

Recommendations to Zero Draft for

Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States

Background

Small island developing states, by definition, already suffer from the lack of natural resources to sufficiently provide for their population while simultaneously developing their socio-economic systems and engage in global trade. The small land sizes lend to finite amount of soil and even less fertile soil on which to cultivate crops and create a livelihood. Being open to harsh weather conditions, exacerbated by climate change, the degradation of land resources, more so our soils, poses a serious threat to our fragile ecosystems and vulnerable livelihoods.

The thematic areas identified in the ZERO DRAFT under *What Do SIDS Want?* **do not** mention 'land' in any operative way, in terms of its sustainable management. Paragraph 'h' on page 12 states

"...fostering a united effort in addressing climate mitigation and adaptation goals, and also noting it is essential for those small island developing States that have maintained forest cover and other ecosystems such as mangroves, seagrass, peatlands, old-growth forests, and marshes, over decades of sustainable management and use to pursue opportunities to mobilize financing in this regard."

How can these be accomplished without making the necessary interventions to first ensure the soils can support these things?

To make it worse, the word SOIL is not mentioned at all!!

In 2017, a report released by the FAO, states *"It is estimated that of the 400 ha of degraded land in SIDS worldwide, 120 ha occur in the Caribbean region..."* This statistic has most likely worsened given the amount of degradation that has taken place due to more frequent and intense storms. [927_a-i7744e.pdf \(unccd.int\)](#)

Recommendations

C. A secure Future

ii. Water-food-energy – inclusion of specific terminology

d. Increase sustainable agricultural and fisheries productivities, food security and nutrition and incomes in SIDS in a manner that helps with climate adaptation, mitigates emissions, **promote healthy soils** and promotes sustainable use of biodiversity including through incubation, diversification, **sustainable land and soil management**, local value addition, climate-resilient best practices, promotion, scaling up and replicating locally grown ideas to accelerate the achievement of agriculture, food security, and good nutrition;

D. Environmental Protection and Planetary sustainability- inclusion of new paragraph

v. Mainstream sustainable land and soil management

- a. Develop and enforce, as appropriate, national drought and land degradation strategies, and voluntary targets to achieve the SDG 15.3.1 land degradation neutrality;
- b. Collaborate with international and regional partners to:
 - (i) ensure data continuity, availability of high-resolution interoperable data products for the land surface, and the bridging of the data gaps, especially in SIDS, availing of innovation in artificial intelligence-based methodologies;
 - (ii) Review the state of the art in methodologies for estimating the three land-based progress indicators with the aim of identifying and incorporating advances which could improve their assessment;
- c. Incorporate local and traditional knowledge and practice of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in SIDS for nature-based solutions to our declining soil fertility and soil biodiversity.

Respectfully,

Lakeram Singh

Chief Technical Officer

PISLM

Cc. Calvin James, Executive Director, PISLM