

Investing in Human Capital: Addressing Health Crises in Small Island Developing States and Building the Potential of Youth Statement.

As a young person from the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and South China Sea (AIS) region, I am keenly aware of the unique challenges and opportunities that small island developing States face. Investing in human capital, particularly through addressing health crises and enhancing the potential of youth, is crucial for our sustainable future.

The COVID-19 pandemic, have exposed the vulnerabilities in our healthcare systems, luckily the Seychelles got support from other nations but for many SIDS, limited resources and geographic isolation intensify these challenges. As youth, we advocate for strengthening healthcare infrastructure, increasing access to medical services, and enhancing public health education. Investing in health means investing in our future workforce, ensuring we can contribute to our communities' economic and social development.

Youth in SIDS possess immense potential, yet often face barriers to education, employment, and entrepreneurship. By prioritizing education and skill development, we can harness this potential. We need increased access to quality education, vocational training, and digital literacy programs. Such initiatives will equip us with the skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing global economy and to become innovative leaders in our communities.

Furthermore, addressing mental health is essential. The pressures of economic instability, climate change, and health crises extremely affect young people. Comprehensive mental health services and supportive environments are vital for our well-being and productivity.

Collaboration is key. And therefore we call on governments, international organizations, and private sectors to invest in youth-led initiatives and to include youth voices in decision-making processes. By doing so, we can ensure that solutions are tailored to our specific needs and aspirations.

Investing in human capital through health and youth development is not just beneficial for the present but is a strategic investment in the resilience and prosperity of small island developing States.

Together, we can build a future where the youth of all region thrive and lead the way towards sustainable development.

- Horisha Savy, Chairperson of SYAH Seychelles.