

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**  
**Date: 16 March 2022**  
**Microsoft Teams Meeting**  
**Time: 3:00pm – 5:00 pm (New York Time)**

**Member Organizations in attendance:** Commonwealth Secretariat, FAO, IOM, IRENA, INTRACEN, IRENA, ITU, OLA, PIFS, RCO Belize, RCO Cabo Verde, RCO Maldives, RCO Republic of the Marshall Islands, RCO SAMOA, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNESCO, UNDP, UNDRR, UNECLAC, UNEP, UNSCAP, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN-OHRLLS (Co-organizer), UNOPS, UNWTO, WIPO, World Bank.

**Chair:** Ms. Tishka Francis, Head of SIDS sub-programme, OHRLLS

**Summary:**

The IACG meeting focused its discussion on the preparation of the Secretary-General Report on the Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, which included updates on (1) the multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI) and (2) the development of a monitoring framework for the SAMOA Pathway. The meeting received a brief report on the IACG Work Plan for 2021 and a brief presentation on Workplan for 2022 from OHRLLS. The meeting also discussed an upcoming SIDS Stakeholder meeting convened by the Chair of AOSIS to discuss the accelerated implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs.

**1. Opening remarks**

**UNOHRLLS**

- **Mr Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, Policy Development, Coordination and Reporting Service for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS** noted the SAMOA Pathway is drawing to close. COVID-19 and other global challenges, including climate change which has a disproportionate impact on SIDS adds to the difficulty to achieve the SAMOA Pathway. For many SIDS, progress towards implementing the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs have either been slowed or significantly derailed.
- The Chief noted that the MVI is an important initiative for SIDS. A high-level panel of experts has been established. It is co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda (Mr. Gaston Browne) and Former Prime Minister of Norway (Ms. Erna Solberg). OHRLLS and DESA will serve as the Secretariat. The MVI should be finalized by August to be potentially endorsed by member states by the end 2022. Advocacy through all channels with

a unified UN voice will be important for the MVI being adopted and used especially by International Financial Development Institutions.

- There is a need to address SIDS key challenges at the national and regional levels, including those articulated in Cooperation Frameworks and Multi-country Sustainable Development Frameworks, through the support of the UN Resident Coordinator system.
- The Chief noted some key activities ahead:
  - The SIDS Stakeholders Meeting to discuss the accelerated implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs convened by the Chair of AOSIS in Antigua and Barbuda, on 22-23 March 2022.
  - The 2022 SIDS Global Business Network Forum in the margins of the Our Ocean Conference in Koror, Palau on 12 April.
  - SIDS national focal point network in Antigua and Barbuda later in 2022.
  - The UN Ocean Conference in June-July and Fifth UN Conference on LDCs. The first part of the Fifth UN Conference on LDCs on Thursday, 17 March, in the General Assembly Hall to adopt the Outcome document “Doha Programme of Action for LDCs”. The second part will be held in Doha, in March 2023.

## **UNDESA**

- **Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief of SIDS Unit, UNDESA** expressed his appreciation of the support UNDESA has been getting from the members of the IACG, especially those related to the dispatch of its duties with regard to the sustainable development priorities of SIDS, as enshrined in the [BPOA](#), [MSI](#) and [SAMOA Pathway](#) . He highlighted two areas of importance: (1) preparation for the 2nd UN Ocean Conference and (2) preparation for HLPF 2022.
- The 2nd UN Ocean Conference will take place on 27 June to 1 July 2022, predominantly an in-person meeting, with provision for virtual participation. Preparations are progressing well, including the intergovernmental negotiations for the outcome document to commence the following week. Members of the IACG are strongly encouraged to register Voluntary Commitments, organize and announce New Partnerships. Opening for the registration for SIDE Events is imminent, and members should also keep an eye for announcements/notifications including through the [UN Ocean Conference Website](#).
- **Substantively, the SIDS unit of UNDESA** is co-chairing with the WORLD BANK the IPWG5 on “*PROMOTING AND STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABLE OCEAN-BASED ECONOMIES, IN PARTICULAR FOR SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES*” with a view of producing a paper. Contributions have been received from UNEP, IMO, UNIDO, FAO, UNDP, DOALOS, UNCTAD, WTO, IUCN, OHRLLS, UNWTO and the World Ocean Council. There are new members which

includes the: ISA, UN Global compact, World Economic Forum, GEF, and the WRI. The Office of the President of the General Assembly is the observer.

