

SIDS Partnership Symposium

Advancing partnerships in support of the new Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States

19 and 23 February 2024, Room H, United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok, Thailand

Organized by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in the margins of the 2024 Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

Background

In its resolution 77/245, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed its call for the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4)¹ to be convened in 2024. Hosted by Antigua and Barbuda, SIDS4 will take place on 27-30 May 2024 under the theme “*Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity*”. The Conference will agree on a bold new programme of action for SIDS to support SIDS to achieve their sustainable development objectives over the next ten years.

A key outcome that stemmed from the *third* International Conference on SIDS² was the establishment of the SIDS Partnership Framework as a mechanism to promote, monitor, and stimulate the launch of new partnerships for SIDS. Established in 2015, the SIDS Partnership Framework has evolved into a broad multi-stakeholder platform, providing a space for reviewing the progress of SIDS partnerships and facilitating the sharing of good practices and lessons learned among all stakeholders.

In 2023, a series of preparatory meetings took place within each of the three SIDS regions, along with an interregional preparatory meeting for all SIDS, with the primary objective of identifying and formulating valuable contributions for the SIDS4 Conference. The outcome of the interregional meeting³ - the “*Praia (Cabo Verde) Declaration*” - called for the *strengthening* of the SIDS Partnership Framework to continue its impact on communities, on human resource, capacity building, the environment and enhanced knowledge sharing, including information, data, and improved coordination.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships have a crucial role in driving implementation of sustainable development in SIDS. By aligning interests and combining public, private and people resources and levers for change, they are uniquely placed to find innovative solutions, engage locally, challenge entrenched power, and drive a transformation towards the vision everyone on the planet can get behind: a prosperous economy, thriving society and healthy environment. It is evident that this **concept is equally applicable to all the priority areas** that have emerged from the preparatory process of SIDS.

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/smallislands>

² <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/small-islands/apia2014>

³ <https://sdgs.un.org/smallislands/interregional-preparatory-meeting-all-sids>

SIDS Partnership Symposium

On 19 and 23 February 2024, UN DESA, in collaboration with ESCAP, with support from UN Office for Sustainable Development, will host a two-day SIDS Partnership Symposium as an associate event to the 2024 Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)⁴, held at the United Nations Conference Center, Bangkok, Thailand.

The objectives of the SIDS Partnership Symposium include:

1. Gather insights and perspectives from SIDS stakeholders on how the **SIDS Partnership Framework** can be improved in its upcoming phase to bolster implementation of SIDS priorities through partnerships in SIDS.
2. Explore how to **enhance coalitions and partnerships on three key SIDS priorities** (as identified in the *Praia (Cabo Verde) Declaration*), including through financing, technological innovation, data, capacity development, trade initiatives, and statistics.
3. Foster **peer learning and exchange of knowledge among stakeholders** in building effective collaborations for SIDS.

The APFSD in 2024 will be organized under the theme: “*Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions in Asia and the Pacific*”. The Forum will also place a special emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals that will be reviewed at the 2024 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, namely **Goal 1** (No Poverty); **Goal 2** (Zero Hunger); **Goal 13** (Climate Action); **Goal 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions); and **Goal 17** (Partnerships for the Goals).

To complement the APFSD and remain focused on topics relevant to Asia-Pacific region, the SIDS Partnership Symposium will center its attention on how to enhance coalitions and partnerships for the following three key SIDS priorities:

Priority area 1 – Partnerships for Science, Technology, Innovation and Digitalization

Unlocking the transformative power of science, technology, and innovation (STI) for sustainable development requires robust partnerships. Collaborative efforts are pivotal for implementing solutions that enhance social services, create economic opportunities, and safeguard the environment. Partnerships also play a crucial role in advancing digital transformation and promoting context-specific research and analysis to strengthen the science-policy interface.

Enhancing strategic partnerships is essential, both within the SIDS community and through North-South, South-South, and triangular collaborations, including SIDS to SIDS. This approach is vital for accessing technical and technology transfers, fostering trade and investment relationships, and expediting inclusive economic growth.

