

Overseas Development Institute

Dr. Emily Wilkinson

Principal Research Fellow and Director of the Resilient and Sustainable Islands Initiative

Adoption of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS is the outcome of a long process of discussion, negotiation and hard work. But the danger with any political process that culminates in a major decennial conference, is that the cathartic and celebratory experience of the summit itself – when the world's attention is briefly concentrated on it – quickly gives way to other priorities.

This summit must therefore represent a beginning, not an end. We must quickly shift focus to the steps required to maintain forward momentum on an agenda that will guide SIDS action and advocacy during this most critical decade ahead. There is no time to lose: the world is becoming more economically uncertain, the geopolitical order is potentially unravelling, and climate change is accelerating, with key tipping points likely to be breached in the near future.

ODI's Resilient and Sustainable Islands Initiative is supporting SIDS stakeholders in charting the course towards resilient prosperity by:

- Convening critical conversations, including the first ever SIDS Future Forum;
- Building and consolidating the evidence base to inform policy decisions;
- Setting out potential pathways by which the promise of the ABAS might be fully realised.

Antigua and Barbuda is the first host of a UN SIDS process to solicit 'outside' voices and expertise in this way. But for the ABAS to avoid the implementation deficits that have bedevilled its predecessors, it will require a deeper institutionalisation of these kinds of partnerships.

Specifically, the ABAS will require a new knowledge architecture with at least three elements:

1. The institutionalisation of the SIDS Future Forum as a biennial event, bringing fresh analytical insights to bear on SIDS challenges;
2. A coordinated research and education network that can provide evidence and capacity building for AOSIS; and
3. A major global evidence-gathering and independent stocktaking process culminating in a regular 'State of SIDS' report.

Such a knowledge architecture can be responsive to rapidly changing global dynamics and generate cutting-edge ideas, to maintain momentum and inform real-time course correction throughout the ABAS.