- The theme for the 2022 HLPF 2022 is “*Building back better from COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” and will be held from Tuesday, 5 July, to Thursday, 7 July, and from Monday, 11 July, to Friday, 15 July 2022 (4 and 8 July being UN holidays). This includes a three-day ministerial segment from Wednesday, 13 July to Friday, 15 July 2022. The HLPF will hold in-depth reviews of **SDG 4** on quality education, **5** on gender equality, **14** on life below water, **15** on life on land, and **17** on partnerships for the Goals. The forum will also address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all SDGs and the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Goals.
- The draft programme and the format of the meeting is currently being reviewed by the President of ECOSOC and the Bureau. The SIDS Special Session is tentatively scheduled for Monday **11 July 2022**. Other events, including the Side Events, VNR Labs, Special Events, and Exhibition will be organized on the margins of the 2022 HLPF. The portal for **application to the side events and exhibitions** will be open on 4 April, and the deadline for application will be 31 May.

## **2. Preparation of the SG’s Report**

The meeting discussed two sub-items, under this agenda item: (a) update on the multidimensional vulnerability index and (b) update on the development of a monitoring framework for the SAMOA pathway.

### **b) Update on the multidimensional vulnerability index**

- In her opening, the **chair** emphasized the next key milestone is finalizing the MVI index by December 2022, in the context the GA resolution paragraph 8(a) of the [resolution 76/203](#). As the secretariat for the panel, OHRLLS and DESA will coordinate the UN system’s contributions to the Panel’s work. The MVI should be finalized by August to be potentially endorsed by member states by the end of 2022. In parallel with the substantive workplan, the Secretariat will support the process with advocacy. The chair underscored advocacy with other developing countries, donor countries and International Financial Institutions and beyond is essential for the adoption and use of the MVI.
- **UNDESA** provided an update including on the MVI, and the establishment of the UNGA High-Level Panel on the MVI.
- The following are the high-level officials to be the Co-Chairs and Members of the 12 member UNGA High-Level Panel on the MVI:

Co-Chairs (in line with [resolution 76/203](#) which specified one member should be from SIDS)

(i) H.E. Mr. Gaston **Browne**, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda.

(ii) H.E. Ms. Erna **Solberg**, former Prime Minister, Norway.

Members:

(iii) Ms. Natalie **Cohen**, Assistant Secretary for Development Strategy, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia.

(iv) Dr. Leonard **Nurse**, Center for Resource Management and Environmental Studies, University of West Indies, Barbados.

(v) H.E. Mr. José Luís **Rocha**, Ambassador, Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cabo Verde.

(vi) Ms. **Xiheng** Jiang, Vice President, Senior Research Fellow, China Centre for International Knowledge on Development.

(vii) Professor Edgar E. **Gutierrez-Espeleta**, former Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica.

(viii) Dr. Omar **El-Arini**, Senior Advisor on governance of the Financial Mechanisms of the Montreal Protocol and the UNFCCC, Egypt.

(ix) Dr. Lino **Briguglio**, Professor, University of Malta.

(x) H.E. Dr. Fatumanava Pa'olelei **Luteru**, Permanent Representative of the Independent State of Samoa to the United Nations.

(xi) Ms. **Tan** Yee Woan, Dean of Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore; and,

(xii) Dr. Louise **Fox**, Nonresident Senior Fellow, African Growth Initiative, Global Economy and Development, the Brookings Institute, United States of America.

○ UNDESA informed the president of the GA will brief the panel on its work programme. The panel will be guided by the UNSG's "principles"<sup>1</sup> as the parameters in its work and will also draw on the existing work on the MVI, which includes work what has been contributed by the members of IACG. It is particularly important for the panel to be clear on the possible uses and to have good recommendations on the set of indices to be discussed and agreed to by Member States.