⁴ <https://www.unescap.org/events/apfsd11>

Priority area 2 – Partnerships for Climate Finance

SIDS have underscored the importance of prioritizing access to climate. This entailed developing the necessary capacity to construct project pipelines at scale. Partnerships play a pivotal role in enhancing access to climate finance for SIDS, including:

- **Increased Pledges to Climate Funds:** Collaboration between developed countries and international climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, is essential. Partnerships can facilitate increased pledges, ensuring a more substantial financial commitment to addressing climate challenges in SIDS.
- **Capitalization of the Loss and Damage Fund:** Urgent capitalization of the new Loss and Damage Fund requires collaborative efforts. Partnerships should ensure that the needs of SIDS are considered in the context of access and resource allocation, contributing to effective climate finance distribution.
- **Risk Sharing:** In partnerships, risk-sharing mechanisms involve various contributors to a fund, mitigating risks linked to investments in SIDS.
- **Technical Assistance and Capacity Building:** Partnerships can offer technical expertise and capacity-building support to SIDS, aiding in the design and implementation of projects aligned with climate and development goals, rendering SIDS more appealing to financiers.
- **Promoting Sustainable Investments:** Genuine multi-stakeholder partnerships focus on promoting sustainable development in SIDS, aligning financial resources with development goals and contributing to projects with positive social, economic, and environmental impacts.
- **Advocacy and Policy Dialogue:** Partnerships provide a platform for advocacy and policy dialogue, fostering collaborative efforts to raise awareness about the financial needs of SIDS and advocate for supportive policies at national and international levels.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Partnerships commonly incorporate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of financed projects. This ensures accountability and aids in refining strategies for future investments, optimizing the utilization of financial resources.
- **Developing Partnerships to Good Standards:** Establishing partnerships adhering to high standards, ensuring ethical and effective collaboration for the benefit of SIDS.

Priority area 3 – Higher Education and SIDS

The Symposium will also feature a lunch-time brown bag event spotlighting the pivotal role of higher education institutions in SIDS in driving sustainable development and exploring avenues for scaling up efforts.

Higher education institutions are instrumental in fostering sustainable development in SIDS by inspiring future generations to cultivate the skills, mindsets, and attitudes needed for societal transformation. It's essential to integrate increased investment opportunities in higher education institutions into SIDS development strategies. Enhancing the teaching of sustainable development across disciplines, supporting innovative research and analysis, and adopting sustainable campus practices while nurturing local ecosystem building endeavors can foster a participatory approach throughout SIDS. Additionally, bolstering partnerships among higher education institutions in SIDS is crucial for enhancing collaborative efforts in areas such as mobility, funding, teaching, capacity building, and research.

Survey on partnerships for SIDS

In our endeavor to gather comprehensive insights and expertise from all stakeholders, we've created a survey which will inform the outputs of this process. We strongly encourage participants of the Symposium and other stakeholders to contribute their perspectives through this survey.

Please note that all questions are optional, allowing you to skip those that may not be relevant or of interest to you. We appreciate your participation and encourage you to take the survey in its entirety or partially. You can access it here: <https://forms.office.com/e/zMjMMv8Je1>

Outputs

The Symposium will contribute to the development of two outputs, which will be submitted to the Steering Committee on SIDS Partnerships for further consideration.

1. **Recommendations** on how the SIDS Partnership Framework can effectively be strengthened in the new programme of action for SIDS.
2. **Assessment of requirements** for scaling up development of partnerships on select priority areas, including mapping of key actors and initiatives, including required resources. Next steps would envision organizing dedicated roundtable discussions with donors and interested actors to scale up collaboration in these priority areas.

