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### **Follow-up to and Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation on the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development Of Small Island Developing States**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General**

##### *Summary*

The General Assembly, by resolution 67/207 called for continued and enhanced efforts to assist small island developing States in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, and for strengthening United Nations system support to small island developing States. The General Assembly also reaffirmed the call for the convening of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014 and decided to convene in 2013 the preparatory process for the International Conference. The objective of the present report is to provide, for the consideration of Member States, an update on the

\* A/68/150

implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy, as well as an update on the preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

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## I Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by resolution 67/207 reaffirmed the Declaration of Barbados<sup>1</sup> and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States<sup>2</sup>, the Mauritius Strategy<sup>3</sup> and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States<sup>4</sup>.
2. The same resolution also reaffirmed that small island developing States (SIDS) remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique challenges including their small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base and exposure to global environmental challenges and external economic shocks, including to a large range of impacts from climate change and potentially more frequent and intense natural disasters.<sup>5</sup>
3. In light of these reaffirmations, the General Assembly called for commitments to take urgent and concrete actions to address the vulnerability of small island

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap 1, resolution 1, annex I

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, annex II

<sup>3</sup> Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius 10-14 January 2005 (United Nations Publication, Sales No.E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., annex II

<sup>5</sup> Resolution 67/207 of 5 March 2013

developing States<sup>6</sup>. The General Assembly also called for the convening in 2014 of the Third International Conference on small island developing States<sup>7</sup>, as had been called for in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The Future We Want”<sup>8</sup>, recognizing the importance of coordinated, balanced and integrated actions to address the sustainable development challenges facing small island developing States.

4. The resolution stipulates that the preparation for the third international conference regional preparatory meetings should be held in all of the three SIDS regions. An interregional preparatory meeting for all SIDS will also be held to identify and develop input for the Conference, while maximizing coherence and complementarity with respect to other preparatory work. These national, regional, inter-regional and substantive preparations should be carried out in a most effective, well-structured and broad participatory manner<sup>9</sup>.
5. The present report also describes progress made towards furthering implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in accordance with resolution A/RES/67/207. The relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, as well as

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 20-22, 2012, Resolution 66/288, annex

<sup>9</sup> Resolution A/RES/67/207

regional intergovernmental organizations of small island developing States, Major Groups, and United Nations Member States were consulted in its preparation<sup>10</sup>.

## **II Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

6. The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) noted in its outcome document “The Future We Want” that small island developing States have made less progress than most other groupings, or even regressed, in economic terms, especially in terms of poverty reduction and debt sustainability. It was also noted that for small island developing States overall progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been uneven<sup>11</sup>.
  
7. The challenges that small island developing States faced which caused their achievement of the MDGs to be uneven, extended across the economic, social, and environmental sectors. In the National Reports issued in the preparation for the Third

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<sup>10</sup> The Report was prepared with input from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; the Office of the High Representative of Land Locked, Least Developed and Small Island Developing States; The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain); the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Pacific Operation Centre); the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; the United Nations Environment Programme; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the Commonwealth Secretariat; and the Indian Ocean Commission. Input was also collected from the National Reports of Small Island Developing States in preparation for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

<sup>11</sup> Resolution A/RES/66/288, annex

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International Conference, multiple factors were outlined as impacting the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the sustainable development of small island developing States.

8. Structurally, small island developing States remain affected by limited land resources, small populations and limited economies of scale. In addition, as a result of the high susceptibility to external economic and environmental shocks, small island developing States saw progress made following the Mauritius Conference in 2005 stalled as they suffer setbacks due to the recent global economic and financial crisis, the energy crisis, and the food crisis.
9. Additionally, attempts to address these structural and external challenges were further complicated by climate change and sea level rise, high debt, limited official development assistance (ODA), and frequent natural disasters. As a result, SIDS felt impact on social development, along with effects to their economies and their ecosystems.
10. In the Caribbean region, SIDS in general continue to face a number of constraints such as limited technical, financial and human resources, as well as the impact of exogenous factors, particularly the global financial crisis.

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11. For SIDS in the Pacific region, the recent synthesis report for the regional preparatory Meeting of the Third International Conference noted that the underlying causes of a lack of progress in achieving inclusive and sustainable development were unfavourable enabling environments and governance<sup>12</sup>.
12. The Indian Ocean Commission noted that if there is a common challenge in this highly fragmented and diverse AIMS region, it is for the more economically advanced states to divert themselves from a pathway of unsustainable development, with its highly adverse impact on essential natural resources and environmental services; and to help to channel the less advanced states to a development pathway that avoids such examples of severe environmental loss in its wake<sup>13</sup>.
13. Additionally, for the small island developing States in the AIMS region, the absence of an active institutional framework akin to those operational for many years in the other two regions, presents a serious challenge to coherent region-wide development<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Pacific Regional Synthesis Report for consideration by the Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting 10-12 July 2013: Nadi, Fiji, UNESCAP Pacific Office

<sup>13</sup> The Divided Region: Progressing Rio+20 outcomes in the AIMS region, Report for IOC, Indian Ocean Commission

<sup>14</sup> Ibid



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14. What these regional outlooks underscore is that small island developing States have different challenges that have significantly impacted their ability in the implementation of sustainable development.