○ Member states will be briefed on the MVI. A one pager of talking points regarding the MVI will be issued to all who are talking to member States as a messaging guide and to speak with one voice regarding the development of the MVI, considering the sensitive and political nature of the work.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Document [A/76/211](#) paragraph 81 (a) – (e)

**c) Update on the development of a monitoring framework for the SAMOA Pathway**

- **UNDESA** referred *to resolution 74/217 adopted on 19 December 2019, which mandated the Secretary-General, to identify the Samoa Pathway priority areas not covered by the Sustainable Development Goals or the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and, if any are identified, to develop forthwith targets and indicators for those priority areas while ensuring complementarities and synergies and avoiding duplication, in order to strengthen monitoring and evaluation.*
- **UNDESA** reminded this required the (1) undertaking of an alignment exercise with SDG Targets and Identification of SAMOA Pathway issue area gaps and their respective targets and (2) identification of indicators and related work based on the targets selected by Member States.
- The first part of the exercise was completed towards the end of 2021, aligning the SAMOA Pathway indicators with the SDGs and with other key global sustainable development agendas. The exercise was able to identify eight thematic areas within the SAMOA pathway for which there are no indicators. The process now is to put a group in place to identify a minimum set of targets for those eight gap areas for which there are no indicators. The gap areas span oceans and seas, climate change, sustainable energy, health and noncommunicable diseases, sport, culture and capacity building. DESA informed these were tabled before the Statistical commission in 2022 which noted the alignment exercise. The Statistical commission will again be asked to look at the proposals of targets and indicators for the gap areas that were identified from this study in 2023.
- **UNDESA** underscored preparations for the annual Secretary General's report will transition to a quantitative approach by Member States and the UN system. By the Fourth International Conference, it should be possible to produce a report that have a quantitative dimension and inform of the progress made in the implementation of the SAMOA pathway in line with the monitoring framework. DESA will be sending out the call for inputs for this year's annual SG's report on the SAMOA pathway with elements of this transition. The agencies that are custodians of SDG data, will be able to provide this data to produce an analytic SG report of the SAMOA pathway.

## Discussions

- **UNEP** highlighted some results of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), which are relevant to the Issues of SIDS including the upcoming UN Oceans conference. One of these is that UNEA decided to initiate negotiations on a global agreement to end plastic pollution. It is an important step that can contribute to the climate transition and protect the oceans, the environment and biodiversity.
- **UNEP** also noted an upcoming [UNCCD meeting](#) and the [Stockholm+50](#) meeting to be held in May and June 2022. Stockholm+50, to be held on 2-3 June, is a crucial international environmental meeting that emphasizes a healthy planet, and will be important to reflect on the interlinkages on a healthy planet and collectively allow to make connections with agendas and commitment from global processes, including a focus on key issues such food security, energy, climate change, biodiversity, oceans etc.
- On monitoring and reporting, **UNEP** underscored the importance of communicating the new ways of reporting with relevant groups to ensure alignment in the new ways of working.
- **RCO (Samoa MCO)** informed the Resident Coordinator network is still active and working on the MVI. It stands ready to provide inputs to operate as a technical resource to the high-level panel for the development of the MVI. RCO (Samoa MCO) informed it aims to use the budget that was allocated by the Development Corporation Office (UNDCO) to cover the cost of the consultant working with the Resident Coordinator network to be able to assist the Secretariat in the MVI process, including providing the panel with inputs, alongside those that will be provided from other colleagues that have been involved in the MVI process: Commonwealth Secretariat, UNDP and Caribbean Development Bank etc. RCO (Samoa MCO) underscored the expectation is that the outcome will be a robust MVI that draws from all the knowledge that has been brought forth by all in the MVI process. The Resident Coordinator network continues to refine its MVI based on feedback received in multiple meetings.
- RCO (Samoa MCO) informed the Resident Coordinator network would like to launch an SDG financing gap for SIDS analysis report during the HLPF 2022. This is in keeping with the Secretary General who has also spoken about the need for a dedicated financing instrument, in addition to existing financial instruments based on the MVI. The network believes it is extremely important to not only have an index that allows quantification of vulnerabilities, but also an assessment of the impact that the MVI has on the capacity of SIDS to implement the SDGs.

