

## 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 Matrix<sup>1</sup> (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, OHCHR has stepped up its coordination efforts for the implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, including through working across its regional and field presences to support resilience-building strategies that are human rights-centred. Key interventions include:

- As part of the Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security (PCCMHS) programme, OHCHR continued supporting the Pacific Islands Forum members to coordinate climate mobility, through the implementation of the Pacific Regional Framework for Climate Mobility and strengthen the capacity of non-state actors in advocating for and engaging in a people-centred climate mobility, enhancing Pacific Islanders' adaptive capacity.
- OHCHR enhanced its presence in the Caribbean region through its regional office in the Bahamas which covers 13 countries. This enhanced presence aims to provide more direct and tailored support to SIDS. OHCHR continues to advocate for integrating human rights into climate resilience strategies. This includes valuing and protecting indigenous knowledge and practices, ensuring that climate policies are inclusive and participatory, and emphasizing the rights of vulnerable populations in resilience planning. OHCHR has also continued to emphasize the importance of the rights to development, health, food security, and to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as fundamental to addressing the interlinked challenges facing SIDS, including climate change, inequality, and sustainable development.
- In São Tomé and Príncipe, under the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Project, OHCHR supported country's institutional resilience and governance capacity, including through support to the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission meeting international "A-status" standards. This commission is expected to significantly strengthen the national human rights framework, support justice and security sector reforms, enhance human rights education, and promote democracy and the rule of law. The PBF Project is a key intervention under the UN system support, was crucial in funding and implementing these initiatives. The Government has confirmed its commitment to establishing the NHRC by the end of 2025, highlighting its strategic role in fulfilling international human rights obligations.
- In **Haiti and Maldives**, OHCHR provided support to its field presences, United Nations peace missions and United Nations country teams on implementation of the human rights due

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<sup>1</sup> accountability framework developed to promote and monitor progress with implementation of ABAS

diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. In Haiti, OHCHR provided support to the Multinational Security Support mission in the development of its human rights compliance mechanism, in line with Security Council resolution 2699; developed a data system to verify and track human rights violations, guiding early warning and humanitarian response; and launched “Clubs of Peace and Integrity” in 18 secondary schools, in partnership with UNDP and the Anti-Corruption Unit of Haiti strengthening the human rights and peaceful conflict resolution capacities of over 500 youths.

- **In Haiti**, OHCHR launched a two-year programme to assist the national police in combating sexual violence through training specialized police units and magistrates in Port-au-Prince, and supported the Haitian National Police’s National Communication Strategy on Gender-based Violence. It also contributed to the Conduct and Discipline Policy and Complaints and Reporting Mechanism of the Multinational Security Support Mission.
- To support administration of justice and law enforcement, OHCHR monitored, trained, and advised state institutions in **Fiji and Haiti**, and advanced human rights integration in law enforcement in **Barbados and Belize**.
- **In the Comoros, Fiji, and Haiti**, OHCHR monitored human rights and carried out advocacy in **electoral processes**. Awareness raising activities on human rights standards, early warning, monitoring, and reporting were held in the Comoros. **In Trinidad and Tobago**, and **Guyana**, OHCHR enhanced media capacity to counter **hate speech, misinformation**, and disinformation. OHCHR in Haiti supported a human rights organization in developing a forum on the electoral process to raise national awareness on ensuring human rights during the upcoming elections.
- **In Belize, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Maldives, and Timor-Leste**, OHCHR supported the establishment and strengthening of **national human rights institutions** by providing legal advice, needs assessments, and capacity-building.
- OHCHR, with the UN system in **Guyana**, supported the rollout of an International Human Rights Law Certificate Course—162 participants graduated.
- Through the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance in the Implementation of the Universal Periodic Review, in 2024 OHCHR supported seven SIDS, namely **Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Suriname**, in the implementation of UPR recommendations. For 2025, OHCHR approved projects to support implementation of the **UPR recommendations in Benin, Cabo Verde and Fiji**.

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

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:

- 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)**

In the Federated States of Micronesia, OHCHR has planned a series of activities aimed at providing expert advice to the Government and other stakeholders, with the objective of aligning development cooperation and national policies with human rights standards. The OHCHR Pacific Regional Office contributed inputs on human rights obligations to the drafting process of the country’s Strategic

Development Plan 2024–2043. In May 2025, the Knowledge Hub on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights facilitated a workshop in Pohnpei to identify key areas for technical assistance. OHCHR will continue to engage with national and subnational stakeholders to support follow-up actions.