Programme

19 February 2024	
Day 1 - Partnership Dialogue	
09.00 AM – 09.05 AM	Welcoming remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, ESCAP
09.05 AM – 09.10 AM	Group photo with all participants
09.10 AM – 09.20 AM	Opening of Symposium <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief, SIDS Unit, Division for SDGs, UN DESA • Mr. Sudip Ranjan Basu, Deputy Head, Subregional Office for the Pacific, ESCAP
09.20 AM – 09.35 AM	Keynote remarks - H.E. Ms. Ilana Victorya Seid , Permanent Representative of the Republic of Palau, co-chair the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS
09.35 AM – 09.45 AM	Presentation - “SIDS Partnership Framework - history, purpose, and the role of partnerships in driving SIDS’ priorities” - Mr. Ola Goransson , Sustainable Development Officer, Division for SDGs, UN DESA (10 mins)
09.45 AM – 10.15 AM	Partnership engagement exercise - Mr. Darian Stibbe , Executive Director, The Partnering Initiative
10.15 AM – 10.30 AM	Coffee and networking break
10.30 AM – 12.15 PM	Priority area 1 – Partnerships for Science, Technology, Innovation and Digitalization Part 1 – Setting the scene <u>Guiding questions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In what ways can partnerships leverage data and digitalization to support evidence-based decision-making for sustainable development in SIDS?</i> • <i>What role can partnerships play in advancing sustainable development goals in SIDS through science, technology, innovation, and digitalization?</i> • <i>How can coordination at the global, regional, and national levels contribute to fostering more effective partnerships in this area?</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Presentation</u> – “<i>The essential role of partnerships in enhancing progress in science, technology, innovation, and digitalization for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States</i>” (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Jonathan Tsuen Yip Wong, Chief of Innovation, Enterprise and Investment, ESCAP • <u>The SIDS perspective</u> - sharing of experiences, opportunities, and challenges (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Bridge Thomas, Special Assistant to the President, Office of the President of Palau • Featuring <u>innovative partnerships</u> (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director, Regional office for Asia and the Pacific, International Telecommunication Union ○ Ms. Yujeong Kim, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UNEP <p>Part 2 - Scaling up collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Group discussions (30 mins)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What resources do different sectors offer, and what motivates or hinders their involvement in forming partnerships to advance science, technology, innovation, and digitalization for the sustainable development of SIDS?</i> ○ <i>How do we systematically support the development of more and more effective partnerships for enhancing progress in science, technology, innovation, and digitalization for the sustainable development of SIDS?</i> • <u>Synthesizing insights (20 mins)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open plenary discussion on actionable steps to scale up collaboration, drawing from learnings shared throughout the session
<p>12.15 PM – 01.30 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch</p>
<p>12.45 PM – 01.30 PM</p>	<p>Priority area 3 - Higher Education and SIDS - A brown bag lunch event</p> <p><i>An open discussion on how we can build a broad coalition to scale up efforts to enhance the knowledge in higher education to support implementation of sustainable development in SIDS.</i></p> <p><u>Moderated by</u> Mr. Ola Goransson, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for SDGs, UN DESA, co-chair of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief, SIDS Unit, Division for SDGs, UN DESA, focal point for the Universities Consortium of Small Island States • Mr. Jaap Van Hierden, UN Resident Coordinator, Federated States of Micronesia-MCO

