

**Symposium on
“Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
and the SAMOA Pathway in Small Island Developing States -
SIDS: Equipping Public Institutions and Mobilizing Partnerships”
21-23 February 2017
Nassau, Commonwealth of the Bahamas**

Informal communique

Preamble:

1. We, the ministers and high-level officials from small island developing States (SIDS) and other countries, civil society and the private sector met at the Symposium on "Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway in Small Island Developing States: Equipping Public Institutions and Mobilizing Partnerships" from 21 to 23 February 2017 in Nassau, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.
2. We express our appreciation to the Government of the Bahamas, UNDESA and UN-OHRLS for this successful event and this opportunity to bolster SIDS capacities for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.
3. 2017 is another important year for small island developing States as the second year for implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and the year the United Nations Ocean Conference is convened¹.
4. SIDS face special sustainable development challenges in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. We reaffirm the commitments all world leaders made in the 2030 Agenda and pledge to realize their promises for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership and for leaving no one behind. We also reaffirm the commitments and priorities we defined in the SAMOA Pathway, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing For Development, the Paris climate change agreement, the Sendai framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and other relevant international agreements. We call on all countries and actors to deliver on the pledges they made in these agreements and give special attention to SIDS, so that we can achieve the transformation that the 2030 Agenda necessitates.
5. National governments have the critical responsibility to mobilize efforts to realize the SDGs. We are determined to move ahead rapidly with implementation while also working to mobilize the means of implementation, bolster our capacities and further elaborate our legal and institutional frameworks.

Integrated Policymaking and Implementation

6. Many SIDS are already well advanced in implementing the SDGs. They have been adapting the SDG targets to their national circumstances and priorities and incorporating them in their development plans and policies. These exercises often show that the SDGs reinforce many existing national priorities and call for integrated approaches.
7. The SDGs and the commitments contained in the SAMOA Pathway, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the Sendai Framework are interrelated and mutually reinforcing-- they need to be implemented in a complementary and synergistic way.
8. We underscore the adverse effect of climate change for SIDS and the threat it constitutes for their efforts to

¹ United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

achieve the SDGs. The effect of climate change amplifies the challenges associated with both poverty and sustainable development. Eradicating poverty and combatting climate change must go hand in hand. We call for urgent efforts to deliver on the commitments regarding adaptation, mitigation and recovering loss and damage.

9. We emphasised the importance of disaster risk management and building resilience in implementing the 2030 Agenda and SAMOA pathway in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Policies and approaches to attain the SDGs should be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity and exposure of persons and assets. It is essential to integrate disaster risk into development planning and public and private investments at all levels. . It is also important to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, as per one of the seven global targets of the Sendai Framework. We support the use of vulnerability indices and vulnerability-resilience tools in order to assess risks in SIDS and assist them in accessing financial resources both domestically and internationally.
10. Good governance is indispensable for realizing the SDGs. We are committed to make continuing efforts to make public institutions effective, inclusive and accountable and prevent corruption in SDG implementation.
11. Social equity should be a central focus of the action of public administrations. The poorest and most vulnerable should have equal rights and access to public services. Public services and social benefits should help overcome inequality.
12. The SDGs should be pursued through a whole-of-government approach. National development plans can provide the country's vision on how it will achieve the SDGs. It is critical to reflect the implementation of the SDGs in sectoral policies and national budgets.
13. Policies are most effective when they take into consideration the complex inter-relations, synergies and trade-offs between the targets. We stress the importance of elaborating and implementing integrated policies that take into account those various interrelations and economic, social and environmental dimensions. It would be useful to develop scientific and other tools and identify models to help develop such policies or understand how to leave no one behind. Institutions/ministries should work closely together to break silos.

Mobilizing governments, civil society and the private sector

14. A well-integrated, coherent and integrated implementation of the SDGs requires a strong political commitment and the continuing engagement of the highest level of Government. It is important that institutions leading implementation have sufficient authority to mobilize other institutions and resources. Successful implementation in SIDS will also require institutional frameworks, workflows and practices that bolster policy coherence and support effective and integrated responses at all levels. SIDS have been putting in place various coordination institutional arrangements, including inter-ministerial and/or multi-stakeholder coordination bodies, which are needed for rallying public administration for realizing the SDGs.
15. For the commitment to the SDGs to persist in times of political change, it is important to sensitise all levels of the governments as well as all institutions and actors to the SDGs. It is also urgent to mobilize local authorities in SIDS and equip them to implement the 2030 Agenda, SAMOA Pathway and other commitments. We call on local authorities to adopt local Agendas 2030.
16. Parliaments also have a critical role to adapt the legislative framework to the pursuit of the SDGs. Supreme audit institutions at the national level can likewise play an important role in advising the government on implementing the SDGs and in overseeing progress.
17. Also critical is to mobilize public servants around the SDGs. We need to instill a deep commitment to the vision of the 2030 Agenda as well as new and transformative working methods based on cooperation and consultation. There is also a need to bolster the capacities and skills of public administrations to incorporate the targets in plans and policies, embrace integrated approaches and consult civil society and the private

sector. A major effort is thus required to train public servants. The UN can support this effort, including by working with public administration schools.