In June 2025, the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights is scheduled to undertake the first-ever visit by a special procedure mandate holder to the Federated States of Micronesia. The visit will result in a report containing recommendations to the Government and other stakeholders, including development partners. This is expected to contribute to better economic, social, cultural and political development taking into account the country’s unique cultural and geographic opportunities and challenges.

In the Marshall Islands, a low-lying atoll nation, the combination of the country’s vulnerability to climate change and the consequences of the legacy of 67 known nuclear tests pose unique challenges to economic, social, cultural and political development, in particular, environmental and health impacts as well as continued forced displacement. OHCHR has coordinated with the UN Multi-Country Office in Micronesia and other UN entities, “acting as one United Nations (...) to support the Government of the Marshall Islands in its efforts to improve the health of its people and environment” and remove obstacles to development and to the enjoyment of human rights stemming from the country’s nuclear legacy. Resources allocated for this project are available here, with further joint efforts with UNDP to fundraise for implementing related projects.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to tailored and effective development cooperation through a series of pledges to be achieved by December 2026. These include the ratification of key international human rights treaties and optional protocols by December 2026; the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in full compliance with the Paris Principles; the implementation of a National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up (NMIRF) to enhance engagement with international human rights mechanisms and facilitate coordinated national reporting and implementation; and the development of a National Policy and Action Plan on Business and Human Rights to support sustainable economic development through structured financing and capacity building in formal and informal sectors. The Government has also committed to further strengthening its collaboration with OHCHR, particularly with the Regional Office for Central Africa, creating an enabling environment for cooperation on human rights promotion and protection.

- 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)**

OHCHR initiatives in SIDS are expected to yield robust national human rights infrastructure, improved responses to international human rights mechanisms, and strengthened local economic capacities through an inclusive, sustainable financial framework, fostering optimism about the future of human rights and governance in SIDS.

## **PART B - COHERENT AND EFFECTIVE 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?**

One of the major challenges faced by UN agencies is the persistence of siloed approaches. Despite efforts to address this challenge, these siloes still exist. A greater level of coordination and collaboration among UN agencies is needed to deliver a whole of system response, particularly one that incorporates the right to development across initiatives. In the Pacific, the lack of baseline data on climate remains a key challenge. The complex architecture of the UN in the region, comprising one UNCT and three Multi-Country Offices, with diverse presence and coverage has resulted in uneven levels of support across subregions, countries, and territories

- 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?**

In the Pacific, 12% of the Annual Work Plan for 2025 is allocated to joint programmes (PCCMHS Phase II, SDG Programme, UNHSTF on climate mobility).

- 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?**

Challenges: limited information sharing and competition over resources, which affects effective collaboration.

Lessons learned: A clear division of resources, responsibilities, and roles among participating agencies in joint programmings is critical to ensure a positive outcome. Additionally, fostering a shared results framework from the outset helps alling different agency approaches and strengthens overall coherence.

Best practices: Strong leadership and the convening power of the Resident Coordinator have proven effective in promoting joint programming. However, equally important is the proactive engagement and willingness of UN agencies in leading joint efforts. When agencies take ownership of joint efforts, whether by co-leading thematic groups, organizing joint activities, or mobilizing pooled resources, it reinforces a culture of shared responsibility and mutual accountability, which is essential for successful joint programming.

- iv. **What improvements would you recommend to enhance the UN's system-wide approach to capacity development in SIDS?**

One key improvement would be to ensure that all Resident Coordinator Offices are equipped with dedicated Human Rights Advisors. This would strengthen the integration of human rights

across UN programming and support a more coherent and rights-centered approach to capacity development in SIDS. This would help mainstreaming human rights across sectors, and enhancing national ownership and accountability in development efforts.

The South-South and Triangular Cooperation should be strengthened and expanded through peer learning among SIDS to enhance the knowledge capacity and expertise. Greater inter-agency collaboration is also needed, with ABAS implementation placed at the core of joint programming and regular inter-agency meetings. Furthermore, harmonizing UN reporting requirements would reduce reporting burden on SIDS, while a unified monitoring and evaluation framework with common indicators would improve tracking of progress. Finally, increased support for training and capacity-building is essential, particularly in Caribbean SIDS facing human resource constraints.

- 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

The Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security has been a good example of close collaboration with PIF Secretariat, including regular engagement on activities and deliverables of the project. The partnership has been sustained through collaboration on webinars, workshops, as well as the development of the implementation plan for the Pacific Regional Framework for Climate Mobility. To strengthen partnerships with regional development stakeholders, the UN should consult with and involve them at the proposal development stage and maintain continuous collaboration throughout the implementation. Joint OHCHR-SPC missions — such as those supporting the establishment of National Human Rights Institutions, supporting engagement with human rights mechanisms, and providing capacity building and technical assistance to address human rights implications of the nuclear legacy in the Marshall Islands have proven very effective.