### **III Implementation of the BPOA and MSI**

15. Despite these challenges however, proactive initiatives have been undertaken by most small island developing States, as well as by the international community in pursuit of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

#### **A. SIDS Activities**

16. In efforts to implement the Mauritius Strategy, small island developing States pursued different initiatives to accelerate national and regional implementation. There are many examples; the ones cited here are just illustrations highlighting the priority that the SIDS are placing on the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy

17. The Republic of Seychelles, for example, embarked on a comprehensive Water Supply Development Plan (2011-2030), launched in 2011 with support from the African Water Faculty, in order to resolve protracted water shortages during the dry

season including increasing the capacity of the reservoir, tackling non-revenue water, enhancing institutional capacity, amongst others. These activities are under implementation; however the country is still experiencing persistent water shortages until these projects are completed<sup>15</sup>.

18. Similarly, in an attempt to address the possible impact of climate change on its economy, citizens, and their livelihoods, Mauritius developed and implemented the “Maurice Ile Durable” programme as well as the Government Programme 2010-2015<sup>16</sup>. This national sustainable development strategy has seen the development of a climate change mitigation and adaptation framework. In this framework, several priority sectors like disaster risk reduction and management, renewable energy, water, coastal zones, fisheries, tourism, public infrastructure, health and agriculture have been targeted and actions are being taken at different levels ranging from policy and legislative review, application of long term dynamic tools, institutional strengthening, infrastructural works, promotion of research and development, awareness raising, education and training.

19. In the Pacific, the Tonga Energy Roadmap 2010-2020<sup>17</sup> was developed which provides a detailed pathway towards a low carbon, cost-effective, technically sound, equitable transformation of the entire energy sector in the Kingdom; while in Papua

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<sup>15</sup> National Reports available on [www.sids2014.org](http://www.sids2014.org)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Pacific Regional Synthesis Report

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New Guinea, the Government established a Sovereign Wealth Fund in 2011 to support macroeconomic stabilisation, support development objectives of the Government, including long term economic and social development, and support asset management in relation to assets accrued from natural resource revenue<sup>18</sup>.

20. In 2011, the Belize National Climate Change Committee (BNCCC) was established as a broad-based multi-stakeholder committee comprised of non-state public and private sector members, to coordinate the implementation of policies and measures designed to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on the environment and to adapt to such changes. It is expected that the BNCCC will facilitate the mainstreaming of climate change policies.

21. In Guyana, the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS, 2009; updated 2010) provides overarching national framework for the transformation of Guyana's current economy to that of a "low carbon economy".

22. Regionally, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) signed an MOU in August 2011 to be better able to assist Caribbean countries in the development of their climate change adaptation strategies, while members of the Melanesian Spearhead

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid

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Group in the Pacific have committed to promoting green growth as a tool and as a development approach to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development.

23. Additionally, the 9<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas will take place in Fiji in December 2013, where a new 5 year Action Strategy for Nature Conservation will be formulated.

### **B. Support by UN System and regional and international organizations**

24. To strengthen the implementation of the BPOA and the MSI, the UN system has put stronger focus on SIDS in their work. While UN system entities focus on different areas of BPoA/MSI, collectively they provide substantial support to SIDS.

25. At the global level, the SIDS Unit in UNDESA has been entrusted with a broad range of functions aimed at providing support for the implementation of the BPOA/MSI, including but not limited to:

- Technical assistance and advice
- Support to the intergovernmental process
- Inter-agency coordination
- Reporting on progress made

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26. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) is mandated to undertake advocacy work in support of SIDS, and to mobilize resources for the implementation of the BPOA/MSI.
27. At the regional level, the regional commissions have the responsibility of advocacy and the coordination of support to SIDS, while UNDP has provided assistance with implementation at the national level.
28. The interagency consultative group, under the DSD/DESA chairmanship helps to ensure coordination among many activities by the UN system and other regional and international organizations. The ECESA Plus, a mechanism used for the preparation of the Rio+20, has continued to be a useful channel for UN system coordination. It also ensures coordination of the UN system for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.
29. UN entities are s actively involved in the strengthening of information exchange and facilitating networking among the stakeholders. The Small Islands Network, SIDSNet<sup>19</sup> continues to provide a general portal of information on the SIDS and the sustainable development agenda, while the Third International Conference website<sup>20</sup> gives a more specific source of information on the conference itself.

