

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).

For WFP Pacific: (1) development financing through disaster risk financing (DRF) for micro and macro insurance payouts – working with the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance (PICRIC); (2) investment in social protection systems to make them more adaptive and shock responsive – strengthening existing government systems; (3) financial and technical assistance in the provision of capacity strengthening for emergency preparedness and disaster response capabilities.

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:

- 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)

WFP's strategies for delivering support to Caribbean SIDS are nuanced to the context and realities. Against this backdrop, our support is premised on specificity, flexibility, and high levels of localisation that align with the goals and objectives that SIDS have articulated in the ABAS. Our investments are significantly focused on understanding specific vulnerabilities through analyses and needs assessments undertaken in close collaboration with national Governments and regional institutions, such as CARICOM, and other partners. Needs assessments focus on the impact that multidimensional risks, such as climate risks, geopolitical risks, and COVID-19, have on the food security and livelihood needs of the most vulnerable individuals, groups, and communities. WFP utilises shock-responsive social protection in its programming and design interventions, which can adjust to evolving circumstances, thereby building the fortitude and resilience of Caribbean people. This means that we work with national governments to enhance their capacity in effective social protection systems and disaster management systems that can rapidly scale to meet the needs of vulnerable households during crises. A notable example is WFP's ongoing support to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) for regional coordination and logistics, which contributes to long-term resilience and sustainability. Furthermore, WFP actively explores innovative financial instruments and

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

partnerships, including forecast-based financing and parametric insurance, to ensure that timely resources are available for early action before disasters strike.

The expected outcome of our tailored support to SIDS is enhanced national ownership and capacity, resulting in stronger national institutions capable of effectively leading and managing disaster preparedness, response, and resilience-building efforts. Financing our intervention to support SIDS relies on a combination of multilateral, bilateral, and private sector contributions. Another outcome of WFP's work in SIDS is the increased resilience to climate shocks, enabling communities and governments to anticipate better, absorb, adapt to, and recover from disasters and economic crises, thereby safeguarding development gains as envisioned in the ABAS. Efforts will result in more efficient and timely emergency responses, as well as faster delivery of assistance to affected populations, due to pre-emptive actions and strengthened local systems.

- 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)

In the Caribbean, WFP's focus is on strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems, as many SIDS Governments are actively developing or enhancing social safety nets. We provide technical assistance to render these systems more adaptive and capable of rapidly scaling up assistance during shocks or disasters. A critical area of support is working with Ministries responsible for agriculture and other entities to empower smallholder farmers to access formal and sustainable markets, by linking local agricultural production to national school feeding programmes. The anticipated results are increased local food availability, reduced import bills, enhanced livelihoods for smallholder farmers, and greater resilience of the agricultural sector to climate change. At this juncture, WFP supports national school feeding programmes through technical expertise in designing, implementing, and coordinating supply chain activities, with an emphasis on sourcing food locally.

WFP also works to enhance national emergency preparedness and response capacities. This involves providing training, equipment, and technical support to national disaster management organizations to improve their readiness and response effectiveness, thereby minimizing the economic disruption caused by disasters. The desired results include reduced economic losses from disasters, faster recovery for affected communities and infrastructure, and increased investor confidence due to demonstrated national preparedness.

Finally, WFP supports data-driven decision-making by assisting national and regional entities and relevant ministries in collecting and analyzing data on food security, vulnerability, and market dynamics. This evidence is crucial for governments to design effective policies and programmes for economic resilience and aligns with calls for SIDS-specific data. This leads to more targeted and effective national policies and investments, improved resource allocation, and better monitoring of progress towards resilient economies.

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?

Key challenges include limited financial resources, high cost of doing business and limited field presence.

The multitude of development needs can lead to a fragmented landscape of partners, resulting in duplicated efforts and straining limited national capacities in the absence of effective coordination. The lack of effective coordination, coupled with operational complexities, overburden and overwhelm SIDS national capacities to leverage the strengths of the UN system. Overlapping agency mandates, earmarked funding and limited flexibility complicate the ability for joint programming and targeted responses to cross-cutting issues, making it challenging to mobilise pooled resources.

- 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?

Government participation at the right level is important while in-country presence is critical. One of the lessons learned is the importance of localisation and co-creation of interventions that will ensure close alignment with national priorities, and by extension, the ABAS. This is done through clearly defined joint work plans that feature shared outcomes, outputs, indicators, and responsibilities, thereby promoting accountability and minimizing duplication. One tangible mechanism that advances the avoidance of overlaps and duplication is the Joint SDG Fund, which fosters greater collaboration among UN agencies and IFIs in addressing complex SIDS-specific issues. Multi-Country Frameworks provide a regional approach to interventions, but its effectiveness lies in the strength of engagement plans with Member States, so there is an effective leverage of the comparative advantages and distinct expertise of each participating agency.

