



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

SIDS4 Conference Side Event

Re-Centering Global Climate Change Discourse: The Role of SIDS in Advocacy and Action

Thursday, May 30, 2024 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm Eastern

Format: Webinar

**Organized by: New York City Bar Association, United Nations Committee &
African Affairs Committee**

***Co-Sponsoring Committees: Business & Human Rights Committee, Council on
International Affairs***

Background on the event:

This side event focused on the question of advocacy driven by diverse actors, including private practitioners, public economists, and State actors. We heard about the dynamics and advocacy impacts of the important milestone of the recent advisory opinion from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) on States' obligations vis-à-vis climate change and ocean management; the intersection of foreign investment and sustainable development in Haiti, with an emphasis in the energy sector; and the multisectoral approach of the Seychelles to its Blue Economy and innovative sovereign blue bond.

Key Issues discussed:

- **ITLOS Advisory Opinion of 21 May 2024:** first time an international legal tribunal has produced an authoritative statement on States' obligations and responsibility for ocean management and climate change; contains explanations of States' obligations to prevent, reduce, and control ocean

pollution with findings of multiple scientific factors; bears on both international responsibility and responsibility of States to ensure that non-state actors prevent harm to the marine environment.

- **Sustainable development and foreign direct investment in Haiti:** discussion centered on building and improving infrastructure and boosting energy production and water-resources management.
- **COP28 Conference and Haitian National Plan:** discussion centered on aspects of National Plan to increase forest cover and use of more renewable energies, including strengthening coordination mechanisms, strengthening evidence base and national priorities for investment, and climate change adaptation metrics.
- **Seychelles' Blue Economy:** discussion centered on multisectoral approach to upholding ocean health through ocean development, such as through policy, tech, and education sectors, with international and regional partnerships.
- **Seychelles' sovereign blue bond:** discussion centered on objectives of the blue bond and investment appeal.

Key recommendations for action:

- **Fuller focus on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) among SIDS to reflect more ambitious climate goals in line with Paris Agreement**
- **Outline means of implementation, including partnerships, technology transfer, and other means of support**
- **Reassess markets and cost of energy in the form of woods and charcoals, and put renewed focus, such as through infrastructure changes, on alternate energy such as through solar, wind, and hydropower**
- **Further participation by States in ICJ advisory opinion proceedings ("Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change")**