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<sup>19</sup> [www.sidsnet.org](http://www.sidsnet.org)

<sup>20</sup> [www.sids2014.org](http://www.sids2014.org),

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30. The DSD/SIDS Unit has facilitated the development of a joint SIDS education programme on sustainable development for SIDS, helping to strengthen the collaboration within the University Consortium of Small Island States (UCSIS). This initiative is an excellent example of SIDS-SIDS cooperation among universities based in SIDS regions, including the University of the West Indies, the University of the South Pacific, the University of Mauritius, the University of the Virgin Islands, and the University of Seychelles. Funded by the Government of Spain, the project has developed a common IT platform for accessing online courses offered to registered students at member universities.
31. The lack of an effective monitoring framework for global commitments related to the sustainable development of SIDS has been frequently noted. SIDS have repeatedly called for the strengthening of national disaggregated data and information systems, as well as the strengthening of analytical capabilities for decision making, tracking progress, and the development of vulnerability-resilience country profiles.
32. The key issue is not only the availability of reliable data and information, but also the need for analytical frameworks to be used as decision making tools both for SIDS and as a basis for developing criteria beyond GDP for assessing the status of vulnerability and resilience of SIDS on a country by country basis.

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33. Efforts are underway to develop a country Vulnerability-Resilience Profile (VRP) as a monitoring and evaluation tool/handbook through expert consultations and pilot testing in a number of SIDS countries, to be available early 2014.
34. With respect to implementation of the MIS, ECLAC has conducted assessments of the social and economic impacts of climate change on agriculture, coastal and marine resources, health, energy, tourism and water in the Caribbean region.
35. Recommendations have been made for adaptation and mitigation strategies based on cost-benefit analyses. In the area of mitigating the impacts of climate change, ECLAC is currently implementing a GIZ-funded initiative that provides support to Aruba, the Bahamas and Suriname in completing national energy policies. ECLAC is also conducting an analysis of the fiscal and regulatory barriers to implementation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies.
36. With respect to tourism, efforts have focused on examining strategies for further diversification of the tourism economy in the Caribbean. In this regard, research is ongoing towards completing a recreational demand study of the yachting and marina sector, in order to inform policy making for the further development of this sub-sector.

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37. ECLAC is currently conducting a study entitled: “The impact of trade and growth in the Caribbean”. Initial results indicate that trade within the region has been very limited and the recent crisis has constrained trade even further. Regional trade is now just 13% of total Caribbean trade. The global recession impacted trade by limiting the demand for Caribbean exports and this in turn has impacted growth. The great challenge in the Caribbean region is to develop new products to sustain exports to new markets while promoting exports to existing markets. ECLAC is also focusing on how Caribbean cultural service providers, including musicians, dramatists and fashion designers can establish more successful commercial presence in the EU.
38. In the area of Knowledge Management the focus is on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in support of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Caribbean as well as building capacity in the use of ICT tools to address DRM in the Information Society.
39. In the area of gender and health, ECLAC, in collaboration with PAHO, UN-Women and CARICOM, has prepared a profile identification of the main barriers and opportunities, linking gender and health. .
40. The *Intersectoral Platforms on UNESCO’s Contribution to the Implementation of MSI for the Sustainable Development of SIDS* are an innovation in the way UNESCO conceives, manages and implements its programme in an interdisciplinary manner.



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The platforms define a joint strategy and establish operational teams made up of colleagues working in various Sectors and, most importantly, in various regions and countries of the world.

41. Involving all five programme Sectors and field offices covering SIDS, the SIDS Platform ensures that UNESCO's unique multi-disciplinary expertise - in science, culture, climate change, education for sustainable development, natural, cultural and intangible heritage, the articulation of scientific and indigenous knowledge, and knowledge management and information for decision-making – is productively used in addressing the multiplicity of challenges facing SIDS.
  
42. UNESCO also addresses the challenges of preparing skilled graduates for the needs of the SIDS labour market, through strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Programmes target mainly the significant percentage of SIDS out-of-school youth, and aim to empower them with skills which will help them contribute to the development of their society.
  
43. UNESCO's global SIDS-focused *Sandwatch* programme makes a significant contribution towards tackling climate change and coastal monitoring issues. *Sandwatch* has been integrated into the national school curriculum in the Pacific island nation of Kiribati. The integration of the *Sandwatch* into the Kiribati curriculum allows teachers and students to understand and contribute to global

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climate change observations through firsthand practical activities in their local environment.

