



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

## **SIDS4 Conference Side Event**

**Enhancing economic resilience through blue-green growth and value-addition in SIDS**

**Tuesday 28.05.2024, 16:00-17:30, Room 4**

**Organized by: European Union & International Trade Centre (ITC)**

### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are facing the brunt of multiple crises: climate change, the economic and social repercussions of COVID-19, and a crisis of debt. At the same time, the political commitment to achieving responsible and inclusive social and economic growth while combating climate change and promoting responsible consumption and production has never been greater. Transforming commitment into action is key for SIDS if they are to face their natural vulnerabilities to ecological fragility, proneness to natural disasters, low incomes and high dependency on food imports and overreliance on fossil fuels for energy. ITC, in collaboration with the European Union, organized this side event to bring together ITC Alliances for Action partners from across the Caribbean, African and Pacific SIDS to explore how market-led partnerships or alliances lead to enhanced economic resilience through blue-green growth and value addition. Examples and case studies presented during the side event demonstrated that economic, environmental and social resilience can be enhanced for SIDS to overcome vulnerability through increased regional market integration, economic diversification, promotion of greater coordination and cooperation, and evidence-based policies and actions. Focus on improved access to market information, value addition, inclusive finance and investment and promotion of blue and green growth can therefore be catalytic towards sustainable trade and development in SIDS.

### **Key Issues discussed (5-8 bullet points)**

- The session was opened by an esteemed high-level panel consisting of:
  - The Hon. Kavydass Ramano, Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Mauritius;
  - Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC);

- Luc Bagur, Director, Sustainable Development Policy and Coordination, Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA), European Union (EU);
  - Cristelle Pratt, Assistant Secretary General, The Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS); and
  - Edison Rijna, Special Envoy for the BES islands for EU and UN and economic relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of Netherlands.
- Key issues discussed by the high-level panel included the need to:
    - (i) accelerate sustainable use of marine and terrestrial resources in SIDS for import substitution, growth and resilience,
    - (ii) further strengthen multi-stakeholder alliances and partnerships for MSME development through value addition, innovation and climate-smart approaches,
    - (iii) leverage both upon the EU Global Gateway, as well as South-South regional, national and local-level initiatives (SIDS to SIDS) to address the triple planetary crisis through robust trade relationships.
  - Private sector MSMEs and NGO partners then took the stage to share their challenges, stories and best practice approaches to enhancing sustainability through blue-green growth and value-addition, including:
    - Nickie Myers, General Manager, Alligator Head Foundation, Jamaica,
    - Michael Louze, Director, South Sea Commodities, Vanuatu,
    - Sophia Searles, General Manager, Searles Agro Products, St Vincent & the Grenadines,
    - Mari Granström, Founder, Origin by Ocean, Finland, and
    - Larry Gardiner, CEO, BabyLove's C-G Foods, Jamaica.
  - Panelists discussed challenges faced in enhancing their competitiveness operating in SIDS in the face of economic, environmental and social issues, including a lack of coordination between value chain actors, access to market and market intelligence and climate and market related shocks.

### **Key recommendations for action (5-6 bullet points)**

Examples of where partnerships and alliances between public sector, private sector and support institutions in SIDS countries have been successful in facilitating climate-smart trade and investment for improved resilience was a key focus of discussions, with recommendations for action including:

- Adding value to traditional sectors through innovation, technology, and diversification, for enhanced economic, social and environmental sustainability and resilience – including concepts of circular economy, ridge to reef and others (e.g. for coconuts, sargassum, blue

economy). Maximizing the potential, particularly in SIDS, of the blue and green economy is paramount.

- Scaling-up market-led partnerships or alliances to upgrade MSME competitiveness through improved capacities, market access and value added at origin.
- Strengthening public-private partnerships that have been critical to ensuring the supportive policy environments needed for the private sector to invest, create jobs and contribute to economic growth.
- Scaling-up of innovative and best practice partnerships and alliances as a proof of concept for SIDS to flourish whilst enhancing resilience.