18. We look forward to the continuing reflection on institutional arrangements and capacities for implementing the SDGs at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration.
19. We encourage further efforts to fully engage civil society and the private sector in decision-making and review of SDG implementation. This is necessary to ensure inclusive and accountable policy making and get buy-in into the national development plans. Some SIDS have already been consulting and engaging civil society in the implementation of the SDGs, including youth, the poorest and most vulnerable people and social partners. The private sector is an essential partner for realising the SDGs and dedicated efforts so that it supports the realization of the SDGs. It is important to ensure that such efforts are owned by stakeholders and have an impact on decision making. We need a major effort to inform civil society at large about the SDGs and make people understand how they can support implementation.
20. We should engage and empower youth to fulfill their potential and contribute to realizing the SDGs. Realizing the SDGs requires a change of mind-set in which education and training have a critical role to play. We call on the General Assembly to encourage all UN Member States to incorporate the SDGs into education curriculums at all levels. The academia has also an important role for the development, transfer, diffusion and application of new knowledge in the implementation of the SDGS.

Policy coherence, capacities, resources and ICTs

21. SIDS need adequate means of implementation for realizing the SDGs, including resources, capacities and technology. We call for stepping up efforts to revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people². Cooperation among SIDS and with other countries is also very important at regional level.
22. We call on Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors to provide effective and coordinated support for the efforts of SIDS for delivering on the SDGs including Official Development Assistance. We welcome that Canada, Estonia, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) expressed their commitment to support SIDS during the Symposium. (Refer to Annex 1)
23. We draw the attention of the international community to the challenges many SIDS face in accessing external financing for sustainable development. Criteria for allocating concessional resources should take into account the particular vulnerabilities of SIDS and help them cope with the impact of natural disasters or climate change as those can reverse years of progress. One of the most challenging of SIDS' vulnerabilities, the large stock of unsustainable debt, should be constructively addressed through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring, sound debt management, as appropriate. It is important to further improve support measures for SIDS undergoing graduation from LDC. We look forward to addressing those issues at the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development.
24. We call upon countries and international organizations to carefully assess the impact of their policies on the sustainable development of SIDS. There should be close consultations in elaborating and implementing policies that may have unintentional impacts on SIDS' efforts to implement the SDGs, such as in the area of de-risking. We express our concern about the impact of derisking policies on the economies of SIDS.
25. Partnerships are crucial to the successful implementation of the SDGs and SAMOA pathway. We welcome the UN SIDS Partnership Framework which aims to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and

² 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

commitments and to encourage new, genuine and durable partnerships for the SIDS. We call on governments, civil society and the private sector to launch new multistakeholder partnerships to support the realization of the SDGs in SIDS especially where there are gaps and where capacity is lacking. We also call on existing partnerships to deliver on their commitments and engage with the Partnership Framework.

26. Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) including e-government can be a very important tool for delivering public services and supporting progress towards the SDGs. Further efforts are needed to put them at the service of the SDGs in SIDS. We are greatly concerned by the persistent digital divide. We call on the international community to support the building of ICT infrastructure in SIDS. It is important to promote innovation through education and to raise public awareness and stimulate a debate about key digital public policy choices. We also call on the private sector and all other actors to develop innovations to ensure that SIDS can benefit from ICT and access to the internet. Such innovations and other important technologies for realising the SDGs in SIDS should be made available through the "Technology Facilitation Mechanism" (TFM) platform to support the implementation of the SDGs. We call on the Science, Technology and Innovation Multistakeholder Forum to give particular attention to the challenges of SIDS at its second meeting on 15-16 May 2017.
27. We call on the HLPF, in reviewing progress towards the SIDS, to give careful attention to the efforts that are needed to ensure that the SIDS are able to mobilise the means of implementation they need for realizing the SDGs.
28. A major effort is needed to build statistical capacities so as to support effective policies and review progress towards the SDGs in SIDS. Systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data are critical to implementing the SDGs. We also need to harness the power of open data and big data and address the related risks and challenges. The World Data Forum agreed on important actions to mobilize data for realizing the SDGs.
29. It is important to continuously review, monitor and evaluate our efforts to realise the SDGs. Reviews at country level should build on existing national systems and be inclusive and evidence-based. The voluntary national reviews of implementation at the HLPF are an important opportunity to share challenges and lessons learned from other countries and mobilise partnerships. We encourage our governments to volunteer for these reviews.
30. We take note with appreciation of the outcome of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference. The conference recognized the importance of enhancing inter-island connectivity and linking the economies of SIDS to regional markets and global supply chains.
31. We look forward to the United Nations Oceans Conference. We will use that opportunity to draw attention to the particular reliance of SIDS on oceans. We will support action at all levels, including partnerships and voluntary commitments, which will be identified at the Conference.