44. In the context of UNESCO's cultural conventions, several new SIDS sites were added to the World Heritage list, including the Phoenix Islands marine protected area in Kiribati, the Bikini Atoll nuclear test site in the Marshall Islands, and Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison in Barbados. Five SIDS (Fiji, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Jamaica) ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

45. Pacific islands and territories are currently carrying out the Pacific World Heritage Action Plan (2010-2015). UNESCO has been coordinating a hub of regional agencies, NGOs, experts and communities with the aims of enhancing knowledge management, capacity building, and partnership building in the Pacific heritage management. In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Capacity Building Project is now fully operational and benefits 16 Member States and 20 World Heritage sites. It also builds and strengthens capacities in heritage management, fosters cooperation in the region, and contributes to understanding the synergies between heritage conservation and new developments.

46. The preservation and promotion of local and indigenous knowledge has been implemented by UNESCO in several SIDS, including the Solomon Islands, through working with

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teachers and local communities, and in Timor-Leste, through activities such as action research, development of environmental educational material, and training sessions, emphasizing the important role of local and indigenous knowledge in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and community-based resource management.

47. Under the framework of the SIDS intersectoral platform in the Indian Ocean, SIDS (Seychelles, Mauritius, Comores, La Reunión, Maldives and Madagascar) are supported in transmission and recognition of traditional medicine through the formation of a sub-regional network of practitioners. They will support each other to exchange best practice, dialogue with policy-makers and scientists, develop good practice guidelines and ethical codes, and improve sustainable use of plant resources and develop appropriate education programmes.

48. Through the Youth Visioning for Island Living (YV) initiative, which promotes capacity building and involvement of youth in sustainable development of SIDS, young people in SIDS are given the opportunity to design, plan, implement and evaluate climate change, as well as Health (HIV-AIDS) related-projects in their islands. This initiative is under implementation in Dominica, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Jamaica, Mauritius, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Seychelles.

49. Scaling the economic impact of disasters provides a clearer picture on how development in SIDS is affected by disasters. For example, Cyclone Evan, which hit the South Pacific in 2012, resulted in total losses equivalent to one third of Samoa's annual economic output. Similarly, losses associated with the 2010 earthquake in Haiti are estimated to have exceeded 15 per cent of GDP. Given their small size, individual hazard events like cyclones may affect an entire territory and economy. Thus, disasters can destroy decades of capital investment and hard-fought development gains, often followed by slow and costly recovery. The increased indebtedness and constrained fiscal space can have long-term developmental consequences.

50. Countries with low levels of investment and high average annual losses are less likely to be able to absorb losses, even from more frequent, less severe events. Thus, for example, Jamaica observed annual average losses due to disasters between 1991 and 2011 equivalent to 2.6 per cent of its average annual investment. This contributed to its sluggish growth over this period.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Vanuatu and Tonga are estimated to sustain average annualised losses at 6.6 and 4.4 per cent, respectively.<sup>22</sup>

51. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction supported consultations on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, the successor to the Hyogo

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<sup>21</sup> UNISDR (2013) From Shared Risk to Shared Value – The Business Case for Disaster Risk Reduction.

<sup>22</sup> Jha, Abhas K.; Stanton-Geddes, Zuzana. 2013. Strong, safe, and resilient: s strategic policy guide for disaster risk management in East Asia and the Pacific. Directions in development; environment and sustainable development. Washington D.C., The World Bank.

Framework for Action, in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Both regions drew on their experiences of implementing regional strategies in support of the Hyogo Framework for Action.<sup>23</sup> In support of ongoing consultations, a study, jointly supported by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Development Programme, analysed current levels of integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the Pacific, with an emphasis on the institutional and policy environment.<sup>24</sup>

52. The Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management, held in Noumea, New Caledonia from 17 to 21 September 2012, committed to developing an integrated regional strategy for disaster risk management and climate change, to commence in 2016.

53. The seventh Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica from 3 to 7 December 2012, with the theme ‘Building Disaster Resilience – A Shared Responsibility’. With the region’s Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy 2007 – 2012 approaching its end, the Conference assessed the level of progress, reviewed the gaps and articulated a strategy beyond 2012.

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.preventionweb.net/files/30311\\_30311posthfaconsultation7thanualca.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/30311_30311posthfaconsultation7thanualca.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/26725>

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54. UNEP continues to implement a number of projects and initiatives in support of the implementation of the BPOA and the MSI. These projects and activities were implemented within global SIDS projects, SIDS regional projects/initiatives, SIDS engagement in global/regional projects or SIDS focused activities under global projects/partnerships.

