



Frequently Asked Questions

United Nations 4th International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4)
27-30 May, 2024 - Antigua and Barbuda

What is the SIDS4 conference?

The fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4) will be held from 27-30 May in St. Johns, Antigua & Barbuda. Under the overarching theme of 'Charting the course toward resilient prosperity', the conference will assess the ability of SIDS to achieve sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It will result in an intergovernmentally agreed, forward-looking and action-oriented political outcome document.

What is the theme of SIDS4?

The theme of the conference is 'Charting the course toward resilient prosperity' which captures the Conference's forward-looking focus on the ability of SIDS to achieve sustainable development and deliver on the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs.

What is the programme of the conference?

SIDS4 will feature eight plenary meetings (including opening and closing statements) and five interactive dialogues. The interactive dialogues will explore areas of critical importance to the sustainable development of SIDS, such as climate finance, youth and digital technologies:

1. Revitalizing SIDS Economies for Accelerated and Sustainable Growth (28 May)
2. Enhancing Critical Forms of Financing and Aid Effectiveness through Collaborative Partnerships: A Conversation (28 May)
3. Making Climate Finance Work for SIDS: Building on the Outcomes of UNFCCC COP 28 (29 May)
4. Levering Data and Digital Technologies and Building Effective Institutions for a Resilient Future in SIDS (29 May)
5. Investing in Human Capital: Addressing Health Crisis in SIDS and Building the Potential of Youth in SIDS (30 May)

Five high-level special events for in-depth and broader discussion on how to chart the course toward resilient prosperity in SIDS will also take place in connection with the Conference. These are:

1. The **SIDS Children and Youth Action Summit** (24-26 May) organized by UNICEF, The Government of Antigua & Barbuda and the Ashley Lashley Foundation.
2. The **SIDS Gender Equality Forum** (26 May) organized by UN Women.
3. The **SIDS Global Business Network Forum** (25-26 May) organized by OHRLLS.
4. The **SIDS4 Private Sector Roundtable** (28 May) organized by OHRLLS.

5. The **Civil Society and Other Stakeholders Forum** (29 May) organized by UN Desa and partners.

SIDS4 will also feature a series of side events hosted by Member States, Intergovernmental Organizations, UN Entities and other accredited stakeholders.

What are the expected outcomes of the Conference?

The Conference will result in an intergovernmentally-agreed, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented political outcome document. The [Zero Draft Outcome Document](#) highlights SIDS' ambition for resilient economies, safe and prosperous societies, a secure future, as well as environmental protection and planetary sustainability.

It outlines six ways to achieve this:

1. Access to finance,
2. Scaling up climate finance,
3. Strengthening data collection,
4. Science, technology, innovation & digitalization
5. Productive populations
6. Partnerships

How often does the SIDS conference occur?

The SIDS conference takes place every decade and has been in preparations since May 2023. SIDS4 builds on 3 preceding conferences:

- SIDS1 (Barbados, 1994), which resulted in the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), outlining a global plan for sustainable development in SIDS.
- SIDS2 (Mauritius, 2005), which yielded the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPOA.
- SIDS3 (Samoa, 2014), which culminated in the adoption of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

How does SIDS4 relate to this year's UN Summit of the Future and other UN processes?

Occurring only once every decade, the SIDS conference taking place this year is uniquely timed to explore and showcase the specific needs and challenges of SIDS.

The **UN Summit of the Future** taking place four months after SIDS4 is a once-in-a-generation high-level event, bringing world leaders together to forge a new international consensus on how we deliver a better present and safeguard the future. It will explore how to reform multilateralism to deliver on existing agreements and commitments such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The Summit has two aims: to accelerate efforts to meet our existing international commitments and to take concrete steps to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. This will be achieved through an action-oriented outcome document called the Pact for the Future, negotiated and endorsed by governments in the lead-up and during the Summit.

The programme of SIDS4 is well-aligned with the Summit of the Future's five action areas. The interactive dialogues on financing and aid effectiveness, climate finance, data & digital technologies, as well as youth taking place in Antigua & Barbuda will feed into the Summit's conversations on sustainable development and financing, technology, innovation and digital cooperation, as well as youth and future generations.

Lastly, as a group of developing economies, SIDS have specific financial needs that will be explored at SIDS4. The political outcome document will therefore feed into the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development** taking place in 2025.

For more information, please visit: [About SIDS4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(un.org\)](#)

Who are the SIDS?

There are 39 SIDS (37 of which are UN Member States) and 18 Associate Members of UN Regional Commissions.

UN members states include:

- **In the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (8):** Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Maldives, Mauritius, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Singapore
- **In the Caribbean (16):** Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago
- **In the Pacific (13):** Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

The 18 Associate Members of Regional Commissions are: American Samoa, Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, Cook Islands, Curacao, French Polynesia, Guadeloupe, Guam, Martinique, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Niue, Puerto Rico, Sint Maarten, Turks and Caicos Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands.

What challenges do they face?

SIDS are culturally and biologically unique and, because of their size and relative geographic isolation, are economically, environmentally, and socially particularly vulnerable to shocks.

- **Climate** – Though the 65 million people living in SIDS are responsible for less than one percent of GHG emissions, SIDS lost USD\$ 153 billion due to weather, climate and water-related hazards between 1970 and 2020. For low-lying SIDS with land at 5 or less meters above sea level, climate change represents a direct existential threat: Tuvalu, the Maldives, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands are among states that may be uninhabitable by the end of the century due to sea-level rise, which would cause mass population displacement.
- **Biodiversity** – Accounting for 14% of the world's coastlines, SIDS present a high degree of biodiversity. Its ecosystems harbor 20% of all plant, bird, and reptile species in about 3% of the Earth's land surface, and 19% of coral reefs. The Pacific SIDS alone are home to three of the 35 global biodiversity hotspots with a high number of endemic species. This biodiversity is at risk from overexploitation and overharvesting, ocean pollution (oil spills, marine plastic litter), acidification and climate change.
- **Economic challenges** – The remote geography of SIDS constitutes a significant challenge for many of them. Highly dependent on international markets yet remote from them, SIDS face high transportation costs and are particularly vulnerable to exogenous economic shocks, such as the one caused by the COVID-19 pandemic: SIDS' GDP dropped by 6.9% versus 4.8% in all other developing countries in 2020, due to their heavy dependence on tourism and fisheries. In fact, ocean-

related industries (tourism, fisheries) can total over half of SIDS' GDPs, making diversification difficult and increasing the social and economic vulnerability to systemic shocks, biodiversity loss and pollution.

These challenges are compounded by scarce financial resources and limited institutional capacity.

Given their specificities, SIDS are uniquely placed to act as strong advocates for climate justice, sustainable development financing, and the preservation of biodiversity.