

Note by the Secretariat for a SIDS Partnership Framework

Version 2 – as of July 2015

Monitoring and ensuring the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for Small Island Developing States

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Introduction

1. The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS Conference), held in Apia, Samoa from 1 to 4 September 2014, resulted in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (Samoa) Pathway ([A/RES/69/15](#)), a blueprint for achieving sustainable development in Small Island Developing States.
2. [Paragraph 101](#) of the *Samoa Pathway* requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to present recommendations, including through the use of existing intergovernmental mechanisms, for a Partnership Framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for Small Island Developing States. The recommendations should be presented to the General Assembly for consideration and action at its sixty-ninth session.
3. The Samoa Pathway specifies that the Partnership Framework should:
 - Monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States
 - Ensure that partnerships focus on the priorities of small island developing States
 - Identify new opportunities to advance their sustainable development, and
 - Ensure the full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the Samoa Pathway.
4. The General Assembly reaffirmed paragraph 101 in its resolution [A/RES/69/217](#), emphasizing that the partnership framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States should be open and adaptable to the priorities and realities of small island developing State and consistent with other relevant processes and mechanisms in order to promote efficient and effective follow-up to the existing partnerships, in particular the new ones launched in Samoa, and to encourage new, genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of small island developing States based on the principles of national ownership, mutual trust, transparency and accountability and focused on concrete action-oriented programmes addressing the priorities of small island developing states.
5. The current note, prepared by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development (UN-DESA/DSD), offers a synthesis of the input received to a survey sent to Member States as part of its consultation process, and a set of preliminary recommendations for a SIDS Partnership Framework to spur further consultations with and among Member States. The word “respondents” in the note refers to Member States, unless otherwise specified.
6. The current note was updated in July 2015 to reflect comments and suggestions made by member States on the proposed recommendations for a *SIDS Partnership Framework* at the *SIDS Partnership Dialogue*, an informal meeting organized by Maldives and UN-DESA on 25 June 2015 at UNHQ, New York, as a follow-up to the SIDS Conference.

Synthesis of survey responses

7. The synthesis presented here is based on 40 Member State responses (*Argentina, Australia, Barbados, Japan, Maldives, Mexico, Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa, Singapore, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, USA, European Union*), including European Union members that submitted a joint response as the European Union. This is a partial sample of views of Member States, representing roughly one fifth of the United Nations membership. Views from SIDS from the three regions - AIMS, Caribbean and the Pacific - were received.
8. In addition, UN-DESA/DSD consulted within the United Nations system, and other relevant entities, through the *Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA Plus)* – an inter-agency mechanism comprising over 52 UN entities -, and through the *Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) on SIDS*, which include a range of various UN entities and some relevant international and regional inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) working on issues related to SIDS. Responses from these entities shows that the views are in large similar, and supportive, of those from Member States, as presented in this note. Deferring and additional views have been mentioned specifically.

Maintaining momentum – opportunities, intergovernmental linkage and coordination

9. The Third International Conference on SIDS, held in Samoa 2014, presented a unique opportunity for a range of partners to discuss, review, and launch partnerships that advance the sustainable development of SIDS. Views from respondents make it clear that maintaining the momentum that was reached in Samoa and effective follow-up on partnerships that stemmed from the SIDS Conference is essential, but clearly also presents a challenge, given the many competing parallel processes and various international conferences held on a yearly basis. It is therefore crucial that new opportunities for discussing and reviewing SIDS partnerships are strategically chosen.
10. As mentioned by one Member State, the timing of forming the Partnership Framework is critical as major changes in implementing and monitoring international cooperation are expected with the definition of the post-2015 development agenda, a crucial aspect also for SIDS. The Partnership Framework should therefore be flexible enough to allow for the best possible synergies with the post-2015 development framework, while also taking into account the future role of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. The HLPF, with its action-oriented focus, is the most appropriate forum for SIDS partnerships and its follow-up, as mentioned repeatedly mentioned by respondents.
11. Most respondents have responded in favour of organizing - by using existing resources - an annual multi-stakeholder *SIDS Partnership Dialogue* as a half or full day event in the margins of the yearly meetings of HLPF under auspices of ECOSOC. Following the modalities of the multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues which were held during the SIDS Conference in Samoa, the HLPF Partnership Dialogue should be action oriented and results focused. It could review progress of SIDS partnerships, act as a launch pad for announcing new SIDS

