



QUESTIONNAIRE

Follow-up to and implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (ABAS)

Please note that strict word limits have been established for each question. The Secretariat is unable to consider any information beyond these established word limits. You are requested to report only on new or updated information. Information conveyed in previous surveys or Secretary-Generals' reports will not be considered.

PART A - FOSTERING RESILIENT PROSPERITY IN SIDS

1. Enhanced UN System Support for achieving Resilient Prosperity in SIDS (FOR the UN system)

Using the UN [implementation Matrix¹](#) (attached) to guide feedback, briefly elaborate on any resilience building interventions or strategies (proactive or preventative) that were/are being implemented during the reporting period at national or regional levels aimed specifically at improving resilience in SIDS. Please include indications of resource allocations, if available (600 words).

During the reporting period, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, through the United Nations-Nippon Foundation (UNNF) capacity-building project, implemented a targeted intervention aimed specifically at strengthening ocean governance in SIDS. The Ocean Governance Fellowship for SIDS, launched in 2024, supports ocean-based action by directly building the capacity of SIDS to understand their rights, obligations, and responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as well as to support the ratification and implementation of the provisions of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement)—ultimately contributing to improved resilience in SIDS.

The SIDS Fellowship employs a highly customized curriculum tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities in SIDS across different regions, reflecting the need for adaptable, relevant and needs-based interventions. By targeting mid-level government officials, this Fellowship strategically builds capacity that helps strengthen national administrations and enhance policy implementation. Topics addressed by the first cohort of SIDS Fellows included the impacts of climate change, plastic pollution, biodiversity loss, and SIDS-specific challenges related to maritime security and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, all of which are highly relevant to the resilience of SIDS.

In addition to the new SIDS Fellowship, the UNNF project has, over the course of its 20 years of implementation, consistently prioritized the inclusion of SIDS nationals in training opportunities, ensuring that capacity-building efforts remain inclusive and embedded within the broader UN system support to SIDS. This includes the Alumni Meeting organized in 2024 to coincide with the SIDS4 Conference, gathering 14 former Fellows (all SIDS nationals) to provide continued, updated training and further raise their professional profiles as ocean experts.

2. Enhanced and Tailored Development Cooperation for SIDS (For Development Partners, IFIs and SIDS Governments)

¹ accountability framework developed to promote and monitor progress with implementation of ABAS



Oceans and Law of the Sea

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

Successful ABAS implementation will require improved, tailored development cooperation approaches and financial resources, calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and economic challenges facing SIDS. It will also require that relevant national/regional plans programme and policies are implemented. Briefly elaborate on:

- i) 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 (600 words)
- ii) any planned or ongoing national programmes to develop more resilient SIDS economies. What are the expected results from these interventions. Please include indications of resource allocations if available (600 words)

PART B - COHERENT AND EFFETIVE UN SYSTEM WIDE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO SIDS

Paragraph 36 of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) requests the UN Secretary-General:

“..... within his annual report to the General Assembly for the 80th Session on the implementation of the ABAS, to present proposals to ensure a coordinated, coherent and effective UN system wide capacity development approach to SIDS and to enhance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ABAS, including a potential single SIDS dedicated entity at the UN Secretariat.”

At the global level, the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) oversees UN efforts for sustainable development in 162 countries and territories, guiding, supporting, tracking and overseeing the coordination of development operations. The UNSDG derives its mandate from the Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which serves as an important instrument for the monitoring and the assessment of UN development operations. The integrated nature of ABAS calls for a UN Development System that works in a coordinated and coherent manner while preserving each entity’s mandate and role and leveraging each entity’s expertise.

1. Coherent and effective UN system support to SIDS (For UN System Responses, 750 words)

- i. What challenges are encountered by UN agencies, to deliver a ‘whole-of-system response’ in addressing the needs, risks and vulnerabilities and to provide development programmes that address the underlying drivers of needs in SIDS?
- ii. What percentage of your entity’s programming expenditures on development activities in SIDS in 2024 were allocated to joint programmes? What percentage will be allocated in 2025?
- iii. What are the lessons learned, challenges and best practices of the UNSCDF (including multi-country frameworks) and their respective Country Implementation Plans (CIPs) in promoting joint programming?
- iv. What improvements would you recommend to enhance the UN’s system-wide approach to capacity development in SIDS?

Drawing from the experience of the United Nations – Nippon Foundation (UNNF) capacity-building project, a key factor in effective capacity development is the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. This includes not only aligning substantive activities with national and regional priorities but also allowing for reasonable adjustments to programmes timeframes. Such flexibility is especially important for SIDS, where limited human capacity in national administrations can affect participation. In addition, effectiveness, including cost-effectiveness, could be improved through stronger coordination and collaboration among UN system capacity-building interventions.



