



SIDS Global Children and Youth Action Summit (CYAS) as part of the Fourth UN SIDS Conference (SIDS4)

Prime Minister of Bahamas, His Excellency Philip Davis, highlighted—at the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27): “his country has to believe that “a safer, better future is possible...I say that we have come because we believe that action -- real, concerted, action -- can save the planet and save our human race,”

This statement highlights, more than ever, the urgent need to inspire action and instill hope by highlighting SIDS children and youth as agents of change, effectively and creatively contributing to issues affecting them and their communities. The **SIDS Global Children & Youth Action Summit (CYAS)** will be held in conjunction with the Fourth UN SIDS Conference (SIDS4), which is set to take place in Antigua and Barbuda in 2024.

The Fourth UN SIDS Conference, convened under the inspiring theme “**Small Islands, Big Dreams: Children and Youth for SIDS Resilience**”, is a high-level event which brings together representatives from SIDS and other countries, along with UN agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, to address the unique and complex challenges faced by small island states, such as climate change, poverty and digital transformation, and other contemporary political and social issues.

SIDS4 builds upon the legacy of the third UN SIDS Conference in Apia, Samoa, in 2014, the SAMOA (Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action) Pathway, the Barbados Programme of Action (1994) and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (2005). SIDS4 will serve as the launchpad for the next ten (10) -year action plan for SIDS development, and the CYAS will ensure that youth are informed, involved and well-placed to provide their perspectives and priorities as governments and other stakeholders cultivate and implement the solutions for the specific challenges faced by SIDS. The 10-year plan framework emphasizes the need for long-term vision, strategic planning, international cooperation and partnerships to support SIDS in achieving their development goals.

CYAS will serve as a highlight of the overall SIDS4 Conference Programme and will provide an essential opportunity for SIDS youth to share their perspectives on an intersection of social and environmental issues and their impacts, as well as to present new ideas, solutions & recommendations for and commit to a course of action.

A diverse group of approximately 60 youth delegates from SIDS countries, aged between 14-28 years old, will be selected to attend this historic moment. In total, 100-150 persons will attend, including Government Officials, United Nations Experts, the global press, technical personnel, chaperones, affiliated partners and observers.

Summit Activities

The 2024 SIDS CYAS will consist of practical and engaging master classes addressing several themes highlighted in the SIDS 4 Outcome Document, discussions, project-formulation and fundraising. The capacity-building elements embedded into the event will be defined in collaboration with partners such as the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and several United Nations agencies with the aim of identifying tangible actions that SIDS youth can take to champion the causes that are important to them.

Specific activities will include:

- Opening and Closing Ceremonies inclusive of special cultural items
- Pre-Consultations - youth consultations will take place in the three SIDS regions and at existing UN fora leading up to the Summit. These virtual consultations aim to empower youth in the lead-up to the SIDS Children & Youth Action Summit, where they will formulate SIDS Youth Commitments and a Call to Action. These commitments and the call will be presented to world leaders at the UN 4th SIDS Conference, ensuring that the voices and innovative solutions of children and young people from diverse SIDS regions are heard and considered on the global stage.
- Master Classes will address various themes such as the impact of climate change, inclusive and transformative digitization, building resilient territories, poverty reduction and participation of children and youth in governance. Experts will provide participants with emerging global trends and best practices in these areas as well as a deep-dive into the pressing issues.
- Inter-generational discussion forum bringing together youth delegates, Ministers and other high-level officials, from the Governments, International Organizations and other, to engage in an exchange of ideas on how youth can be included on critical issues.
- Challenges - A challenge will be designed to serve as a platform to foster innovative ideas and practical solutions between the three (3) SIDS regions. By encouraging collaborative problem-solving and involving youth as teams, we aim to harness diverse perspectives to create efficient and impactful solutions. These challenges align with the broader goals of our youth consultations and workshops, emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices and youth engagement in SIDS issues.

- Youth will negotiate with donor funding agencies to raise support for the projects developed through the challenges and the regional consultations.
- SIDS Youth Commitments & Call to Action Declaration, which is to be presented at the Ministerial Discussion during the 4th UN SIDS Conference.
- Sustainable Cultural Fashion Show – youth delegates will be asked to reuse old or recyclable materials/clothing that would typically have to go to the landfill to make a piece of art that is durable (can be worn again or recycled entirely after the show) and looks fashionable. Prizes will be awarded to the Top 3 delegates.
- Inspire Me will be an evening dialogue with one of the SIDS Global Children and Youth Climate Action Summit Ambassadors (celebrities) to share their life experiences and those related to the impacts of climate change or their work with the delegates.
- Skit & video creation for the Goodwill Challenges.

Objectives:

- Equip and mobilize SIDS youth as agents of change
- Develop action items and linkages among SIDS youth to respond to the multiple crises facing SIDS
- Generate a youth-led global call to action to contribute to the resilience of SIDS
- Youth voices, ideas, and suggestion to be reflected in the official SIDS4 Outcome Document

Intended Outcomes:

- Generation of a SIDS Youth Commitments & Call to Action
- Financed children/youth projects & initiatives at the regional and/or global levels to address SIDS needs in alignment with the 4th International SIDS Conference Plan of Action.
- Creation of regional and cross-regional partnerships
- Expansion of Goodwill Challenge as an advocacy platform
- Youth voices, ideas, and suggestion to be reflected in the official SIDS for conference and the related SIDS4 Outcome Document

Expected Impact:

Children & Youth from the three (3) SIDS regions are interconnected for common objectives, formally engaged in multilateral SIDS processes, and leading on SIDS-targeted initiatives at the national, regional, interregional, and global levels, laying a solid future for sustainable development and the achievement of SDGs in SIDS.

Participant Profile

- Legal resident of SIDS, regardless of citizenship
- Between the age of 14-24 years old
- A member of a child/youth organization or network that engages in activities for SIDS, especially targeted to vulnerable groups and grassroots communities, giving priority to participants operating along the summit's thematic areas

- A recognized advocate at the national or regional level
- Formally approved/endorsed by a SIDS national government or at least by one UN agency as a representative for the CYAS and/or for the SIDS 4.

The CYAS organizers will seek to ensure gender balance and geographic representation and will prioritize participation for youth with disabilities, indigenous youth, rural youth and youth from other vulnerable groups. Furthermore, priority will also be given to youth representatives who have the above profile and are already engaged in youth networks established and/or supported by UN agencies to ensure regional, inter-regional and global impact.

Budget Estimate

The proposed budget for this initiative is \$901,922.38 USD. Various partners including Member States, Foundations and UN Agencies currently partnering with The Ashley Lashley Foundation have been contacted to sponsor this event.

From the supporting UN agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will manage the funding and takes overall responsibility for the organization of the conference. A special account has been set up at UNICEF HQ for this purpose.

Conference partners

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda is collaborating with the Ashley Lashley Foundation and in partnership with Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) SIDS Constituency to ensure that the conference is youth-led. Having launched in December 2019, **The Ashley Lashley Foundation** uses its voice to bring greater awareness of significant environmental and health issues affecting Small Island Developing States (SIDS), namely the health impacts of climate change. Over the years, The Ashley Lashley Foundation has embarked on several projects, using each as a reminder to you to ***Let No Obstacle Be Greater Than the Cause***. These projects began with the start of the Schools Against Non-Communicable Diseases, followed by the Global Youth Network Summit in 2018 and has been an annual event since seeing themes relating to Non - Communicable Diseases, Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Change and Health. The Major Group for Children and Youth is the United Nations General Assembly mandated, official, formal and self-organized space for children and youth to contribute to and engage in certain intergovernmental and allied policy processes at the United Nations.