55. In the Caribbean Region, UNEP's major initiatives include, but are not limited to, the Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) in Caribbean SIDS, Transformation of Dominica into an Environmentally Sound Organic Island, and the Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC) project.

56. Within its Ecosystem Management sub-programmes, UNEP has started the Island Ecosystem Management Initiative where a whole island is recognized as an ecosystem, applying the ecosystem-based approach to promote optimum use of island ecosystem services for human benefits and sustainable island development. Based on the existing tools and methodologies, UNEP in 2012 started working with SPREP to establish good practices in supporting such a management approach, and once this is further developed, replication of the work in other SIDS regions will be expected.

57. The UNEP project, Advancing Caribbean States' Sustainable Development through Green Economy (ACSSD-GE), started in August 2012 targeting CARICOM member

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States with pilot countries of Haiti, Jamaica and Saint Lucia. The overall objective of the ACSSD-GE is to enable countries in the Caribbean to advance sustainable development through the design and implementation of policies that result in a strong and sustainable economy, which is environmentally responsible and socially inclusive. The project will lead to four main outputs: i) a regional multi-stakeholder green economy network and similar platforms in the three pilot countries; ii) country-relevant investment and policy menus; iii) a Regional Centre of Excellence on green economy; and iv) a region-specific green economy capacity building portfolio.

58. UNEP is preparing its publication on Sustainable Consumption and Production Best Practices in Mauritius. The publication is a booklet of Best SCP Practices in Mauritius. The information in this publication should be relevant to all SIDS in supporting appropriate measures to promote resource and energy efficiency and sustainable infrastructure with a view to accelerate the shift from bad consumption and production habits to a more sustainable lifestyle.

59. UNEP is also implementing a project entitled Sustainable Public Procurement and Eco-labelling Project (SPPEL). Within this project, and based on the experience acquired by UNEP on eco-labelling and SPP, the project seeks to combine these two instruments to achieve maximum synergies and better deliver the common goal of stimulating the demand and supply of sustainable products.

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60. UNEP is supporting development of national contribution to Global Monitoring Plan on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The countries which receive support include, but are not limited to: Kiribati, Marshall Island, Niue, Palau, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Mauritius, Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda. UNEP also published a report entitled Passive Air Sampling under the Global Monitoring Plan for Persistent Organic Pollutants, in March 2012. It summarises the work and the results of the monitoring of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in support of the Global Monitoring Plan (GMP) according to article 16 of the Stockholm Convention. Ambient air concentrations of POPs are compared around the world. This report includes fourteen SIDS in the Pacific Region, Africa and the Caribbean.
61. UNEP engaged as well in extensive activities addressing the implementation of the MSI in climate change and energy resources, coastal and marine resources, land resources, biodiversity resources, and institutional strengthening.
62. UNEP is coordinating the regional seas programmes under its global regional seas coordination framework. Each year coordination meetings are organized by UNEP. SIDS relevant regional seas programmes participate in the coordination activities, including SPREP (based on the Noumea and Waigani Conventions), the Caribbean Environment Programme (Cartagena Convention), Nairobi Convention, Mediterranean Action Plan and Barcelona Convention, and the Abidjan Convention.



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SIDS related issues were also discussed in the coordination meetings, such as Green Economy in SIDS and island based ecosystem management. Each SIDS relevant regional seas programme implemented SIDS specific activities.

63. FAO has been assisting in the Implementation of the MSI in the Caribbean and Asia/Pacific regions where most of SIDS member countries are located. For example, FAO has supported a number of activities through technical and trust fund projects in the Caribbean and the Pacific Island states notably in strengthening risk management capabilities, promoting climate change adaptation and ensuring food security and protecting biodiversity.
64. A thematic website is under development to show FAO's work in SIDS in different areas through establishment of a dedicated website.<sup>25</sup>
65. A global e-consultation was launched with the objective of encouraging dialogue and seeking inputs that will contribute to the preparatory process aimed at addressing the main challenges and opportunities in SIDS.
66. Support has been provided to the regional preparatory meetings (Caribbean, Pacific, and AIMS) for the Third International Conference through organizing and financing

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<sup>25</sup> [www.fao.org/sids](http://www.fao.org/sids)

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side events, participating in panel and round table discussion, presentation during plenary session and bilateral discussions. Efforts were made to provide substantive and technical inputs to delegations on the topics within the mandate and core area of FAO during the preparatory process.

67. At the end of 2012, FAO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of States (ACP) to strengthen collaboration on food insecurity, malnutrition, hunger, natural resources management and climate change, and that a variety of international funds are being mobilized to facilitate the agreement.

