



Concept Note

Voice the Future SIDS Journalism Campaign

1. Introduction

The future of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), espoused by SIDS, must be based on ¹“resilient prosperity.” The **“Voice the Future SIDS Journalism Campaign”**, a drumbeat supporting this ethos, is a United Nations initiative designed to promote SIDS-based reporting and will attract both developing and accomplished journalists from SIDS member countries to cover the pivotal Fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4), scheduled for 27-30 May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda.

This initiative recognizes the critical role journalism plays in shaping the sustainable development narrative, including shining a spotlight on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by SIDS, by emphasizing issues such as climate change, disaster risk reduction, access to finance, sustainable tourism, economic transformation, and more. The initiative is spear-headed by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

Experience with the SAMOA Pathway, the predecessor to the new SIDS agenda, showed that the SAMOA Pathway remained scantily visible to the very SIDS communities it sought to serve. Where there was coverage, it was mainly through the United Nations or global media entities with very little available through SIDS based media outlets. Enhanced journalistic focus can elevate coverage of the urgent development issues of critical importance to SIDS, inform policy, attract investment, and foster international cooperation. There is a dire need for increased media representation specific to SIDS that articulates these issues with cultural insight and local knowledge. The Voice the Future SIDS Journalism campaign seeks to capitalize on SIDS4 and promote wider coverage of SIDS development issues by SIDS based media including the new 10-year agenda for SIDS development, the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

¹ The overarching theme of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) is “Charting the course toward resilient prosperity.”

2. Aims and Objectives

The overarching goal of the “Voice the Future SIDS Journalism Campaign” is to enhance the quality and reach of SIDS’ sustainable development-related reporting.

Specific objectives include:

1. To select a cadre of journalists with a passion for highlighting SIDS sustainable development issues;
2. To promote in-depth, knowledgeable, and culturally nuanced coverage of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS and other SIDS related issues; and
3. To facilitate the building of a network of SIDS-focused journalists who can continue to share knowledge and coverage on SIDS sustainable development matters beyond the conference.

3. Expected Outcomes

In the short term, the initiative aims to generate quality SIDS reporting; including high-caliber articles, videos, and audio reports, before, during and after SIDS4 that capture the essence and urgency of SIDS' sustainable development issues.

Long-term outcomes include the establishment of a dedicated stream of SIDS-centric news content and the fostering of a robust network of journalists highly engaged in SIDS sustainable development issues, contributing to sustained international, regional and local awareness and advocacy on what is at stake for SIDS in relation to their sustainable development, in the context of the new SIDS agenda, and the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. An indicative theory of change is shown in **Annex 1: An indicative theory of change**.

4. Methodology

The selection process for SIDS journalists will be initiated through an open call for submissions (**running for about 4 weeks**) with clear judging criteria related to SIDS' reporting experience, linguistic proficiency, audience reach, and journalistic excellence etc. The call will be widely circulated online, social-media and shared to a targeted distribution to amplify reach. A panel of judges including those with expertise in journalism and SIDS related issues will review submissions within a specific deadline. Selected journalists, up to 18 (covering all the three SIDS regions; Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Seas (AIS), Pacific and Caribbean) will be provided with support to attend SIDS4 from 27 to 30 May 2024. Selected journalists will be asked to participate in pre-conference workshop(s), for orientation and to produce indicative plans for their journalistic activities related to the SIDS Conference.

An indicative list of key milestones is contained below. A detailed workplan will guide the implementation of the related activities with responsibilities.

Indicative list of key milestones (Pre-conference activities).

² Milestone	Date (indicative)	New Dates (indicative)
1. Concept note	28 Feb 2024	
2. Open Call for (including application guidelines) published/circulated	6 March 2024	19 March 2024
3. Evaluation team constituted	25 March 2024	27 March 2024
4. Deadline for submissions	06 April 2024	10 April 2024
5. Communication of Award to SIDS journalists	15 April 2024	17 April 2024
6. Information on registration, logistics & travel info. Circulated <i>(Should be sent with the award info).</i>	15 April 2024	17 April 2024
7. Confirmations of acceptance (with completed related forms) received from Journalists.	19 April 2024	22 April 2024
8. A Pre-Conference event held (Online)	8 May 2024	Same date
9. A Draft programme for Journalist in Antigua established	22 May 2024	Same date
10. A complete tally of Participants (with tickets confirmed)	24 May 2024	24 May 2024

² These will be adapted to circumstances, including the rate of approvals for processes.

Annex 01: An indicative ³theory of change:

	<u>Areas of 'impact'</u>	Comments/Assumptions
Impact	Sustainable Development of SIDS	<i>Sphere of interest</i> , with limited influence by this initiative – constitutes long-term changes.
Outcome level 3	Increased actor/partner engagement for the SIDS sustainable development	<i>Sphere of interest</i> : limited ability to control this
Outcome level 2	Actors, current and potential, empowered with information on SIDS issues, in the context of pursuing the SIDS sustainable development agenda.	<i>Spheres of influence</i> (changes the initiative would like to see)
Outcome level 1	Increased (also sustained) reporting on SIDS issues; to empower 'actors' to co-create value; Sustainable and high impact SIDS development initiatives; programs and projects.	<i>Sphere of influence/control</i> - Selected SIDS journalist are highly motivated to produce quality reporting on SIDS sustainable development issues competent journalist, able to travel within a tight turnaround time, visa
Output	Highly competent SIDS journalists selected and nominated to participate and report on SIDS issues, including in the context of SIDS4	<i>Sphere of control</i> - A competent panel, a good number of competent journalists apply, and are able to travel within a tight turnaround time, and overcome visa issues is critical.
Input	Adequate resources (Human and Financial) in place to support selection and 'deployment' of journalist at SIDS4	<i>Sphere of control</i> - Financial resources could cover up to 18 journalists from SIDS (6 from each region), contingent on other factors.

³ The bottom reflecting the areas with some degree of control, to influence and finally level of interest that are removed from this initiative.