

PART A
VULNERABILITY REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING IN SIDS

Enhanced Support for achieving Resilient Prosperity in SIDS

The theme for the SIDS4 Conference is “Charting a Course toward Resilient Prosperity” as such resilience building will be at the core of the new Programme of Action for SIDS. Briefly elaborate on any resilience building interventions or strategies (proactive or preventative) that will be implemented at national or regional levels aimed specifically at improving resilience in SIDS. Please include indications of resource allocations, if available (750 words).

Malta fully supports the focus of the SIDS4 Conference on resilience-building, and understands the need for, and strongly supports, the inclusion of capacity building at the core of the SIDS4 Programme of Action for SIDS. Malta is committed to continue providing capacity-development opportunities for SIDS. Within the framework of its ‘Island for Islands’ initiative, launched at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in November 2021, Malta has been awarding scholarships at Master and PhD levels specifically to nationals of Official Development Assistance (ODA)-eligible SIDS, through a partnership between the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade (MFET) and the University of Malta’s Island and Small States Institute (ISSI), a partnership which was also awarded the UN SIDS Partnership Award under the Social Category in 2023. This successful partnership is set to continue and be strengthened further, when, over the next three-year period (2024-2027), an increased number of scholarships are envisaged to be awarded, at both PhD and Master level. Furthermore, the Government of Malta, one of *Diplo Foundation’s* most important partners in online learning, has allocated funds to support scholarships for applicants from developing countries, including SIDS, to attend its courses. Through the Small States Fellowship programme, participants from several Pacific, Caribbean and Indian Ocean SIDS were able to participate in various courses.

During its tenure as an elected member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2023-2024, Malta has been and is bringing to the fore, in particular, climate issues, which are crucial for the security of SIDS. Indeed, climate and the oceans are a key priority for Malta during its term on the UNSC. Malta is also a ‘Champion Country’ in the Coalition for addressing the Existential Threats of Sea-Level Rise (SLR) (C-SET). The initiative aims at synchronising ongoing discussions on Sea-Level Rise and ensuring that the voice of these most impacted by this phenomenon are heard.

Malta has also worked in a multi-stakeholder fashion by strengthening its links with pertinent regional organisations, such as the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Malta, together with AOSIS, organised webinars which focused on SIDS-specific subjects such as Sustainable Fisheries and Coral Reef Restoration, during the course of 2023. Through its collaboration with ISSI, Malta is partnering with OACPS on the development of a *Climate Vulnerability and Resilience Index* which will serve to objectively identify, qualify and quantify SIDS’ vulnerabilities and resilience issues vis-à-vis climate-related challenges. This Index will complement the UN’s *Multidimensional Vulnerability Index* (MVI) and will be presented during a Side-Event at SIDS4. With the OECS, Malta is currently working to conclude a general cooperation agreement which will provide the framework for future cooperation in several areas of priority to the OECS membership.

Furthermore, in May 2024, Malta was welcomed as the 89th partner of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) SIDS Lighthouses Initiative, a framework for action to support SIDS in their energy transition efforts from fossil fuel dependence to renewables.

Enhanced and Tailored Development Cooperation for SIDS

The New SIDS Programme of Action will require improved, tailored development co-operation approaches, calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and economic challenges facing SIDS. Briefly elaborate on any planned or ongoing strategies/approaches to improve and deliver on more tailored development support to SIDS. What are the expected results from these interventions in the targeted countries. Please include indications of resource allocations if available (750 words)

Malta considers of paramount importance to develop support programmes tailored to the needs of SIDS given the significant economic and geographical vulnerabilities they face, as well as the extensive capacity constraints that hinder and limit their social and economic progress.

A small island state itself, Malta is fully aware of the important role which human capital plays in the implementation of any Programme of Action agreed upon at SIDS4. Continuing its investment in human resources and in building up the potential of youths is of crucial importance if SIDS are to further prepare themselves to deal with the challenges they are facing. The ultimate objective of such support programmes is ultimately to partner with SIDS in order to enhance their respective capacities in areas of direct interest to them by facilitating the exchange of academic and technical expertise and good practices.

Malta is thus actively involved in providing such tailored support, primarily related to capacity-development and the sharing of technical expertise, such as in the area of water management, which is also specifically referred to in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS).

Under the 'Island for Islands' initiative, Malta has been awarding scholarships at Master and PhD levels to nationals specifically of ODA-eligible SIDS since 2021. Malta is also cooperating with OACPS on the development of a *Climate Vulnerability and Resilience Index* which will complement the UN's MVI and will serve to highlight the vulnerabilities of SIDS and facilitate their access to concessional financing so as to enable them to strengthen their resilience. Malta is also working to partner with SIDS to promote capacity-building through cooperation with regional organisations, such as the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Malta is also a strong proponent of the establishment of international partnerships and has continued to participate and support the events organised by the UN Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS which it co-chaired with Antigua & Barbuda during 2020 and 2021.

