in addition to ECOSOC Partnership Forum, ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum and/or Science, Technology and Innovation Forum; (ii) UNOC 3; (iii) COP29.
- I hope that these elements provide food for thought, not least to incoming Co-Chairs, and I thank you.

Presentation: Key messages on partnerships from preparatory meetings for the Fourth Conference on SIDS

- Thank you, Ambassador Luteru.
- The goal of this segment is to follow-up on the partnership dialogues held during the regional and interregional SIDS 4 preparatory meetings, as foreseen in our 2023 work programme.
- We wanted to leave you with a concrete product that could contribute to collective thinking on the future of the SIDS Partnership Framework. The Secretariat, whom we thank, has prepared an informal summary of key points drawn from preparatory meetings. We hope you may find it useful.
- Allow me to highlight key messages drawn from these meetings in a non-exhaustive manner in advance of our interactive discussion.
 - Overall, there is an interest in strengthening existing institutional structures aimed at the promotion of partnerships, including: (i) the SIDS Partnership Framework; (ii) and, the SIDS Global Business Network and the SIDS Global Business Network Forum.
 - This is complemented by a call to establish new structures, specifically a biennial regional multi-stakeholder SIDS partnership dialogue (interregional meeting), a Caribbean SIDS Partnership Forum and a Pacific regional multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue. There was also a call to convene a high-level meeting of the AIS region to discuss modalities for a coordination mechanism.
 - At the same time, there are calls to boost public-private sector partnerships and strategic partnerships, the latter of which by leveraging North-South and South-South, including SIDS to SIDS, and triangular partnerships.
 - There is cross-cutting interest on partnerships in a number of issues, including, among others, the fight against climate change and plastics and pollution, and the protection of biodiversity, disaster risk reduction and the promotion of resilience, STI and digitalization, and financing for development.

- Finally, some meetings appear to have gone into more detail on certain topics in their connection to partnerships. A few examples:
 - The promotion of innovative financing, such as debt-for-nature swap and blue investment bonds, carbon credit, blue and green bonds (AIS, Caribbean)
 - Sustainable and energy infrastructure (AIS, Pacific) and just transition from fossil fuels (Pacific)
 - Water and sanitation (AIS, Pacific)
 - Strengthening of health systems and revamping education models (Caribbean, Pacific)
 - Data and statistical systems (Caribbean, Pacific)

Excellencies,

- These items do not exhaust the list of SIDS priorities. There are many challenges that SIDS face that require urgent attention from the international community, as outlined in each outcome document. Their challenges can be effectively met through partnerships.
- The SIDS Partnership Framework provides a platform for stakeholders from different sectors to come together, to synergize their efforts and to form effective partnerships for SIDS to address their challenges.
- This is your opportunity to provide your views on its future.
- I thank you and look forward to your interventions.

Closing remarks

- We hope that this discussion can contribute to collective thinking on the future of the SIDS Partnership Framework.
- Based on the dialogues held during the SIDS 4 preparatory meetings and today’s discussion, the Steering Committee will work with the Secretariat on recommendations to strengthen the SIDS Partnership Framework.
- From our part, as we step down from this role and hand the baton to Ireland and Palau, you can count on us to remain engaged:
 - In the preparatory process of SIDS 4, to which I am glad to announce that we will contribute financially. We look forward to the first session of the Preparatory Committee.
 - At the Conference itself, with high-level participation, noting, with appreciation, the thematic panel focusing on partnerships.
 - And beyond, aiming to launch in 2024 a SIDS capacity-building and training programme, designed for senior officials, covering such key areas as climate and energy transitions, ocean conservation and governance, digitalization, and international law.
- Finally, some thank you notes:
 - To Ambassador Luteru, on behalf of Ambassador Zacarias, with whom we developed a good partnership, on which we hope to build,
 - To the Secretariat, including UN DESA and OHRLLS teams, for their tireless support,
 - And to MS and other stakeholders, for whom this work is carried out, for your trust and engagement.
- I thank you for your support over the past two years and wish the best of luck to Ireland and Palau.
- The [tenth] meeting of the Steering Committee is adjourned.