

**Intervention of Ms. Helena Fraser, Director, Policy and Programming Branch, United Nations Development Coordination Office, for the Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue, 10 Jul 2024 [As prepared]**

- *I have been requested by organizers to focus my intervention today on how the Development Coordination Office and the RC system, can play a role to support SIDS in the implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS); I will then underscore three critical entry points for RCs to support the implementation of the ABAS, there are more, of course, but I will focus on those 3.*

**First entry point: SDG acceleration**

- SDG Acceleration is the collective mandate and mantra of the UN Development System and SDG Acceleration is at the heart of the ABAS. However, there is no one size fits all path to success, country context is determinant.
- The ABAS specifically spells out the valuable role of the UN System in supporting SIDS to achieve their sustainable development objectives, and requests all the UN Development System entities to contribute to the implementation of and to integrate ABAS into their strategic and work plans, in accordance with their mandates.
- In this context, under the leadership of RCs in SIDs, and in alignment with national, subregional and regional development plans and priorities, UNCTs are implementing new generation Cooperation Frameworks to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda, drawing on a suite of interagency programming tools to help achieve transformational results that countries now demand.
- Cooperation Frameworks are critical instruments to lay out a comprehensive, coherent, and coordinated UN development system offer responsive to the priorities spelled out in the new Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) and aligned to national priorities.
- Bottom line is that through the Cooperation Frameworks, governments get more coordinated, responsive support, with greater transparency and more accountability for results than before.

**Second entry point: Financing for Development**

- SIDS rely on external financing to help prepare and recover from acute challenges and development needs, exacerbated by extreme weather events, the COVID-19 pandemic and the rippling effects of the crisis in Ukraine.
- *However*, while most SIDS are not the poorest nations, response to disasters, debt and infrastructure are considerably more expensive and accessing financing is more difficult due to capacity constraints and a complex and fragmented global financing architecture, combined with eligibility criteria that mainly rely on GNI per capita and fail to capture SIDS' vulnerabilities and funding needs.
- The recent confluence of global crises and shocks have further exacerbated the situation: over 40% of SIDS are now on the edge of or already grappling with unsustainable levels of debt, creating a vicious cycle of fiscal stress and climate vulnerability. This severely constrains their ability to invest in resilience, climate action and the SDGs, and could ultimately severely limit the implementation of the ABAS.
- In this context, the Joint SDG Fund representing the “muscle” of the RC System and the UN Development System as a whole, has since its inception in 2018, provided \$62.1 million in direct financial commitments to SIDS, which has been matched by \$35.7million in co-funding by partners, facilitating joint programmes across 24 UN country teams and multi-country offices. These initiatives have benefited 42 SIDS worldwide, working across 63 joint programmes with 24 UN system partners.
- Following the 2021 QCPR recommendation from the UN Secretary General, the Fund launched a dedicated portfolio for SIDS recognizing a ‘special case’ for sustainable development. In total, 17 UN country teams began programmes in 2022, investing \$56.3 million (\$31.4 million in direct commitments and \$24.9 million in co-funding) and activating 23 UN entities to work across 42 SIDS.
- In this sense, RCs with the tools provided by the Joint SDG Fund, are optimally positioned to support countries in identifying opportunities to mobilize financing for development in SIDS, including from domestic and international sources, aligned with strategic priorities and country commitments, keeping the most vulnerable and marginalised at the centre of any intervention.

### **Third entry point: Partnerships**

- The SIDS4 conference is a clear call for strategic partnerships and for plans that are concrete, action-oriented and responsive to the needs of SIDS.
- In this context, *as policy influencers and strategic convenors* RCs are well positioned to act as brokers for partnerships across multiple stakeholders, building bridges between national

stakeholders and breaking siloes across the key focus areas defined in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS.

- For instance, RCs play a crucial role in supporting SIDS to unleash the potential of their private sectors as engines of sustainable growth and development.
- Mobilizing private sector resources and investments towards climate-resilient infrastructure and adaptation measures in SIDS is vital for safeguarding economic assets and livelihoods from the escalating impacts of climate change.
- To finalize I would like to highlight that while incipient progress has been made in providing SIDS the support required, much work remains to be done, and the Development Coordination Office in its mandate to manage and oversee the Resident Coordinator System has great interest to explore, together with you, the best avenues to provide this tailored support. We are open to hear from you what the specific needs in your respective countries might be, based on the country context and government priorities.