

4TH INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON
**Small Island
Developing States**
27-30 MAY, 2024
ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Issue #4: 14 February 2024
103 days to go!



*Ashley Lashley of Barbados participates in an interview during the SIDS4 Preparatory Committee meetings in January 2024.
UN DESA photo*

Partnering with small islands for a resilient future

When the last International Conference on Small Island Developing States was held in 2014, there was no COVID-19 pandemic and no global economic recession and much fewer geopolitical tensions. The climate emergency, while present, had not reached the heights it has today.

This year, as the world prepares to meet in Antigua and Barbuda in May for the [fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States \(SIDS4\)](#), things are different. While SIDS have made some progress towards sustainable development, their small size, geographical remoteness and the limited scale of their economies have left them particularly vulnerable amid a raging storm of acute external shocks.

Even with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change now in place as clear target-driven global agreements to make the world better for everyone everywhere, SIDS are being left behind. The time for a new programme of action for SIDS is now.

“SIDS are the stewards of our ocean and bastions of environmental justice. Amid today’s turmoil, they are both facing the fire and fueling the change,” said UN DESA Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua, also serving as Secretary-General of the SIDS4 Conference. “Building their resilience ensures a sustainable future for us all.”

He added: “We must craft an ambitious programme of action that is robust and achievable. Not a wish list, but an action list.”

Countries took a big step in developing that action list last month in New York during the first Preparatory Committee session for the Conference. Delegates met from 22 to 26 January for the first round of discussions about the [zero draft outcome document](#). It outlines a development plan aimed at bolstering more resilient societies in SIDS including by improving their access to finance—including climate finance—strengthening data collection, accelerating innovation and digitalization, and enabling partnerships. Special attention has also been placed on improving education and employment opportunities for children and youth, and other vulnerable groups.

“As co-chairs, we are happy to note the strong showing we saw from member states and the UN system and civil society,” said H.E Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the UN and co-chair of the SIDS4 Preparatory Committee with New Zealand, at a [news conference during the preparatory meetings](#). “We heard strong commitments for a more sharply focused and action-oriented programme of action.”

Ambassador Mohamed noted: “SIDS are not seeking charity. SIDS are looking for genuine partnerships.”

The SIDS4 Conference comes at a critical time for small islands, which face rising sea levels and a rising debt burden.

“The cumulative effects of weather, climate and water-related hazards in SIDS, which caused a staggering US\$153 billion dollars of losses in the last 50 years continue to pose existential threats to the 39 small island states,” said Rabab Fatima, UN High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and Special Adviser for the SIDS4 Conference.

Good ideas for how to build resilience in SIDS are coming from the people living on small islands in addition to their development partners. The upcoming conference in Antigua and

Barbuda will provide opportunities for all stakeholder groups to learn from each other and create new partnerships to benefit all.

“We believe this Conference is going to put down a marker for transformation,” said H.E. Walton A. Webson, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda.

Watch the [new video created by UN DESA](#) highlighting SIDS partnerships.



UN DESA photo

SIDS4 zero draft outcome document advances at first Preparatory Committee session in New York

The [first session of the Preparatory Committee](#) for the SIDS4 Conference, co-chaired by H.E. Ms. Carolyn Schwalger, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations, and H.E. Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations, met from 22 to 26 January in New York to consider the [zero draft outcome document](#) and to take a number of procedural decisions, including granting special accreditation to 105 NGOs, major groups and other stakeholders in the Conference.

The zero draft outcome document builds on the collective aspirations and outcomes from a series of SIDS regional and interregional [preparatory meetings](#) conducted in 2023, and it seeks to set out a new and ambitious 10-year action plan for SIDS, aimed at succeeding the SAMOA Pathway.

The co-chairs have organized a comprehensive schedule to ensure the continuation and deepening of the discussions on the outcome document, planning three additional rounds of negotiations before the Second Preparatory Committee Meeting, slated for 1 to 5 April.

At the core of the zero draft and the discussions at the preparatory meeting were urgent calls for action to bolster the resilience of SIDS against climate change impacts. The document also highlights the critical need for enhanced access to concessional finance,

alongside emphasizing the importance of protecting oceans, promoting the blue economy, building capacity, diversifying economies, strengthening health systems and advancing social inclusion.