- RCO (Samoa MCO) informed the Pacific SIDS have just commenced the process to develop its cooperation frameworks. The development of these Cooperation frameworks has drawn from the MVI analysis to develop the theory of change. The process includes discussions on the structural limitations that SIDS have, drawing on the MVI reports the Resident Coordinator network have produced. The Pacific SIDS will also consider the monitoring framework, the indicators for the SAMOA pathway, with regards to developing the results framework of the cooperation frameworks, both at the regional level as well as at the country level.
  
- Responding to the MVI process and the UN systems involvement in the processes, **DESA** underscored the matter is now being dealt within the ambit of an Intergovernmental process. Member States decided to constitute a high-level working group to assist in this process. OHRLLS and DESA as the secretariat, and co-chairs of the IACG which closely connects them to the IACG group, intend to astutely observe the work of the panel, and will not hesitate to consult members as and when a need arises. The secretariat will seek the assistance of a particular agency or regional organization if required at any juncture in the process. Members will be informed accordingly of such a need.
  
- **UNDESA** also noted the assistance of the RCs network, in the light of the extra hand and extra resources to assist in the MVI process as announced by RCO (Samoa). This is indeed very welcomed and a much-needed support.
  
- **DESA** reiterated the Secretariat have been requested to prepare a one or two pager of talking points which will be circulated to the UN system, including the RC's offices. It is to be used to guide conversations with member States and other stakeholders on the MVI, given the political nature of these processes. Members were reminded to be very careful with conversations around the MVI. The talking points will be circulated shortly, and the expectation is that these could be used in conversations with Member states, Development Partners etc.
  
- Responding to the questions relating to the monitoring framework and what the IACG and member States can expect, **DESA** emphasized the move towards a more analytical assessment of progress on implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. This moves away from the predominantly storytelling format “we have been doing this and that – but no real assessment of the progress made on the achievement of the goals, indicators and targets”. Drawing on the monitoring framework, which draws largely from SDG indicators, and other global frameworks, agencies will be requested to report on the data that they have for SIDS over a specific period.

- **DESA** is trying to determine whether to begin with request for data on the entire monitoring and evaluation framework or take an incremental approach and seek more data next year. The internal capacity of DESA to be able to crunch the data to produce a report is a factor, including the timeline. The internal deadline for submitting the report this year is early **July 2022**. The call for inputs will be sent out shortly with a deadline of the end of May.
- **The Chair** underscored the importance of a unified approach on the MVI. She also lauded the monitoring framework an important part to be able to report during the remainder of SAMOA Pathway, as well as laying a strong foundation for the next global framework in 2024.
- **ECLAC** noted that their thinking is that there is need to start preparations for the fourth conference at least by the second half of 2022 to get all of “the machinery together”, given the complexity a 10 review, and the new ways of reporting. ECLAC noted some level of capacity building will be required with our member countries and partners within the sub regions to achieve a comprehensive and results orientated report. ECLAC intends to work closely with the SIDS focal points in this regard.

### **3. Report on IACG Work Plan for 2021 and Workplan for 2022**

- **OHRLLS** referred members to a recently shared IACG work plan (2022). Taking stock of 2021, OHRLLS noted that COVID-19 continued to impact on the work plans. Many key events including the UN Oceans Conference, and the annual meetings for NFPs were postponed, or replaced, where possible, by virtual meetings. The IACG was able to hold only two meetings. Nonetheless, the IACG was still able to deliver along all three work streams, albeit with necessary adjustments in priorities and focus.
- Pursuant to the GA resolution, on the development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), members successfully participated as part of the broader engagement of UN entities in line with their respective mandates through a one-UN approach. DESA coordinated the substantial input for the SG report, and OHRLLS coordinated the intergovernmental process, including outreach to member states and other stakeholders on the development of MVIs.
- OHRLLS outlined the 2022 plan as follows:
  - (i) IACG meetings will continue to provide an important forum for the exchange of information on the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. The IACG will continue



its efforts toward enhancing synergies and collaboration. The is to have more meetings, in line with the IACG TORs, in the context member's work including the MVI and work in preparation for the Fourth international conference for SIDS.