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Santi Chaisrisawatsuk, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) • Ms. Lily Bosen Liu, Head, Partnership and UN Liaison Unit, UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education (IESALC) • Ms. Heejeong Ahn, Programme Specialist in Higher Education, UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok • Ms. Elena Proden, UNITAR (connecting virtually) <p><u>Guiding questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How can higher education institutions in SIDS effectively inspire and equip future generations with the skills, mindsets, and attitudes necessary to drive transformative change for sustainable development?</i> • <i>What strategies can be implemented to integrate sustainable development principles across all disciplines of study within higher education institutions in SIDS?</i> • <i>In what ways can higher education institutions support and promote innovative research focused on addressing sustainability challenges specific to SIDS?</i> • <i>How can universities in SIDS lead by example through the adoption of sustainable campus practices and active engagement in local sustainability initiatives?</i> • <i>What role does higher education play, and what strategies can higher education institutions implement to promote partnerships towards achieving SIDS priorities?</i> • <i>What are the next actionable steps to scale up collaboration?</i>
<p>01.30 PM – 03.15 PM</p>	<p>Priority area 2 - Partnerships for Climate Finance</p> <p><u>Guiding questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How can partnerships support SIDS in accessing climate finance, including with the development of projects to ensure they meet the necessary requirements?</i> • <i>How can partnerships help the effective implementation of climate related programming and projects, including ensuring adequate resources for implementation?</i> • <i>How can coordination at the global, regional, and national levels support these efforts?</i> <p><u>Session scenario:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Setting the scene presentation</u> – “The role of partnerships in supporting access to climate finance for SIDS” (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Beatrice Olsson, Asian Development Bank • <u>The SIDS perspective</u> - sharing of experiences, opportunities, and challenges (10 mins)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Samoa • <u>Innovative partnerships/approaches</u> (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Vuki Buadromo, Principal Adviser, The Pacific Community • <u>Scaling up collaboration</u>: Group discussions (30 mins) • <u>Synthesizing insights</u>: Open plenary discussion on actionable steps to scale up collaboration, drawing from learnings shared throughout the session (20 mins)
<p>03.15 PM – 03.45 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Coffee and networking break</p>
<p>03.45 PM – 04.45 PM</p>	<p>Wrap-up discussion</p> <p>The SIDS Partnership Framework serves as a crucial a mechanism to promote, monitor, and stimulate the launch of new partnerships for SIDS.</p> <p>The session aims to generate ideas and recommendations for how to the Framework can be strengthened in the new programme of action for SIDS.</p> <p><u>Facilitated</u> by H.E. Ms. Ilana Victorya Seid, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Palau</p> <p><u>Guiding questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How can the SIDS Partnership Framework be strengthened within the new programme of action for SIDS? What specific strategies and initiatives could enhance its objectives?</i> • <i>Drawing from past experiences, what approaches have shown promise, and conversely, what strategies have proven ineffective or failed to yield meaningful progress?</i> • <i>How can international financial institutions strengthen their involvement in supporting SIDS through the Framework to further advance sustainable development in SIDS?</i> <p><u>Kick off presentation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Building the enabling factors for widespread collaboration in SIDS” - Mr. Darian Stibbe</i>, Executive Director, The Partnering Initiative (10 mins)
<p>23 February 2024</p>	
<p>Day 2 - Policy Dialogue</p>	
<p>Part of UN DESA’s Global Policy Dialogue Series</p> <p>Watch live at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtVCKSjbg48</p>	

<p>10.00 AM – 10.15 AM</p>	<p>Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Lin Yang, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN ESCAP • Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief, SIDS Unit, Division for SDGs, UN DESA
<p>10.15 AM – 10.30 AM</p>	<p>Key messages from Day 1 of the Symposium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships for Science, Technology, Innovation and Digitalization (speaker tbc) • Partnerships for Climate Finance (speaker tbc) • Higher Education and SIDS, Mr. Ola Goransson, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for SDGs, UN DESA
<p>10.30 AM – 11.45 AM</p>	<p>Panel discussion - Advancing partnerships in support of the new Programme of Action for SIDS</p> <p><u>Guiding questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What factors contribute to creating an enabling environment for collaboration in SIDS, and how can these factors be further strengthened to boost collaboration?</i> • <i>In what specific ways can the SIDS Partnership Framework provide support to facilitate partnerships in the upcoming programme of action for SIDS?</i> • <i>How can we ensure active participation of all stakeholders in advancing partnerships in the new programme of action for SIDS?</i> • <i>What are your hopes and aspirations regarding the potential outcomes or initiatives that could emerge from the SIDS4 Conference this coming May, and how do you believe they could positively impact the challenges faced by SIDS?</i> <p><u>Moderated by</u> Mr. Darian Stibbe, The Partnering Initiative</p> <p><u>Panelists:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Willie Ningalo, Government of Solomon Islands 2. Mr. Gilson Pina, National Director for Planning, Ministry of Finance, Government of Cabo Verde 3. Ms. Misha Kaur, Senior Lead & Specialist, Public Governance Directorate, OECD 4. Ms. Kate Brown, Global Island Partnership 5. Ms. Villaney Remengesau, Belau Association of NGO
<p>11.45 AM - 12.00 PM</p>	<p>Closing and next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Andie Fong Toy, Head, Subregional Office for the Pacific, UN ESCAP • Mr. Ola Goransson, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for SDGs, UN DESA