



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

SIDS4 Conference Side Event

‘Leveraging Environmental Data for Development through South-South Cooperation’

29 May 2024, 8:00-9:30, American University of Antigua

**Organized by: IAEA, UNEP, UNOSSC, Antigua, United
States of America**

Background on the event:

The side event focused on how best to harness environmental data for the benefit of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in line with the conference stream on ‘leveraging data and digital technologies.’ The event brought together representatives of Member States and UN System organizations, including: Minister Chet Greene (Antigua), Director Linroy Christian (Antigua), Assistant Secretary Michele Sison (United States), Deputy Director General Hua Liu (IAEA), Ambassador Peter Thomson (UNDESA), Deputy Director Bruno Pozzi (UNEP) and Director Dima Al-Khatib (UNOSSC).

Discussions concentrated on the importance of technical capacity building programmes in SIDS, including the IAEA technical cooperation programme, in enabling accurate data collection and analysis and ensuring continuity at the national level. Speakers highlighted the significant role of South-South cooperation, especially at the regional level, in ensuring comparable data.

Key Issues discussed:

- The lack of historical and regionally comparable environmental data in SIDS presents difficulties when conducting analyses.
- Due to the disproportionately damaging effects of climate change on SIDS, environmental challenges are increasing, which makes it more urgent to gain a better understanding of the status of environmental conditions through science and technology.
- The peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology offer SIDS benefits in terms of generating accurate data on freshwater and ocean resources.
- South-South cooperation is a useful mechanism for SIDS to support each other by sharing resources and expertise on common challenges, including those related to the ocean.
- Scientists should consider their presentation for their raw data when making it available to the government or the public, particularly with sensitive topics, such as human health, to be sure that the conclusions are clear and do not cause alarm.
- Environmental data is intertwined with public health challenges, as pollution can affect populations' health and well-being. For instance, ocean or freshwater pollutants can be transferred to humans via the consumption of unsafe seafood or contaminated water.
- The IAEA has committed 13.7 million euros in support to SIDS for 2024-2025 that will be delivered in areas including human health, water resource management and nutrition.

Key recommendations for action

- Consider improvements in mechanisms for sharing data among different national government organizations to prevent siloed thinking and decision-making.
- Support South-South cooperation among SIDS and the standardization of environmental data collection methods to better monitor environmental challenges at the regional and subregional levels.
- Increase technical capacity building opportunities for scientists based in SIDS.
- Increase cooperation among UN system organizations to amplify the results of the initiatives of individual institutions.
- Consider the possibility of using nuclear science and technology for the generation of data related to the environment.