Conclusion

32. There is no single blue print for implementing the SDGs. SIDS face similar challenges but each one has its own specificities. But we greatly benefitted from exchanging experiences and lessons during the Symposium.
33. This Symposium has also given new impetus to our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway, drawing from each other's experiences. Our discussions and proposed actions will inform the HLPF as the overarching UN platform to review the progress in achieving the SDGs, working with the rest of the United Nations system. SIDS are committed to regularly review their progress in the adaptation and implementation of SDGs at national and local level.

Annex 1: List of assistance or technical cooperation announced at the Symposium to support the SIDS in implementing the 2030 Agenda, the SAMOA Pathway and other international agreement

ESTONIA

Estonia has increased national financial contribution in this regard through development cooperation. It remains ready to send governmental and private ICT experts to support its initiatives on transferring knowledge and best practices on e-governance, e-democracy, open information societies and national cybersecurity. The e-Governance Academy (www.ega.ee) is an NGO of experts with experience from more than 60 countries.

Contact:
e-Governance Academy Foundation
Tallinn, Estonia
Email: info@ega.ee

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The Korean Government has been active in supporting global partnership in e-Government and ICT by sharing its experience and know-how in national social and economic development. Per requests by foreign government, it provides consultations and technical assistance, including dispatching advisory experts to the partner country or running local workshops which share two countries' perspectives and suggestions with aim to improve the partner country's current ICT policies and strategy. The e-Government Cooperation Centers, currently runs in Indonesia and is planning to open in Peru and Kenya in 2017, are to serve as a "window for cooperation" between Korea and the partner countries in the field of e-Government and ICT and carries out the various IT cooperation program, such as joint projects, consultations, HR exchange and so on. The e-Government Global Academy, located in Jeju Island, is the center for sharing the best and insightful knowledge for e-Government and National ICT development (<https://koil.nia.or.kr>).

Contact:
Global e-Government Division, e-Government Bureau
Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Korea
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NORWAY

- Norway will continue to support vulnerable nations, including SIDS, via the provision of official development assistance, currently at 1% of GNI, in accordance with UN commitments.
- Norway will channel a significant part of its assistance through multilateral mechanisms, including close to USD 200 million for the Green Climate Fund over the next four years.
- In order to support renewable energy in the Caribbean region, Norway will allocate USD 4 million to the Clinton Climate Initiative to continue its capacity development programs for the next 3 years. This is complementary to the work Norway supports in the Pacific via IRENA and the SIDS "Lighthouse" project, with some USD 3 million.
- As new support to AOSIS, Norway will provide more than USD 1 million to the activities of AOSIS and its Chair, currently held by Maldives, over the next 3 years, via the Secretariat in UN New York.
- To promote sustainable oceans and responsible fisheries management, Norway has allocated almost USD 5 million in funding for UNODC to combat fisheries crimes and will provide satellite imagery upon request to

states suspecting illegal activities in their waters. Norway has also made available, through the UN (FAO, ODC, FCCC) an amount of travel funds for SIDS and LDCs wishing to participate in relevant multilateral meetings.

Contact:
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Norway
Email: post@mfa.no

SINGAPORE:

The Singapore Cooperation Programme

- From Singapore's experience, human resource development is a critical building block for growth and development. This is why Singapore established the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) in 1992. The SCP works through bilateral technical cooperation, Third Country Training Programmes, and cooperation with International Organisations. It shares with fellow developing countries Singapore's development experience in areas such as public health, education, water management and public administration. These are relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 6 and 16, as well as others.

- Since the SCP's establishment, more than 112,000 participants from over 170 countries have participated in its activities. The annual SCP calendar offers fellow developing countries a range of courses that are relevant to the UN 2030 Agenda and specific SDGs. The SCP also has customised programmes tailored to countries' needs and interests. Singapore extends technical assistance to SIDS under the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). The SCP is administered by the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Sustainable Development Programme

- Singapore launched a technical assistance package known as the Sustainable Development Programme in 2015 at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development. Under this, Singapore partners UN agencies and other bodies such as NGOs with domain expertise to provide capacity building to fellow developing countries in the areas of good governance, sustainable cities, and water and sanitation management.