Technical cooperation is ongoing at the bilateral level between Malta and Antigua & Barbuda to enable the latter to manage its water sector more efficiently, by improving water management techniques through capacity-building programmes, contributing to optimising adaptation to climate change, in terms of increasing the resilience of municipal water supply, as well as through the promotion of water use efficiency.

Malta is currently also looking into establishing programmes of collaboration in maritime-related matters.

Malta has provided humanitarian and financial assistance for SIDS; during 2023 it contributed €50,000 in financial aid towards UNICEF's appeal for children and basic needs in Haiti. Meanwhile, during 2024, Malta contributed €25,000 towards the UN SIDS4 Trust Fund, which was set up to assist representatives of SIDS to participate at SIDS4 and related preparatory meetings. Malta has also contributed \$15,000 to sponsor youth participation at the Global SIDS4 Children and Youth Action

Summit. €50,000 is being provided to Antigua to purchase personal protective equipment for their security personnel.

PART B
MULTIDIMENSIONAL VULNERABILITY IN THE WORK OF THE UN SYSTEM

Paragraph 13 of Resolution 78/232 Requests the Secretary-General to assess how multidimensional vulnerability is currently considered by the United Nations system. Please indicate how your entity considers multidimensional vulnerability in your policies, practices and Programmes (1000 words)

Malta is fully aware of the different, significant vulnerabilities which affect SIDS due to their specific characteristics such as geographical isolation and the impact of climate change.

Malta is also aware that, under the existing international financial architecture, not all such vulnerabilities are being taken into consideration, limiting the access of SIDS to concessional financing since they generally tend to enjoy high *GDP per capita* levels, the primary conventional income-based metric which is used by the international community to measure a state's level of development. The inaccessibility to sources of concessional financing limits the ability of these SIDS to build up the resilience necessary for them to face these challenges. This situation is worsening the fiscal position of several SIDS which have to grapple with unsustainable levels of debt, including of the private external category, which further constrains their ability to invest in resilience, climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), since they have to allocate significant budgetary funds for debt relief.

The matter of building up resilience is being increasingly recognised by the international community as a very important subject matter and is one of the core issues to be considered during SIDS4 which has the theme of '*Charting the Course towards Resilient Prosperity*'. The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) specifically refers to, *inter alia*, reforming the international financial architecture, increasing the effectiveness of development finance as well as supporting the sustainable management of debt in order for SIDS to build their resilience.

Malta was one of the countries represented by a distinguished economist on the high-level panel of experts appointed by the UN to develop the *Multidimensional Vulnerability Index* (MVI) with the objective of providing a structured framework to measure vulnerability of states from a multi-faceted perspective.

The Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta, the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, and the University of Malta's Islands and Small States Institute have cooperated to develop a complementary *Climate Vulnerability and Resilience Index*, which, apart from assessing vulnerability and resilience individually, also juxtaposes the two indices with the objective of creating a more comprehensive understanding of the risks and challenges of climate change, and the efforts and costs associated to address climate change vulnerabilities by strengthening and maintaining resilience. Once operationalized, these instruments will become a valuable tool to developing countries, especially SIDS, and their partners.

Furthermore, Malta's Small States Centre of Excellence is partnering with the University of Malta's Islands and Small States Institute, in such a way as to enhance its operational and outreach capacities. The Centre will be directly associated with the work on the above-mentioned *Climate Vulnerability and Resilience Index* and will serve as the data hub related with the Index. In this capacity, the Centre

would also complement the work of, and provide synergies with, the SIDS Centre of Excellence data hub which is being proposed by Antigua & Barbuda at SIDS4. Malta looks forward to the launch of this proposed Centre of Excellence, and to actively explore the opportunities for cooperation with Malta's Small States Centre of Excellence, for the benefit of SIDS.

Malta's Small States Centre of Excellence is also committed to continue providing capacity-developing opportunities and serve as a focal point for sharing best practices in the areas that benefit Small Island States and Small Island Developing States. New and growing challenges to the sustainable development and resilience of small islands and states means that there is scope to enhance the activities of the Centre by incorporating a futures dimension into its work, particularly in the fields of science and technology. This will allow the Centre to appropriate itself of a novelty niche which is of great value and interest.

Malta will also continue to partner with SIDS and help them develop their capacities by awarding scholarships to nationals of ODA-eligible SIDS in areas of specific interest to them as well as continued advocacy on multilateral as well as regional levels.