68. The Secretariat has a long history of targeted research and advocacy on behalf of its SIDS members. Over the period 2012 to 2013 the Secretariat through its ongoing consultative process with SIDS sought to:

- Identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of SIDS and ways and means to address them;
- Expand existing networks and identify partners for collaborating on key activities.

69. The resulting programme of activities in support of SIDS focused on: building resilience in SIDS; migration and development; tourism; MDGs; and building

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capacity. The Secretariat also used its convening power to host several major international meetings/conferences that brought together SIDS and key development partners. These meetings provided an effective platform to influence outcomes in support of SIDS in key institutions that influence global resource allocation. In the context of the Secretariat's advocacy and policy research programme on behalf of small states, the Secretariat conducted several studies that were aimed at enhancing the understanding of the unique challenges that these countries face in their quest to reduce their vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience.

70. In March 2012, the Secretariat convened a meeting of experts on migration and development in Jamaica to discuss developmental challenges and benefits of migration in SIDS and other small states. The findings of several studies commissioned by the Secretariat on migration and development in small states were shared. These studies which covered migration and development issues in SIDS (and other small states) from the Pacific, Caribbean and AIMS regions were further refined through this consultation and will be published as a book by the Commonwealth Secretariat in October 2013. .

71. As part of its ongoing efforts to build capacity in SIDS, the Commonwealth Secretariat developed and delivered a, known as "International Architecture for Environment and Sustainable Development" (IAESD), which provides policy makers and development practitioners in SIDS and other small states an understanding of the tools and the

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governance frameworks at different levels of governance from local to international to effectively implement sustainable development in their respective countries.

72. The Commonwealth Secretariat continued to work closely with World Bank. The Secretariat participated in the Annual small states forum held during the IMF/World Bank Annual meetings and worked jointly with the World Bank on a workshop on data challenges facing SIDS and other small states. The two institutions also recognising the importance of the tourism sector and its potential catalytic role in these economies commissioned three studies to explore the transmission mechanisms of tourism to the development of small states. These studies were presented and discussed at the Commonwealth Secretariat 2012 Second Global Biennial Conference on Small States and will be published in a forthcoming book entitled: *Tourism and Inclusive Growth in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*.

73. Commonwealth Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) to ensure the continued delivery of a training course on International Architecture for Environment and Sustainable Development (IAESD) in the Indian Ocean Region.

74. The Commonwealth Secretariat has supported the development of a partnership between the regional organisations of SIDS in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific regions focused around climate financing and sustainable development

concerns. At Rio+20, the Commonwealth Secretariat facilitated a side-event on 20 June 2012 with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs) on pathways to climate resilient, low-carbon economies. This included a film and debate on priority concerns of SIDS in the Rio+20 process, and the signing of Memorandums of Understanding between the organisations.

#### **IV Preparations for the Third international conference on small island developing States**

75. As outlined above, the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly adopted a resolution<sup>26</sup> on convening the Third international conference on SIDS as asked for in the Rio+20 outcome document<sup>27</sup>.

76. Resolution 67/207 also set out the modalities for the preparations of the Conference. It was agreed that the Conference would:

- (a) Assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, building on, inter alia, existing reports and relevant processes;

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<sup>26</sup> A/RES/67/207

<sup>27</sup> A/RES/66/288

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- (b) Seek a renewed political commitment by all countries to address effectively the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, inter alia, through mobilization of resources and assistance for small island developing States;
- (c) Identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of small island developing States and ways and means to address them, including through the strengthening of collaborative partnerships between small island developing States and the international community;
- (d) Identify priorities for the sustainable development of small island developing States for consideration, as appropriate, in the elaboration of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda;

77. In preparation for the Conference, the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, as Secretary-General of the Conference.

78. As already, mentioned above the regional preparatory meetings stipulated in the resolution A/ 67/207 were held in July 2013 (in Jamaica, Fiji and Seychelles respectively) and the interregional meeting will be held later in August in Barbados. This process will be completed before the modalities resolution for the global process for the Conference is adopted, and the global process itself begins later this year, .

79. National consultations were held in SIDS Member States prior to regional meetings, resulting in National Reports, which led to regional synthesis Reports<sup>28</sup>.

#### *Outcome of Regional Process*

80. The regional preparatory meetings helped to concretize regional priorities for the Third international conference.

#### Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting

81. The outcome stressed the ongoing challenges that Caribbean SIDS face including climate change, natural disasters, crime and violence, high rates of unemployment—especially among women and youth—and resulting brain drain, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and other health concerns, and debt. It called on the international

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<sup>28</sup> For more information on the reports see [www.sids2014.org](http://www.sids2014.org)

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community to support SIDS through technology transfer, capacity development, capitalization of the Green Climate Fund, and promotion of renewable energy, among others. Carribean SIDS expressed also the urgent need for development partners to consider measures other than GDP per capita when making decisions regarding financial assistance and debt relief.

#### Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting

82. Climate change and ocean related issues figured prominently in the Pacific outcome document of the regional meeting. Other issues raised included health, especially non-communicable diseases (NCDs), social protection and inclusion, information and communication technologies, transport and energy and renewable energy. To advance these and other priorities, the Pacific decided to propose as the theme for the 2014 Samoa Conference: “the sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships.”

#### AIMS Regional Preparatory Meeting

83. Central to the outcome of the meeting was the concept of the “blue economy,” encompassing the full range of economic and social development that the ocean can drive. The AIMS region addressed issues of peace and security, especially in the face of international piracy and organized crime, as well as renewable energy, NCDs,



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special financing mechanisms and trade instruments for SIDS, sustainable management of national resources, and the need for a strengthened AIMS regional coordination mechanism and institutional support for SIDS.

84. Following the regional preparatory meetings, the SIDS began preparations for the inter-regional preparatory meeting, which would subsequently feed into the global preparatory process for the Third International Conference. Small island developing States were also expected to engage in discussions on the International Year of Small Island Developing States, while discussing the preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

85. These activities during the International Year of SIDS will help the international community to consider how much of MSI has already been implemented and to ensure that the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy will be advanced in Samoa.

## **V Expert group meetings as substantive inputs into SIDS preparations to the Third international conference on SIDS**

86. There were a number of expert group meetings organized by DESA , OHRLLS, UNEP, UNISDR and others, often jointly, which were specifically targeted to provide substantive inputs to the SIDS preparatory process:

*Strengthening Partnerships Towards Disaster Risk Reduction for Small Island Developing States at the Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (OHRLLS and UNISDR)*

87. The importance of preparedness was stressed as being vital including the use by authorities of simple language and graphics to explain hurricanes. These messages have been translated into guidelines and recommendations and broadcast as early warning messages through various media. Integrating disaster risk reduction into education and awareness curricula from primary school level upwards and including at the grassroots/community level was also stressed as an important avenue for improving preparedness and building capacity for resilience.

*The Significance of Marine Science and Technology for SIDS, and the Importance of Capacity Building and Marine Technologies Transfer to SIDS to Support Sustainable Development.(OHRLLS , UNESCO-IOC and UN Office of Legal Affairs' Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea,)*

88. For SIDS the ocean is an issue that clearly cuts across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of their sustainable development objectives. SIDS have demonstrated leadership in managing the living marine resources that occur under their respective jurisdictions and are again leading the way on matters concerning exploration and exploitation of non-living marine resources. The need to build capacities and scientific know-how remains a crucial component for SIDS' sustainable development aspirations and indeed tackling the multifaceted adaptation and mitigation requirements of climate change.

*Symposium on Small Islands Ecological and Social Resilience (OHRLLS in Partnership with American Museum of Natural History)*

89. The Symposium stressed that island ecosystems present unique challenges for conservation due to distinctive ecological and evolutionary processes and vulnerability to threats. It was recalled that biological diversity on islands was not only of global importance but likewise was suffering from numerous threats including natural disasters, diseases, overexploitation, deforestation, drainage of wetlands, loss of habitat, illegal trade in endangered species and climate change. In this light, the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity considers species on islands to be at most risk of extinction. To date 95% of birds, 90% of reptiles, 69% of mammals and 68% of plant extinctions worldwide have occurred on islands

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*SIDS and the post-2015 development agenda (organized by DESA)*

Key issues identified for consideration included:

1) Social Dimension of Sustainable Development

90. For development in SIDS to be truly sustainable, social issues must be given a new prominence in the post-2015 development agenda. Inequality itself can inhibit growth, and those involved in setting the post-2015 development agenda are urged to work toward social inclusion by addressing a range of social development issues, including: (i) Supporting and creating opportunities for employment, for all demographic groups; (ii) Attention to women's empowerment and to issues of importance which has not previously been specified in MDGs, such as domestic violence; and (iii) Strengthening the quality of education and health services, rather than focusing only on quantity of services, and the expansion of tertiary and vocational education

2). Addressing debt and access to global capital markets

91. The economic challenges of SIDS are urgent, especially those of Caribbean countries with high debt burdens, those lacking access to global capital markets, and those barred from

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access to concessional financing due to their being categorized as “middle income countries” on the basis of the GDP. To address these challenges, the international community must consider reforms to the global financial architecture, to create an environment that encourages “investment in the resiliency of SIDS. SIDS also need differentiated treatment and access to concessional financing based on fair assessment of their respective vulnerabilities and resilience,.