The general discussions featured a diverse range of voices, including nine statements on behalf of a group of countries, 32 national statements, 11 contributions from United Nations system entities, and eight presentations by accredited civil society organizations (CSOs).



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2nd Multi-Stakeholder Webinar on the SIDS4: Updates and Views on the Zero Draft Outcome Document

15 February 2024, 9:00 - 10:30AM (EST)
Zoom Webinar

Learn more and register:
<https://sdgs.un.org/events/2ndstakeholderwebinarSIDS4>

Pacific Climate Warriors in Vanuatu. Photo credit: 350.org

15 February: 2nd Multi-stakeholder webinar on SIDS4—updates and views on the zero draft outcome document

The second multi-stakeholder informative webinar will be held on **15 February, from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. EST (New York time)**. The objective of the webinar is to share updated information about the preparations for the SIDS4 Conference as well as to create an opportunity for stakeholders to share their views and proposals on the [zero draft outcome document](#) in an informal dialogue with the co-chairs of the SIDS4 Preparatory Committee and other interested Member States. Please click [here](#) to register for the webinar. For details, please, check [here](#).

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Stakeholders registration is now open for the SIDS4 Conference

Representatives of accredited non-governmental organizations, major groups and other relevant stakeholders can now register to attend the SIDS4 Conference

Deadline: 26 April 2024
 More info:
<https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/sids2024/stakeholders#participation>

Crédit: UN Photo Library

Now open: SIDS4 registration for stakeholders and UN system

NGOs, Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders (12 February – 26 April): Non-governmental organizations, major groups and other relevant stakeholders organizations that are accredited to attend the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) will be able to pre-register their delegation (up to 10 people per organization) to the Conference from 12 February to 26 April. There will be no on-site registration for stakeholders.

UN Secretariat, Funds, Programmes, Regional Commissions and Other Entities (12 February-10 May): Registration is required for all UN Secretariat staff members who have been designated to support the Conference onsite, as well as those representatives of the UN Secretariat Offices, Funds, Programmes, Regional Commissions and other entities who wish to attend the Conference in person. Registration will be open from 12 February to 10 May.

For more information including registration online portal for the above categories, please check [here](#). Registration for other categories (Member States, IGOs, Specialized Agencies and Related Organizations) will be open on 1 March. All information will be made available on the [Conference website](#).



Now open: Call for side event proposals for SIDS4 – apply by 8 March

Member States, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), UN Entities and other accredited stakeholders are invited to submit their proposals for side events to be held in connection with the [SIDS4 Conference](#).

To apply for an in-person side event inside the Conference venue: [onsite application form](#).

To apply for an in-person side event outside the Conference venue, in other locations in Antigua and Barbuda: [offsite application form](#).

To apply for a virtual side event: [virtual application form](#).

Deadline for applications is 8 March. For more information, please check [here](#).



Open until 1 March: Applications for the UN SIDS Partnership Awards 2024

The UN SIDS Partnership Awards was established by UN Member States in 2021 to recognize and reward the efforts of the best and most noteworthy, genuine and durable partnerships in the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway). The Awards provide an opportunity to reward the most successful SIDS partnerships, highlight best practices, increase the visibility of the SIDS Partnership Framework, motivate the creation of new SIDS partnerships and incentivize the registrations of new partnerships for SIDS.

We are inviting partnerships for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to apply for the United Nations SIDS Partnerships Awards 2024. **The deadline for the application is Friday, 1 March**. Details [can be found here](#).

The SIDS Partnerships Awards are given in each of the three dimensions of sustainable development: 1) economic, 2) social and 3) environment. Subject to funding, one representative from each of the three winning partnerships may be invited to New York to receive a certificate. The ceremony will take place in the margins of [High-Level Political Forum 2024](#), during the Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue.

For questions regarding the UN SIDS Partnerships Awards, please contact infounpartnershipsawards@un.org.