To improve its partnership with CARICOM, the UN should focus on regular coordination meetings, such as quarterly or biannual strategic dialogues between the Resident Coordinators, Heads of UN Agencies and the CARICOM Secretariat that can serve as essential mechanisms to align programming with regional priorities, track progress on ABAS implementation, and identify potential areas for joint action. A comprehensive mapping of existing activities/work would reduce duplication and identify entry points for the UN system to partner with CARICOM. Additionally, areas of joint collaboration should include joint advocacy at regional and international levels to promote the specific needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS and the importance of the ABAS framework and joint resource mobilization to attract funding for ABAS implementation, leveraging the convening power and networks of both the UN and CARICOM.

#### **a. Current UN coordination level:**

Documents confirm effective collaboration among OHCHR, UNDP, and the UN Resident Coordinator in establishing the NHRC. Regular joint meetings ensure coherent actions, addressing structural and legislative challenges proactively.

#### **b. Coordination challenges:**

Significant challenges include legislative delays and budgetary constraints, underscoring the need for improved national financial planning. These challenges highlight the necessity for strategic resource allocation and long-term planning to sustain development initiatives.



### c. Mechanisms for improvement:

Creating a dedicated national coordination structure, such as a permanent committee involving UN agencies and national authorities, could enhance coordination and expedite implementation. This structure would facilitate regular communication, joint planning, and efficient issue resolution, significantly improving the efficiency and effectiveness of development efforts.

#### 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)**

There are differing perspectives among OHCHR Offices working in SIDS, on whether establishing a new entity—such as a "UN-SIDS" body—would be the most effective way to improve coherence and coordination in the UN system's response to the unique challenges faced by SIDS:

- From the perspective of the Pacific Regional Office, rather than creating a new structure, it may be more strategic to strengthen the OHRLLS which could also ensure consistency and coherence across the three groups of countries—SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs.
- On the other hand, experiences from São Tomé and Príncipe, particularly the participatory process around the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission, highlight the potential benefits of a more dedicated and tailored "UN-SIDS" mechanism. This could significantly enhance technical assistance, institutional support, and resource mobilisation.
- According to the OHCHR's CARICOM Office, creating a dedicated UN-SIDS entity holds significant promise for enhancing the UN's system-wide approach to SIDS. By fostering greater collaboration, improving coherence, strengthening advocacy, and streamlining system-wide engagement, such an entity could significantly boost the effectiveness of the UN's multi-disciplinary response to the unique challenges and development priorities of SIDS. Instead of having the mandate spread out over various entities, a dedicated UN-SIDS would have the purview of dealing with all issues

affecting SIDS and promoting coherence in the UN system's response. This would also address the persistent siloed working practices across the UN enhancing the coordination.

### **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?)**

A greater coordination with regional UN presences could ensure a more grounded discussion. Strengthening ECESA Plus's role in fostering transparent, regular communication between UN agencies and national governments would further enhance systemic alignment and coherence. Additionally, ECESA Plus can be used to strengthen coordination by mapping UN agency mandates, comparative advantages, and existing interventions in SIDS. This will prevent duplication, identify complementarities, and ensure that each agency contributes its expertise in a coherent and collaborative manner. Additionally, by ensuring the timely input of information in the UN implementation matrix that serves as a coordination tool to track progress. ECESA Plus can establish cross-agency thematic task forces (e.g., on climate resilience, sustainable tourism, or blue economy) to drive integrated responses aligned with ABAS and the SDGs. These groups can facilitate knowledge exchange, pool technical assistance, and coordinate capacity-building efforts across SIDS.

### **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)**

The HLPF SIDS session should be structured to focus on thematic clusters aligned with ABAS priorities such as climate resilience, ocean health, digital transformation, and financing for development. In this way, it drives implementation of ABAS while reviewing SIDS relevant progress on the SDGs. It should also adopt clear, targeted indicators aligned with ABAS and the SDGs. The monitoring and evaluation framework of ABAS should play a central role in this structure. It should serve as the primary tool for tracking implementation, aligning indicators with SDG targets while integrating SIDS-specific metrics to reflect unique vulnerabilities and capacities. This framework can ensure that reporting is harmonized, results are measurable, and progress is consistently benchmarked.