

SIDS Civil Society Engagement Forum

12-13 May 2025, UNHQ, New York

Introduction

On 12–13 May 2025, the *Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Civil Society Engagement Forum* will be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Organized by UN DESA in collaboration with the Governments of the Maldives and Latvia – the co-chairs of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS -, and with generous support from Ireland, the Forum aims to ensure that diverse stakeholder perspectives and needs are fully reflected in the recommendations for strengthening the SIDS Partnership Framework, an outcome from the Fourth International Conference on SIDS.

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 as part of the SAMOA Pathway, the **SIDS Partnership Framework**¹ was created to monitor progress on existing partnerships and stimulate the launch of new, genuine, and durable partnerships in support of sustainable development in SIDS.

The **Fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4)**², held from 27 to 30 May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda, concluded with the adoption of *The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity (ABAS)*. Paragraph 37 of ABAS requests the UN Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States and through the Steering Committee on SIDS Partnerships, to present recommendations for strengthening the SIDS Partnership Framework and the SIDS Global Business Network and its Forum.

The **SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap (2024–2034)**³ - developed by civil society representatives from the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and South China Sea (AIS), Caribbean, and Pacific regions - outlines a strategic framework for enhancing civil society's role in implementing the SIDS agenda. It calls for tailored capacity-building, adequate financing, and meaningful inclusion, recognizing the vital contributions civil society makes to sustainable development.

A renewed and strengthened SIDS Partnership Framework can be instrumental in advancing these efforts - fostering partnerships built on trust, transparency, accountability, and collaboration across all sectors of society.

Inputs

- **Civil Society Consultations and Study (May 2025):** With funding support from Republic of Korea/UNOSD, UN DESA is developing a study assessing the opportunities, challenges, and capacities of stakeholders in the Caribbean, Pacific, and AIS regions to support implementation of the ABAS. *To be launched at the Forum.*
- **Preliminary Strategies for Enhancing the SIDS Partnership Framework (April 2024):** With funding support from the Government of Portugal, UN DESA developed a set of

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/small-island-developing-states/sids-partnership-framework>

² <https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/sids2024>

³ <https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/SIDS%20Civil%20Society%20Action%20Plan%20and%20Roadmap%2029%20May%202024.pdf>

preliminary strategies for enhancing the SIDS Partnership Framework over the coming decade. [Study by UN DESA on the SIDS Partnership Framework](#)

Structure and Format

The SIDS Civil Society Engagement Forum is a two-day meeting designed to facilitate structured dialogue and engagement between civil society and Member States:

- **Day 1 – Civil Society Positions:** Participants will refine key priorities, identify capacity needs, and develop actionable recommendations to enhance civil society engagement in the SIDS Partnership Framework and support ABAS implementation.
- **Day 2 – Dialogue with Member States:** Civil society representatives will present their recommendations, showcase successful partnerships, and engage in a focused dialogue with Member States to strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration in SIDS.

Outcomes

- **Enhanced Civil Society Engagement in the SIDS Partnership Framework:** Greater integration of civil society perspectives, broader representation, and stronger influence in shaping implementation aligned with the ABAS.
- **Strengthened Collaboration between Civil Society and Member States:** Improved mutual understanding and cooperation to advance shared priorities for sustainable development in SIDS.

Venue

The Forum will take place at UN Headquarters in New York. The first day, 12 May, will be held in **Conference Room A** as a workshop for civil society representatives in SIDS (by invitation only). The second day, 13 May, will be held in the **ECOSOC Chamber** and will be open to all Member States and relevant stakeholders, and will be broadcast on UN WebTV.

Website

<https://sdgs.un.org/2025SIDSCSOForum>

Programme

12 May 2025, Conference Room A, UNHQ

09.30 AM – 09.45 AM **Opening remarks**

- H.E. Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations, co-chair of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS
- H.E. Ms. Sanita Pavljuta-Deslandes, Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations, co-chair of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS

Outline of Forum

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- Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief, SIDS Unit, UN DESA
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09.45 AM – 10.15 AM **Setting the Stage: Strengthening the SIDS Partnership Framework**

- *Presentation on SIDS Partnership Framework Consultations (Mr. Ola Goransson, UN DESA)*
- *Study Findings on Stakeholder Engagement for ABAS (Ms. Karuna Rana, Consultant, UN DESA)*

Followed by Q&A

10.15 AM – 10.45 AM Coffee break & networking

10.45 AM – 11.45 AM **Interactive Breakout Groups – Strengthening Civil Society Engagement in the SIDS Partnership Framework**

Facilitated discussions to identify key recommendations across the following themes:

1. Connecting local to global action
2. Improving access to funding
3. Strengthening CSO–government partnerships
4. Strengthening CSO–private sector partnerships
5. Addressing CSO capacity development needs

Each group will develop at least one actionable proposal—e.g., a funding mechanism, training initiative, or new engagement model, including how the SIDS Partnership Framework's activities can support effectively.

Guiding questions to be developed.

11.45 AM – 12.45 PM **Plenary: Reporting Back and Discussion**

(Highlights from each breakout group)

12.45 PM – 02.15 PM Lunch break

02.15 PM – 03.15 PM **Interactive Breakout Groups - Regional perspectives on SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap Implementation**

Groups reflect on SIDS region-specific approaches to advancing the SIDS Civil Society Action Plan and Roadmap.

03.15 PM - 03.45 PM Coffee Break & Networking

03.45 PM – 05.00 PM **Refining CSO Recommendations**

- *Reporting back by three regional groups*
 - *Facilitated discussion to finalize CSO recommendations*
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10.00 AM – 10.15 AM

Opening remarks

- H.E. Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations
- H.E. Ms. Sanita Pavļuta-Deslandes, Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations
- Mr. Li Junhua, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

10.15 AM – 10.35 AM

Presentations:

- Result of SIDS Partnership Framework Consultations (Mr. Ola Goransson, UN DESA)
- Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships for the Implementation of the ABAS (Ms. Karuna Rana, UN DESA consultant)

10.35 AM – 10.45 AM

ABAS in Action: Spotlight on Innovative SIDS Partnerships

10.45 AM – 11.15 AM

The Role of Civil Society in Driving ABAS

- *Regional rapporteurs (AIS, Caribbean, Pacific) present key recommendations based on consultations across SIDS regions. The recommendations will set the stage for the interactive dialogue.*

11.15 AM – 12.50 PM

Interactive Dialogue: Civil Society and Member States – Partnering to Deliver ABAS

- *Member States respond to the civil society recommendations and engage in a discussion on opportunities, challenges, and next steps.*

Moderated by the co-chairs

Reflections by Member States, UN & IGOs:

A draft summary of CSO recommendations will be submitted in advance. Guiding questions to be developed.

12.50 PM – 01.00 PM

Closing remarks and next steps

- H.E. Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations
- H.E. Ms. Sanita Pavļuta-Deslandes, Permanent Representative of Latvia to the United Nations