Technical Cooperation Package for Small Island Developing States

- At the Third International Conference on SIDS in Samoa in September 2014, Singapore announced a special three-year technical cooperation package for its fellow Small Island Developing States. Singapore will renew the package this year.

Contact:
Singapore Cooperation Programme
c/o Technical Cooperation Directorate
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore
Email: mfa_scp@mfa.gov.sg

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The OECD has relevant expertise in many of the policy areas where innovative solutions are needed for the achievement of the SDGs and Samoa Pathway, and is working in partnership with other international organisations and SIDS to ensure that these solutions and approaches are coherent, mutually reinforcing and

effective. These include work on the oceans, fisheries, climate, environment, ICTs, policy coherence for sustainable development etc.

Two areas are of particular relevance to the SIDS. This includes the work of PARIS 21 on statistical capacity building for developing countries, and the work of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on financing to countries most in need, including SIDS. This work aims to enhance SIDS' financing prospects – and in particular the effective access and use of concessional finance – which is critical to the successful achievement of the SDGs. More specifically OECD:

- Produced a report - jointly with the World Bank - on Climate and Disaster Resilience Financing in Small Island Developing States. This report examines the increasing incidence and impacts of climate-related events and disasters in SIDS and the spiral of slow growth, high debt and high vulnerability that these create. The report documents the positive steps that SIDS are taking to mainstream climate and disaster risks considerations into their national strategies and plans. It also examines how the international community can better support SIDS in building resilience, by providing examples of innovative financing approaches and options that can enhance access and predictability of financing and reduce fragmentation.
- Committed to produce a study this year to explore innovative ways to use concessional finance more catalytically, including to crowd in private sector resources, diversify the economic base and unlock the potential of the blue economy. This evidence will inform international and regional policy discussions, contributing to foster financing to SIDS that is better tailored to their needs.
- The OECD is also working - jointly with the UN, WB, and others – on the issue of graduation from concessional finance, which many SIDS have pointed out during this symposium. A better understanding of the consequences of graduation from different sources of financing is needed, so that better financing can be ensured for SIDS as they transition through various stages of development.

The discussions throughout this symposium were rich and have been the culmination of the hard work of many. But the conversation should not end here. We need to advance the implementation of the SDGs and Samoa Pathway as a group – SIDS, multilateral organisations and donor countries – working together. We need to use evidence to identify concrete actions to achieve the goals of these agendas. And this can only be done if we work together. The OECD stands ready to support these efforts working in partnership with all of you.

PARIS21 Statistical Capacity Development Support in Small Island Developing States

PARIS21 provides support to SIDS in Caribbean, Pacific, and AIMS region, specifically in strengthening national statistical systems through:

1. Institution building – review and updating of statistical legislations, guidance/advise in setting-up statistical governance mechanisms and/or coordination of the national statistical system
2. Strategic planning in statistics through National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) process – review/assessment of national statistical systems; strategic planning workshops; regional and country training on NSDS; development of statistical action plans; costing of statistical activities in the NSDS; and evaluation of NSDS implementation
3. User-producer engagement – high level forum on statistics to bring together policy-makers and statisticians; (National Statistical Systems (NSS)-wide statistical workshops on thematic areas
4. Data management – technical assistance in data archiving and microdata management (regional and country level); data visualization training; data management policy advice

5. Statistical advocacy – regional and national levels (brochures on statistics, thematic videos,
6. Region-wide support – strong partnership with intergovernmental bodies, specifically with the Statistics Division/Unit (e.g., Caribbean Community, Pacific Community, Indian Ocean Commission); collaboration in region-wide training (e.g., NSDS, data visualization, data dissemination); support in the review/preparation of regional strategy for the development of statistics (e.g., Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), CARICOM, Pacific Community); PARIS21 membership in regional statistics steering committees (Pacific and Caribbean)
7. SIDS-wide support – facilitate south-south collaboration and engagement between and among SIDS countries across the 3 regions (e.g., 2014 Forum on Advancing Statistical Development in SIDS in the Post 2015 Era side event in the UN Conference on SIDS; 2016 PARIS21 Cross Regional Forum Agenda 2030 and the SIDS: Strengthening Statistical Capacity and Readiness)

Currently, PARIS21 is exploring means to establish a statistical coordination mechanism for the AIMS region towards stronger statistics cooperation among the countries and facilitate south-south engagement in the region.

Contact:

OECD PCSD Partnership

(Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Enhancing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development)

Website: <https://community.oecd.org/community/pcsdpartnership>