- (ii) Members will continue to provide inputs to the preparation of the Secretary-General Report on Follow up to and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, in line with the requirements as discussed in the previous agenda item.
- (iii) Members will participate, through the Secretariat to the Panel, towards the finalization of the MVI in line with the GA resolution, while ensuring a unified approach.
- (iv) The continued implementation of the MCO review, identifying critical issues for discussion and follow up will be key for enhanced actions to accelerate the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. Members will hear of updates, including in the context of the implementation of Cooperation Frameworks and the regional Multi-Country Sustainable Development Frameworks, as and when required. DCO in particular will make their important contributions to our discussions when requested.
- (v) Members will continue to provide their support to the SIDS National Focal Points (NFPs) Network, including in the preparation of the third annual meeting to be held in the Caribbean region, tentatively in fourth quarter this year. The SIDS RC network will continue to have a critical role in this regard.

### **3. SIDS Stakeholder meeting**

- OHRLLS noted the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS has invited stakeholders, many of which are members of this IACG, to a two-day SIDS Stakeholders Meeting to be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 22 to 23 March 2022. The chair noted it is best to ensure the IACG is coordinated in its approach. OHRLLS and DESA will lead the discussions on the first day and encourages the IACG to participate actively in the discussions.
- OHRLLS will facilitate the first session on delivering the remaining years of the SAMOA Pathway. The session will provide an update on the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway since the Mid-Term Review in 2019 and will explore lessons learnt and possible solutions toward accelerated implementation. The session will also provide an update on the development and operationalisation of a monitoring and reporting framework for the SAMOA Pathway.
- DESA, on the other hand, will facilitate the session on the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability (MVI). The focus will be on the broader use of the MVI including how the UN system can more integrate vulnerability and resilience, building into the strategies that it pursues at

global, national and regional levels, and examine its uses as it pertains to access to concessional resources and sovereign debt issues. DESA informed this focus is a result of feedback from development partners who are quite clear that they wish to see the MVI integrated in programming within the UN system. The CDB is expected to present on a new product, not quite similar to the MVI, at the meeting, whose details are not yet clear.

- AOSIS will lead the remaining sessions. An annotated agenda will be shared by AOSIS, and members could use the opportunity to gather their thoughts in preparation for the meeting. The host is exploring ways to ensure there is remote participation and members will be informed of how to join once the hybrid arrangements are in place.

### **Discussions**

- **RCO (Samoa MCO)** reminded members of the task that was given to the Interagency Task Force for Financing for Development to come up, in 2022, with proposals on the use of the MVI, regardless of the architecture of the final index. This is an important area that is under consideration, and it will be useful if there could be clarity on the use of the MVI before the SIDS stakeholder meeting in Antigua and Barbuda.
- Debt restructuring remains important for SIDS. High vulnerabilities, as reflected in an MVI, could also contribute to the calibration of debt relief needed to restore sustainability in the context of debt restructuring and debt servicing program for SIDS.
- In connection with the SIDS summit in 2024, the RC network would like to table a report that analyses how vulnerabilities have affected SIDS progress towards the SDGs based on the final MVI.
- DESA in response to the question before the Interagency task force on Financing for Sustainable Development noted that indeed the task force undertook this work to look more closely at those issues related to use of the MVI. FSD office will participate in the SIDS stakeholder meeting to present some of its work depending on the availability of the Hybrid meeting arrangements to allow remote participation. DESA informed it will share a copy draft of the paper with the understanding that its purely a draft. The draft paper gives an in depth look at some of the issues surrounding the uptake of the MVI and what changes will need to take place, particularly as it relates to sovereign debt and debt restructuring and other related issues regarding concessional lending, loans, insurance products etc.

## 5. Any Other Business

- UNDESA informed the United Nations Small Island Developing States [Partnerships Awards](#) initiative Launched on March 14th, 2022. IACG members are encouraged to nominate any partnerships that may be eligible.
  
- UNDESA informed of the revival of the SIDS University consortium, under the leadership of UNESCO. The SIDS consortium was launched back in 2005 during the Mauritius Strategy. It came back into focus during the Intergovernmental high-level review of the SAMOA Pathway where it was agreed it needed a boost. The University of Delaware, Biden School of Public Policy and Administration, has volunteered to be the Secretary to produce for the consideration of the members of the consortium a strategy going forward for the next five years. There is hope the University Consortium members could be part of this interagency group and contribute to the discussion towards the fourth international conference SIDS.

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