3). Addressing the existential threat of climate change

92. Climate change remains the central threat for many SIDS, not least because sea level rise may undermine their territorial integrity. The developed world holds the responsibility for climate change mitigation through the reduction of carbon emissions. The urgent need for financing for adaptation and the development of a loss and damage mechanism, has been highlighted..

4). Strengthening monitoring systems and the data underpinning them

93. The experts recommended that the strengthening of the data gathering and analysis capacity of SIDS should have an eye to bolstering knowledge management systems and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. M&E frameworks should be piloted at the national level and then rolled out to a regional and then global scale. It is crucial that data collection methodologies and M&E frameworks are user-friendly, and based on bottom-up,

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consultative processes. With this approach, an M&E framework will accurately reflect the vulnerability and resilience of SIDS as well as the heterogeneity within and among the three SIDS regions.

5). Advancing high quality partnerships

94. The experts viewed that in the post-2015 development landscape, partnerships have the potential to advance a new paradigm in development cooperation, moving beyond the traditional donor-recipient relationships.

*Emerging Issues in SIDS*

95. This meeting was held as part of the UNEP-initiated “Foresight” process, which uses a methodology originally designed to identify emerging environmental issues in the lead up to Rio+20. They decided in this juncture to apply the methodology with the focus on SIDS. DESA joined this work by bringing together experts from SIDS to have parallel discussions and explore inter-linkages. The experience of this expert group meeting has led DESA and UNEP to explore a more integrated approach to identifying and refining emerging issues in the future, with great potential benefits for the advancement of holistic sustainable development in SIDS and beyond.

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96. The emerging environment issues identified through the foresight process initiated by UNEP and narrowed down at the joint meeting came up with the following themes /issues? which are being subjected to further refinement:

- (a) Invasive Alien Species
- (b) Irreversible Loss of Tropical Montane Cloud Forest
- (c) Coastal Squeeze: Coastal Deforestation and Loss of Ecosystem Services
- (d) Pacific Deep-sea Minerals Mining and Associated Risks
- (e) Disproportionate Impact of Climate Change and Sea-Level Rise in SIDS
- (f) Intensification of Extreme Events and External Shocks and Increasing Vulnerability of SIDS
- (g) Accelerated Beach and Coastal Erosion and Breakdown in the Sand and Sediment Budget
- (h) Accelerating Decline of Ecosystem Functions Affecting Food and livelihood Security
- (i) Energy Dependency and the Need to Develop Renewable Energy Resources
- (j) Increasing Degradation and Scarcity of Water Resources
- (k) Reaching the Limit of Land Capacity
- (l) Waste for Resources
- (m) Indiscriminate and Increasing Use of Pesticides
- (n) Synergizing Local, Traditional and Modern Science as a Basis for Sustainable Island Development
- (o) Developing an Ocean-based Blue-Green Economy

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- (p) Overfishing and Potential Collapse of Inshore Marine Ecosystems
  - (q) Unique Human Capacities for Island Sustainability
  - (r) Climate and Environmental Change Driving Population Displacements
  - (s) Exploring the Potential of Unexploited Natural Resources in SIDS
  - (t) Global Contaminants Affecting SIDS
  - (u) Impending Agro-ecosystem Breakdown and Loss of Agrobiodiversity

97. The social and economic issues identified in the course of the meeting and its preparations included:

- a. Need to diversify SIDS economies
- b. Innovative approaches to debt relief
- c. Shoring up traditional local and indigenous knowledge
- d. Reinforcing social cohesion
- e. Rediscovering opportunities for youth
- f. New challenges in gender
- g. Health challenges in SIDS
- h. Preserving an authentic cultural heritage and identity
- i. Making tourism sustainable
- j. Climate and Economic Drivers of Migration
- k. The future of food security in SIDS
- l. Freshwater management for the 21st century



- m. Need for enhanced disaster preparedness
- n. Economic and social impact of climate change
- o. Diminishing Resources for Development Financing

## **VI Conclusion**

98. As noted in the MSI+5 Outcome and during the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, small island developing States have had an uneven path towards the implementation of the sustainable development strategies and programmes of action.
99. There have been successful activities, both by small island developing States themselves, and by the international community.
100. It is envisioned that the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States will provide renewed political commitment towards the sustainable development of small island developing States, while helping the member states to prepare for the post 2015 development agenda.
101. The activities throughout 2013, and the planned activities for 2014 including for the International Year of SIDS will also help in raising awareness of the challenges faced by small island developing States, and advancing strategies to address these challenges.