Oceans and Law of the Sea

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

It may be beneficial to map out the UN system's assistance programmes for SIDS and communicate with potentially relevant UN system entities upstream during project scoping phases, not simply downstream for assistance in the implementation of specialized thematic elements of the assistance.

- v. How can the UN better partner with regional development stakeholders e.g. CARICOM Secretariat, SPC, PIF, SPREP etc to improve programme delivery, improve coherence and avoid duplication

DOALOS engages with regional entities in establishing beneficiary States' needs and in the delivery of its assistance. For example, cooperation with regional partners in the Caribbean and Pacific in the organization and implementation of the Division's programme of activities to promote a better understanding of the BBNJ Agreement and prepare for its entry into force has enabled the Division to provide targeted training to SIDS in these regions. In such engagement, it is important to proactively and early-on have focused discussion on initiatives already being implemented or in development, including with the UN country teams. There can also be duplication in the funding provided by donors in the region through the various regional entities and/or bilaterally. The UN can assist in rationalizing donor actions by undertaking consultations with the regional entities and actual / potential donors to exchange information and collaborate as appropriate.

In the face of the complex and interconnected challenges confronting SIDS, the UNNF project has found significant value in leveraging the experiences of SIDS across different regions to share best practices and approaches. Strengthened collaboration with regional stakeholders in the substantive delivery of training would further support beneficiaries in this regard. Experience has also shown that, beyond substantive training, participants greatly benefit from opportunities to network with professionals from other countries and regions, fostering future collaboration. The UN, working in collaboration with regional stakeholders, can play a key role in creating an enabling environment to support this, for instance through learning and experience-sharing activities. Enhanced collaboration would also support the timely dissemination of opportunities, helping to ensure that calls for applications reach the appropriate professionals and networks.

For Governments

- vi. How would you assess the current level of coordination among UN agencies in supporting capacity development for SIDS at the national, regional and global levels? What challenges do you believe hinder effective coordination among UN entities in providing support to SIDS? What mechanisms would you suggest to improve the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of UN support for SIDS? (600 words)

2. Interagency Mechanisms for improved coherence

Under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) provides broad guidance, coordination and strategic direction for the UN system in the areas under the responsibility of Executive Heads. Focus is placed on inter-agency priorities and initiatives while ensuring that the independent mandates of organizations are maintained. One particular focus of the CEB is system-wide coordination and policy coherence in the programme areas. The CEB has to date created three inter-agency mechanisms to increase coherence across the United Nations system in addressing urgent development challenges. These are UN-Water, UN-Oceans and UN-Energy.

- vii. As there is no single entity in the United Nations system that has sole responsibility for SIDS, do you see value creating a UN-SIDS to serve as the primary agent for promoting system-wide collaboration on SIDS issues, and to promote coherence in the UN system's multi-disciplinary response to SIDS? (500 words)



Oceans and Law of the Sea

Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea

UN-Oceans is an inter-agency mechanism that seeks to enhance the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of competent organizations of the United Nations system and the International Seabed Authority in relation to activities relating to oceans and coastal areas (revised Terms of Reference: GA resolution 68/70, Annex). UN-Oceans has participated in both the Samoa and Antigua and Barbuda SIDS Conferences with side events highlighting actions and partnerships supporting small island developing States. UN-Oceans is committed to raising awareness and building capacity on oceans and coastal challenges facing small island developing States, as well as coordination of activities across the United Nations system in meeting these challenges.

Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs Plus (ECESA Plus)

Coordination of UN System actions for the implementation of politically agreed documents e.g. ABAS takes place through the Executive Committee on Economic and Social (ECESA Plus). Its over fifty members have developed a matrix for the follow up to ABAS, focusing on mandates specifically directed at the United Nations system as well as on areas where the UN system is already engaged through its programmatic work. The UN Implementation Matrix, which is being continuously updated, serves as an accountability framework and as a working tool to promote and monitor progress. ECESA Plus meets regularly to *inter alia* SIDS related matters and is convened by the Under Secretary General of DESA.

- viii How can ECESA Plus be used to more effectively harness UN agency contributions and to amplify systemic synergies?)

3. HLPF

- ix. How should the HLPF SIDS session be structured to effectively monitor progress to scale up implementation of the SDGs while at the same time driving implementation of ABAS? What role should the monitoring and evaluation framework of ABAS play in this? (250 words)