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

(1) More joint interventions at the country-level, (2) More recognition of the inter-dependencies of the various activities / interventions. Additionally, conducting comprehensive, SIDS-led assessments of cross-sectoral capacity is a crucial starting point for enhancing the UN's system-wide approach to addressing SIDS development issues. This will inform a clear articulation of UN intervention that is grounded in national priorities and with those outlined in the ABAS, and leverages each agency's strengths while remaining adaptable to the SIDS contexts. From the baseline comprehensive assessments, critical investments could then be made in knowledge management platforms that promote South-South cooperation between the SIDS regions. The coherent and structured approach strengthens the advocacy with donors to provide predictable, flexible, and long-term support to capacity development in SIDS. Operationally, UN engagement must be streamlined and harmonized by standardising mission planning, reporting requirements, and programmatic interfaces to reduce the burden on national Governments.

- 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

(1) Increase high-level engagement of the UN, e.g. the UNSG's participation at the Pacific Leaders' meeting provided a boost to UN's engagement in the region, (2) Better delivery at the country-level helps affirm the UN's value in the regional mechanisms. Additionally, for better partnerships and collaboration, UN Agencies should involve regional bodies from the outset in the joint strategic planning and programming of multi-country strategies, to ensure alignment with regional SIDS priorities. In the Caribbean, regional entities such as CARICOM, CDEMA, and the CCCCC bring expertise, convening power, and a network that allows for maximum reach, impact, and buy-in to interventions by UN agencies. A clear definition of roles and responsibilities between regional entities and UN agencies should be established to avoid duplication and maximise collective impact. The UN brings global expertise while regional bodies bring effective context-specific integration and policy. Additionally, joint work programmes can reduce the burden on SIDS in monitoring and evaluating the progress in achieving ABAS targets. As a case in point, WFP works with national government to strengthen data collection, analysis, and enhance knowledge-sharing platforms. Also, direct capacity strengthening is done where WFP seconds staff to regional entities such as CARICOM and CDEMA, which fosters mutual understanding and stronger collaboration.

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)

*An entity (UN-SIDS) with focus on SIDS may be relevant. However, resources allowing and member states buy-in, support the mandate should be clearly defined for the UN-SIDS and other entities that may have overlapping mandates, to minimize duplication. It should focus on promoting coherence and it should not have an operational role. **But caution needs to be taken considering the UN80 reform process which seeks to reduce duplication and overlaps in mandates; thus mainstreaming may offer an effective alternative.***

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?)

By strengthening joint analysis, coordinated programming, and collective advocacy, ECESA Plus can drive systemic synergies across humanitarian and development mandates. To be more effective, the platform must prioritize actionable deliverables, foster inclusive participation—including field-level inputs—and embed accountability mechanisms that translate collaborative intent into transformative impact. For WFP, it enables more coherent engagement on food security, resilience, and nutrition by integrating our operational footprint with policy dialogues led by other agencies.

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) [an entity focused on SIDS will help facilitate.]

The HLPF SIDS session should align the monitoring of ABAS with the SDG framework to ensure coherence and avoid duplication. This includes utilizing the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework being developed by UN DESA and UN-OHRLLS, which aims to enable the international community to target assistance effectively. Given the data challenges faced by SIDS, the session should emphasize building statistical capacities to enable effective monitoring. This includes supporting integrated programming and high-quality geospatial data to identify vulnerable populations and monitor outcomes.

The session should ensure the inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including marginalized groups, to reflect the intersectional vulnerabilities faced by communities within SIDS. This approach ensures that no one is left behind in the implementation of ABAS and the SDGs. Facilitating knowledge exchange among SIDS through South-South cooperation can advance ABAS implementation. Sharing best practices and lessons learned can help in addressing common challenges and scaling up successful initiatives.

The role that the ABAS M&E Framework should play in this:

To effectively monitor progress and address inequalities, establish specific, measurable indicators aligned with ABAS's ten thematic areas through:

- *the collection and analysis of disaggregated data to fully capture disparities and inform targeted interventions*
- *enhancing the capacity of national statistical agencies in SIDS to collect, analyze, and report this data accurately and in a timely manner.*

These efforts will provide crucial evidence-based insights to guide policy formulation and resource allocation, ensuring interventions are truly responsive to the unique needs of SIDS.