specific partnerships, and be a forum for engaging in substantive discussions on key issues related to SIDS. The themes of the dialogue could be subject to change annually, staying relevant to the themes of the HLPF.

12. Many respondents have also indicated that the regional commissions, which respectively cover the three SIDS sub-regions –AIMS, Caribbean, and the Pacific –, could organize, in close collaboration with SIDS, *Regional Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogues*. Regional partnership dialogues could review partnerships in the given region, provide policy recommendations and develop *regional progress reports*.
13. Similarly, reviews at the national level, in form of *National Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogues* have been repeatedly suggested in the consultation process response. National dialogues could provide a forum for partners to discuss best practices and challenges of national realities. It has been suggested that SIDS should strongly encourage partnerships in their country to report to these dialogues as a means to maintain ownership while tracking progress at the national level. National dialogues could form *national progress reports*.
14. The importance of integrating SIDS partnerships in other processes and international conferences, where relevant, has also been repeatedly suggested, as has the importance of capturing outcomes of such processes and reviews into to the SIDS Action Platform.
15. In addition, it has been suggested that Expert Groups Meetings dedicated to reviewing progress of SIDS partnerships could also be considered, as needed and per request.
16. Many respondents were in favour of forming an informal steering group, or a “*Friends of SIDS*”, in order to provide broad guidance to the partnerships follow-up process. They said that the group, if formed, should work independently from the UN Secretariat and in close collaboration with all SIDS, with the objective to effectively plan yearly activities for SIDS partnerships in order to maximize exposure on the international development arena. Most of those in favour of creating such an informal steering group, were of the opinion that it would benefit from being multi-stakeholder driven, to reflect the nature of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Two respondents felt, however, that it should only include Member States as members. In addition, three respondents were of the opinion that such a group should not be created.

Monitoring and capturing progress - ensuring full implementation

17. Analysis of responses reveal that the majority of respondents prefer that reporting by partners on the progress of their partnerships should be done on a voluntary basis and through self-reporting, as the ultimate responsibility of reviewing and reporting on progress lies with the implementing partners themselves. It has been suggested that partners should therefore be allowed to *self-report* directly to the SIDS Action Platform by filling out simple and short progress reports. This would be better than seeking lengthy narratives, which might deter partners from reporting so. It is also mentioned that the structure of such reports needs to be streamlined across all reporting exercises, while keeping it flexible and subject to change based on what works, and what doesn't work.

18. Many of the respondents were also in favour of having the Secretariat pro-actively reach out and gather information on progress of partnerships.
19. It was also suggested that the Secretariat could, per request from Member States in advance of relevant meetings, develop status reports and fact sheets of registered partnerships - based on information available in the SIDS Action Platform. The Secretariat could also regularly provide status updates of partnerships to Member States on those partnerships that operate in their country, and where the government itself is listed as implementing partner, for effective follow-up at the national level.
20. It is very clear that respondents are of the strong view that existing reports by the Secretary-General - and other existing reporting mechanisms and arrangements - should be leveraged to the full extent possible and be the main basis for reporting on progress of SIDS partnerships.
21. Further analysis shows that respondents prefer that partnerships and their deliverables should, first and foremost, be aligned and targeted to the priority areas of the Samoa Pathway. The possibility of aligning with the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda in the future should nevertheless also be considered.
22. Civil society and other non-governmental entities play an important role in reviewing partnerships, as well in tracking its progress, a point that was raised by several respondents.
23. One respondent from the UN system suggested that an *"inter-agency web advisory group"* could be created, with the role of periodically monitoring progress of partnerships, and reporting back to the Secretariat for follow-up and action as appropriate.

