

Statement

Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS

Ambassadorial Meeting 2023

14 December 2023, 10.00-12.00

Conference Room 2

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Excellency Ambassador Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Dr. Pa'olelei Luteru,

Excellency Jorge Aranda,

Thank you for convening this meeting today. I would like to add my congratulations to you on your excellent stewardship of the Steering Committee for the last two years. We also congratulate Palau and Ireland as the new co-chairs and look forward to working with you.

In your capacity as co-chairs, you have led important efforts to advocate for the strengthening of partnerships in support of SIDS.

Our Office is happy to support the Steering Committee on efforts to promote stakeholder partnerships for SIDS, including the the SIDS Partnerships Awards and the preparatory gl for SIDS4.

In this context, we have helped to organize meetings in the broader sustainable development arena, including ECOSOC and HLPF. OHRLLS has also organized events at key meetings like the IMF and World Bank annual meetings as well as COP28 which included discussions on partnerships for SIDS.

As recommended by the co-chairs, our Office continues to work closely with DESA and the Steering Committee to create synergies between the SIDS-GBN and the SIDS Partnerships Framework.

During your stewardship, OHRLLS has worked hard to strengthen the SIDS Global Business Network, which is the private sector arm of the SIDS Partnerships Framework.

The SIDS Global Business Network was established at the private sector forum of the SIDS3 Conference in Samoa. The establishment of the SIDS-GBN was formally recognized by the General Assembly in 2016.

Since the establishment, OHRLLS has convened the SIDS-GBN Forum every second year to bring together businesses, SIDS and stakeholders to share best practices, and form partnerships that contribute to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

Together with incoming co-chair of the Steering Committee, the Republic of Palau, we convened the Fourth SIDS Global Business Network Forum in 2022 on the margins of the Our Ocean Conference in Koror, Palau. This was done in close collaboration with the former Steering Committee.

Early this year, the Office conducted an evaluation of the SIDS-GBN which found that the Network is an important platform for involving the private sector in the SIDS agenda. The report included recommendations on how to strengthen the network going forwards. For example, it found that there is a need to convene more frequent activities such as regional business fora, capacity building activities, and workshops.

At the interregional preparatory meeting in Cabo Verde, SIDS called for the strengthening of the Network for the facilitation of public-private partnerships.

Under the SIDS-GBN, OHRLLS offered support for travel of private sector representatives to the SIDS4 preparatory meetings to bring their voice into the discussions, which reinforced the discussions during the partnership dialogue in the Pacific. The Office also organized donor roundtables which facilitated open discussions with donors on key priority areas for partnerships with SIDS going into the next SIDS agenda.

We are now looking towards a critical year where we need to define the future for SIDS.

The next SIDS Global Business Network Forum will be convened next year ahead of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS, with a preparatory process that is well underway. The Forum will bring together SIDS, private sector actors and other stakeholders to discuss joint priorities that will feed into the private sector forum of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS.

The process will be closely linked to the SIDS4 process and functions as the private sector track. The outcomes of the Forum will be brought into the private sector session of the SIDS4 Conference.

We recently kicked off the preparatory process of the Forum. Through this process, we are exploring how to strengthen the Network in the next SIDS decade.

OHRLLS has also set up an advisory group for the Forum's preparatory process with private sector representatives from each SIDS region and partnerships experts to guide the process. We appreciate the support and engagement of the Steering Committee in this process as members of the advisory group.

In October, we convened an in-person meeting in New York that brought private sector representatives from each SIDS region to New York to meet with member states, UN partners and other stakeholders. During this meeting, we heard from speakers on how to better engage the private sector in the sustainable development of SIDS. We were happy to see that the Network was endorsed as a way of giving the private sector a table in discussions on the new SIDS agenda.

In November, we held the first preparatory webinar, focused on building resilience of SIDS via public-private partnerships. This webinar series will continue next year from January through April with webinars on blue-green economy, digitalization, innovation and technology, financing and investment, as well as sustainable business principles.

We have brought in specialized UN agencies throughout this process to exchange knowledge from across the UN system which can contribute to the strengthening of the Network. We have also started to engage development banks into the process who can contribute to discussions and best practises of financing.

We also participated in the Caribbean Investment Forum to promote the Network and hear from businesses on how to best engage them in the upcoming forum and the new SIDS agenda. Here, we learned the importance for us to be engaged in regional private sector networks going forward to better bridge their work to UN processes.

Under the Network, we are currently developing a report on public-private partnerships for sustainable tourism in SIDS in collaboration with Compete Caribbean, UN World Tourism Organization, and SIDS tourism organisations. The report will result in concrete recommendations for public-private-community partnerships for sustainable and inclusive tourism with special attention to women.

We are also developing a report on MSME Financing in SIDS with support from ESCAP.

Finally, we plan to develop a 'SIDS in Numbers' report focused on private sector development in SIDS. The report will provide a deeper understanding on the current situation of the private sector across the SIDS, upon which we can base our future work.

All of this work will be closely aligned with and will feed into the work of the Steering Committee and the Conference.

We look forward to working with Portugal and Samoa on the SIDS-GBN Forum 2024 as well as other related initiatives for the remainder of your stewardship and beyond as you remain important members of the advisory group.

We also look forward to working with our incoming co-chairs on these efforts including our strengthened engagement with the SIDS national focal points and RCs to bring coherence at all levels.

Thank you.