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

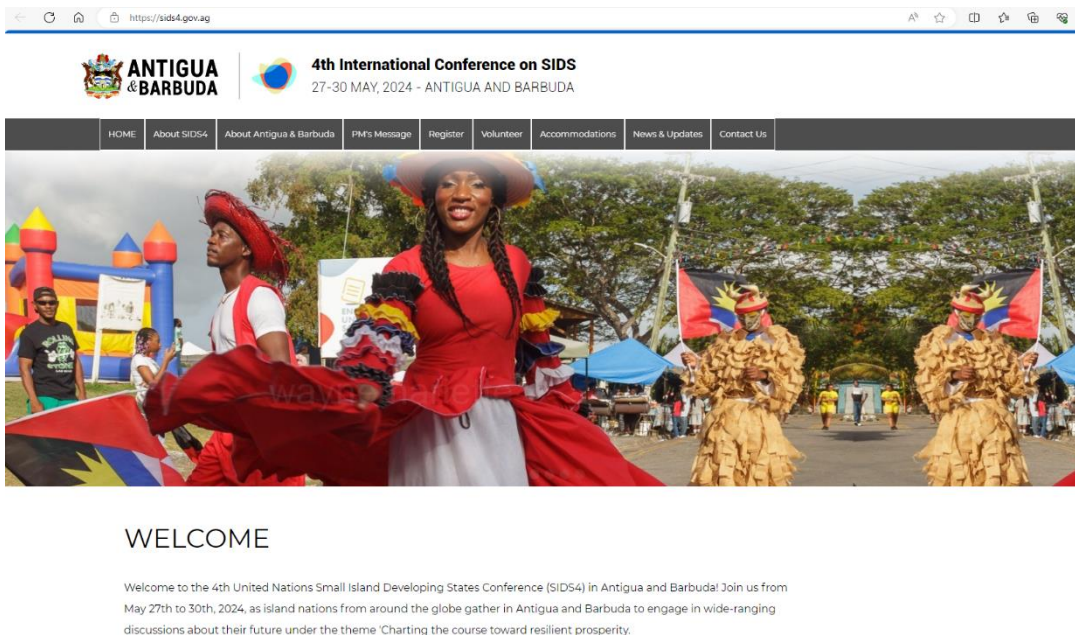
A UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue

Friday, 23 February 2024
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. GMT+7
(Bangkok time)

Register here: bit.ly/sids23feb Watch: youtube.com/unitednationsdesa

Register now: UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue on SIDS Partnerships, 23 February

Join UN DESA on 23 February (10 a.m. to 12 p.m. GMT+7, Bangkok time) for a virtual conversation on how multi-stakeholder partnerships can drive implementation of sustainable development in small island developing states (SIDS). This event also will be the final segment of the SIDS Partnership Symposium, an associate event to the 2024 Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), held at the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok, Thailand. Watch live on youtube.com/unitednationsDESA or [register here to join via Zoom](#).



Now available: Host country website for SIDS4

Be sure to bookmark sids4.gov.ag for all the latest logistical information and updates provided by the host country, Antigua and Barbuda.



Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Digital Transformation, Trinidad and Tobago

Partner corner

From developing to digital; charting the course for SIDS' transformation (UNDP blog)

By Marcos Neto, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director of UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, and Robert Opp, UNDP's Chief Digital Officer

Small Island Developing States, or SIDS, have long been pioneers in international development, often compelled by the challenges they face. Positioned on the frontlines of climate change, they lead efforts in mitigation, adaptation, and advocacy, and despite their geographical dispersion, they are innovating approaches to resilience and sustainability. SIDS are leveraging digital tools and technologies for real and positive impact on their countries and communities. They are leaders in internet gender parity, whilst a number perform strongly on global indices of cybersecurity. They are increasingly becoming Small Island Digital States.

This shift is reshaping the way people in SIDS live and work, facilitating connectivity, shaping new industries and opportunities, and ensuring that public services can reach even the most remote areas. From the SIDS Global Data Hub in Antigua and Barbuda to the national digital strategies in the Cook Islands and Niue, to the Digital Pathway of Samoa, and substantial

innovation efforts in countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, the Maldives, and São Tomé and Príncipe, digital is positively changing lives and livelihoods. ...

You can continue to read this blog post on [UNDP's website here](#).

For more information

- Visit the official UN SIDS4 website at un.org/smallislands.
- Click [here](#) to sign up to our newsletter and receive the latest updates about the Conference straight to your inbox.



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