SIDS Action Platform

24. The SIDS Action Platform (www.sids2014.org) was developed by the Secretariat shortly after the conclusion of the SIDS Conference. It consists of a UN Implementation Matrix and a database of partnerships stemming from the SIDS Conference.
25. The majority of respondents regard the SIDS Action Platform as the most natural place for gathering information and various progress reports on partnerships, and one of the main components of a SIDS Partnership Framework.
26. Most respondents echoed the importance of keeping the SIDS Action Platform simple and user-friendly while allowing users to browse information on partnerships and their commitments with a range of search options.
27. It was suggested that, in order to avoid a bottleneck in the follow up approach, the content management of the SIDS Action Platform should be decentralized and shared among various types of focal points, as opposed to being managed centrally by the Secretariat. This would ensure the SIDS Action Platform maintain its relevance and lead to greater ownership among all partners. Respondents are also of the view that the Secretariat should continue to technically manage the SIDS Action Platform, in consultation with relevant experts within

the UN System, and make further enhancements, per request, and within what existing resources allows for.

28. Responses also shows that several respondents are of the view that partnerships that do not yet fulfil the established SMART criteria should still remain on the SIDS Action Platform, but be clearly marked as such. The Secretariat could regularly follow up with those partnerships through email in an attempt to gather the necessary information. It has been suggested that an online guide on "*How to make your partnership SMART*" could be developed, and be posted online, and that support in this regard could be provided per request. Some member States were of the opinion that those partnerships that do not fulfil the SMART criteria, or those that are inactive, should be removed from the SIDS Action Platform, but can be considered to be put back if the criteria are met at a later stage. Alternatively, as suggested, a separate section of the SIDS Action Platform could focus on those partnerships that do not yet fulfil the SMART criteria.
29. It has been suggested that each partnership should include a progress page with deliverables with two settings: reached or not reached, and two values for its time frame projected month/year and actual month/year. The registration form for capturing new partnerships could be simplified and use more drop down menus, rather than asking for narrated text. As an example, the option for "*Coordination mechanism*" could have options such as "*Multi-stakeholder*", "*Government review process*", "*Self-coordinated*", "*Existing mechanisms*", etc. It has also been suggested that each partner listed on a partnership should describe its role, although one respondent cautioned against that as that might deter partners that play a smaller role to complete the form.
30. It was also been suggested that the SIDS Action Platform should be developed with scalability and sustainability in mind, considering data design beyond the immediate need. Common and open standards should be utilized wherever possible in order to reduce development costs and to permit data sharing across other platforms. The Secretariat, when further developing the SIDS Action Platform, would benefit from looking at other open data models, such as the *International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)* - which makes data compatible with country aid management systems - and platforms such as *UNOP's Project Database*, the transparency portal of UN-Habitat, *Open UN-Habitat*, and the *Socrata Open Data Portal*.
31. The SIDS Action Platform should also allow users to extract data on partnerships to other formats, such as Excel. Development of an *Application Programming Interface (API)* could be considered, allowing other platforms to programmatically access and use information on SIDS partnerships.
32. It is suggested that the SIDS Action Platform should contain and link to other resources as well, such as relevant reports by the Secretary-General, news stories from SIDS and their partners, and best practices on the implementation of partnerships.

SIDS Partnership Dialogue, 25 June 2015

33. As a follow-up to the SAMOA Conference, an informal SIDS Partnership Dialogue was organized by Maldives and UN-DESA on 25 June 2015, UNHQ, New York. The meeting

provided an opportunity for all partners to inform stakeholders on the progress of their ongoing partnerships in Small Island Developing States, and included an interactive discussion on the proposed recommendations for a SIDS Partnership Framework. More information:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/meetings/sidspartnershipdialogue>

