

CONTRIBUTION BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

On the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway (2014) for the Sustainable Development of SIDS during the past year (May 2023 to April 2024)

PART A

VULNERABILITY REDUCTION AND RESILIENCE BUILDING IN SIDS

1. 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 have been implemented during the past year, at national or regional levels aimed specifically at improving resilience in SIDS.** Please include indications of resource allocations, if available.

Inputs by WHO

WHO worked across all SIDS regions to strengthen the climate resilience and environmental sustainability of health systems, including through assessments of climate resilience, retrofitting of the health infrastructure, and enhancement of surveillance capacities. In particular, WHO implemented climate resilience projects in Timor Leste, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu through funding from the Global Environmental Facility; and in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, and seven Caribbean SIDS through funding from the Green Climate Fund. Under its SMART Hospitals initiative in the Caribbean, WHO/PAHO supported nine SIDS to incorporate SMART standards in the design and modernization of health facilities¹. Efforts on climate change and health are expected to be further strengthened in the years ahead given the endorsement by 22 SIDS of the Climate and Health Declaration during the UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai in December 2023².

Other resilience building efforts in the Caribbean included the evaluation of Essential Public Health Functions in eight SIDS³ which helped to identify gaps in the context of health system stewardship and governance capacities. WHO/PAHO also continued to support the Human Resources for Health Commission⁴, which was established in 2022 jointly with CARICOM, and provided technical guidance on addressing the mobility and migration of health workers. WHO/PAHO also initiated the process of developing, or updating, policies on human resources for health in five SIDS⁵; and supported the strengthening of nursing education in three countries⁶. In partnership with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, and through the India-UN Partnership Development Fund, WHO/PAHO secured funds to support CARICOM Countries in their efforts to achieve and sustain the elimination of mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT Plus) of HIV, syphilis, and hepatitis B.

¹ Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sint Maarten, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

² <https://www.cop28.com/en/cop28-uae-declaration-on-climate-and-health>

³ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago.

⁴ <https://www.paho.org/en/news/16-12-2022-inaugural-human-resource-health-commission-launched>

⁵ Bahamas, Grenada, Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia

⁶ Belize, Dominica, and Turks and Caicos.

In the Pacific, WHO continued to support 21 Pacific island countries and areas (PICs) to enhance country capacities and resilience to prevent and respond to health system disruptions. Further, WHO ensured that PCR testing capabilities are now available in all PICs for detecting diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV, influenza, and COVID-19. To strengthen pandemic preparedness, oxygen-generating plants were successfully commissioned in Tonga and Solomon Islands, with a total of nine PICs having the ability to provide medicinal oxygen for patients with respiratory diseases. In April 2024, WHO held a training for 15 countries in the Western Pacific, including all SIDS in that region, to explore strategies for establishing and sustaining Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs), including on analysis and rapid detection of emerging health threats, and on real-time data management for improved surveillance.

To support African SIDS, WHO facilitated the validation of a pooled procurement agreement for essential medicines and medical products, and contributed to a survey on the costing and availability of essential medicines. WHO further supported countries to estimate the prevalence of child malnutrition and to adapt the WHO/AFRO nutrition profile model to restrict marketing of unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages for children. WHO also provided support in regard to the completion of the 2021 Global Survey on Climate Change and Health which will inform priority actions on health and the environment. To address the threat of vector-borne diseases, WHO supported countries in the development of a comprehensive strategy for the prevention and control of arboviral diseases.

As a direct follow-up to the SAMOA Pathway, WHO and the Government of Barbados held a Ministerial Conference on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health in SIDS in Bridgetown, Barbados in June 2023. The conference sought to strengthen national responses to the urgent crises of noncommunicable diseases and mental health, and adopted the Bridgetown Declaration on NCDs and Mental Health⁷. SIDS countries were encouraged to submit concrete national actions and interventions to be achieved by 2025 in order advance efforts on NCDs, mental health and climate action. These are available online on a SIDS Commitment Page⁸. To date, 20 countries have shared 63 actions which are being progressed with coordinated support from WHO/PAHO.

With WHO's support and facilitation, dedicated Health Ministers' Meetings were held in the Caribbean (March 2023), Pacific (September 2023), and in the African region (March 2024) to review progress towards health targets and agree on new commitments.

2. 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.

⁷ <https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/ncds/sids-event/2023-bridgetown-declaration-on-ncds-and-mental-health.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.who.int/teams/noncommunicable-diseases/sids-action-on-ncds-and-mental-health/sids-commitments>

Inputs by WHO

Through implementation of its organization-wide strategy, the General Programme of Work for 2025-2028⁹ (adopted in May 2024) WHO will support the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) and continue to prioritize the SIDS as a group of countries with multidimensional vulnerabilities. It will also support the SIDS through expanded support on: climate change and health, noncommunicable diseases and mental health, addressing health workforce challenges, and tackling health inequalities, including through implementation of the PAHO Strategy and Plan of Action on Health Promotion¹⁰.

WHO will also support SIDS through a number of new, or newly revitalized mechanisms, including the Caribbean Health Disaster Risk Reduction Committee, a subregional coordination platform (established in 2008, revitalized in 2023) which comprises Disaster Coordinators from Ministries of Health and regional agencies such as PAHO, CARPHA and CDEMA. In the African region, a Pooled Procurement Mechanism for SIDS – the establishment of which WHO has supported, and for which a Secretariat is being established in Mauritius¹¹ – will coordinate the purchase of essential medicines and medical products, harmonize medicines management systems, and improve supplier performance, leading to improved health system performance across all African SIDS.

In 2023, WHO created a SIDS-specific data¹² portal to allow countries and partners to track morbidity and mortality of the main noncommunicable diseases, prevalence of their key underlying risk factors, and information on the actions that countries have, or have not, taken to address NCDs. WHO will also support the newly announced Global Data Hub for SIDS, including through providing access to existing WHO data platforms and collaboration on capacity building activities to strengthen the quality and availability reliable health data in SIDS.

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.

Inputs by WHO

WHO is committed to supporting the operationalization of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI). The first-ever World Health Assembly resolution on climate change and health¹³ and the WHO General Programme of Work for 2025-2028¹⁴ (both adopted in May 2024) will enable a stronger focus on addressing the multidimensional vulnerabilities of SIDS. WHO is also strengthening its equity-focused

⁹ <https://www.who.int/about/general-programme-of-work/fourteenth>

¹⁰ <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/55925>

¹¹ <https://www.afro.who.int/news/african-island-states-take-fresh-step-towards-joint-medicines-procurement>

¹² <https://sids.ncdportal.org/>

¹³ https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA77/A77_ACONF7-en.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.who.int/about/general-programme-of-work/fourteenth>

work through addressing the social, commercial and environmental determinants of health, including through creation of a dedicated department in PAHO in 2023.

The International Dialogue on Sustainable Financing for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health on 20-21 June 2024, organized jointly by WHO and the World Bank, will include a focus on addressing multidimensional vulnerabilities in SIDS through the MVI and other measures, as a means of unlocking financing for the provision of NCD and mental health services. In addition, the Fourth UNGA High-level Meeting on NCDs in 2025 will highlight the unique challenges in SIDS and call for a holistic response to the overlapping threats of NCDs, mental health conditions and climate change.