34. At the meeting, member States stressed the importance of paragraph 101 of the SAMOA Pathway in developing a robust *SIDS Partnership Framework* as an important mechanism for follow-up to SIDS partnerships, as well for the *Framework* to emphasize action and impact of the SIDS partnerships, going beyond dialogue and show-and-tell.
35. Participants also underlined that no partnership should be left behind regardless of the size, since, albeit their size, smaller partnership can have a great impact in SIDS. Participants also and urged the UN Secretariat to work in a coordinated manner through constructive collaboration between different departments and units dealing with issues pertinent to Small Island Developing States.
36. In regards to the draft recommendation 1 - which speaks of forming an informal steering group to guide the follow-up process of partnerships – comments were made urging the Secretariat - and member States - to look at existing successful groupings, such as the Friends of LDC, when moving ahead with this recommendation, and to work within existing resources. Member States also requested the active engagement of the UN Secretariat in its work, if such a group would be formed.

Recommendations for a SIDS Partnership Framework

Based on the responses to the questionnaire, and comments made at the SIDS Partnership Dialogue, a few initial recommendations are proposed below for further consideration:

- **Recommendation 1** – *form an informal steering group, or a “Friends of SIDS”, to guide follow-up activities on SIDS partnerships. The group could benefit from having a mix of Member States, UN entities, international and regional organizations, and Major Groups & other stakeholders as members, mirroring the multi-stakeholder nature of SIDS partnerships.*

The group could provide a public face for interacting with SIDS Partnerships in following up to the SIDS Conference, regularly appearing and presenting at relevant meetings, events and international conferences for the purpose of reporting on progress of SIDS partnerships while raising the visibility of SIDS issues.

The group should work in close collaboration with the UN Secretariat and all SIDS with the objective to effectively plan yearly activities for SIDS partnerships in order to maximize exposure on the international development arena. The Secretariat should provide technical support and be invited to report on various aspects of its work and provide any substantive support if and as deemed appropriate by the group.

- **Recommendation 2**– *organize on an annual basis, an action oriented, results focused, informal Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue as a half or full day event, within*

existing resources, in the margins of the meetings of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under auspices of ECOSOC. The Partnership Dialogue should provide opportunities for reviewing progress of SIDS partnerships, as well act as launch pad for launching new partnerships, and discussing key issues of SIDS. It would also review reports from *regional and national partnership dialogues* (see below).

The themes of the dialogue would be subject to change annually, staying relevant to the themes of the HLPF, and other relevant inter-governmental processes.

- **Recommendation 3** – *organize Regional Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogues* through existing fora, notably the ECOSOC Regional Commissions (ESCAP, ECLAC and ECA) in close collaboration with SIDS and partners. Regional dialogues should review partnerships in the given region, provide policy recommendations, and develop *regional progress reports*, to be presented at the HLPF Partnership Dialogue.
- **Recommendation 4** – *encourage the organization of National Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogues*, possibly in conjunction with existing development planning exercises, or donor-respective SIDS consultations, providing a platform for partners to discuss best practices and challenges related to national realities. SIDS should strongly encourage partnerships in their country to report on progress of SIDS partnerships to these dialogues as a means to maintain national ownership while tracking progress at the national level. National SIDS dialogues should result in *national progress reports*, which could be presented at the regional level or at the global SIDS Partnership Dialogues.
- **Recommendation 5** – *develop a standardized reporting mechanism for partnership progress reports* - a common reporting structure should be developed in order to minimize reporting burden, achieve reporting coherence and for the purpose of being able to perform analytical studies on partnerships and their progress, both at the level of individual partnerships and at regional and national level. The use of existing reporting mechanisms and reports of the Secretary-General should be leverage to the full extent possible.
- **Recommendation 6** – *continue to maintain and further develop the SIDS Action Platform* to ensure its simplicity and relevance to the process while keeping it open for new registrations of SIDS specific partnerships, as well decentralize the content management of the SIDS Action Platform to allow different types of focal points (on the individual partner level, national level, and regional level) to report on progress of SIDS partnerships directly into the SIDS Action Platform.
