

**‘MY WORLD, MY SIDS’ AIMS YOUTH REGIONAL MEETING OUTCOME DOCUMENT
11-16 July at Victoria, Seychelles**

Have the future we want? Y.E.S. we can!

“...When I managed to fix the man, I turned the page and saw that the world had been repaired.” (from the story “How to fix the world”, in the Cape Verdean presentation, Author unknown)

The world we live in is increasingly uncertain, especially for young people. As we embrace post-modernity and advance towards development, progress and new forms of technology, the threats of social and climate change leading towards social, environmental and economic degradation loom as an all-too bleak reality. Add to that complacent attitudes and a lack of political will. It is undeniable that the case of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is special, atypical and unique. The nexus of SIDS and Sustainable Development is a matter of survival and resilience for the younger generation.

While we were not in Barbados for the first Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994, we acknowledge that it was a transformative process and a major first step in advancing the cause of sustainable development. But our islands’ survival remains in peril. The SIDS 2014 meeting represents a crucial and decisive process to strategize and consolidate our voice, as SIDS, within the international community.

The AIMS youth should be at the forefront of decision-making in relation to challenges which SIDS from the AIMS region face. Their energy, drive, passion, creativity, experience, openness and ability to view things from a different perspective make them a key partner in achieving a sustainable future.

This outcome document represents our collective response to the problems faced by youth in the region. The consultation process enabled us to identify the issues, challenges, weaknesses and stumbling blocks faced by the youth in the SIDS AIMS region. Throughout the process, we have also put forward concrete recommendations and formulated practical projects which we, as youth, would like to see being implemented at national, regional and international levels in the short and long terms.

OUR VISION

In our vision, we are living in a world where we can walk together, tall and proud of a peaceful and thriving society. The living environment is our greatest ally, while our spiritual, cultural and intellectual riches are shared without bounds.

For now, we recognise our role as decision-makers and policy-implementers of tomorrow. We also realise that the outcomes of any decision made or not made today will be inherited by the future generations. As such, our vision is that of a socially and environmentally conscious generation of future leaders. We picture a self-sustaining, climate and economically resilient SIDS that have a strong place in global politics – where SIDS youth have a visibly strong representation and voice, and where the rights of SIDS children, youth and the future generations are held high.

WHAT GOOD GOVERNANCE MEANS TO US

We believe that good governance at the global, regional and national level should:

- Coordinate and focus on implementing existing agreements and plans of action;
- Strive for peace and cooperation amongst different nations;
- Equal representation of women at policy and decision-making levels within the AIMS region;
- Secure public access to information and environmental justice;
- Actively fight corruption; and
- Be open to equal partnerships with non-governmental stakeholders, including youth.

THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

Recognizing that the environment is the source of subsistence for life and that natural resources of the SIDS are vulnerable to the threats of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, we as youth reiterate our concern on **climate change** and **sea-level rise**¹, the lack of **infrastructures**, practices that do not support the living environment and ecosystem services, **waste management** and **ocean and coastal resources**. The combination of these factors affects the population in various ways, for example during the drought periods in 1999 and 2012 and flash floods of 2008 and 2013 in Mauritius. Similarly in Comoros, flash floods in 2012 and 2013 resulted in severe damages and loss of lives².

In addition, due to the volatility of fossil fuel prices and our geographic isolation, we are concerned about our **food, water and energy security** in the face of external shocks. We believe that we have the means of ensuring the security of these resources from within our region and countries, however the performance of our **education systems** (youth feel that current educational system of “remember and repeat” is inadequate for skill building), the reality of **youth unemployment**, and **technological**³, **infrastructural, institutional and investment limitations** are leaving us frustrated and exposed to additional pressures. These include **substance abuse, crime and violence**⁴ including **sexual violence**, hence **health threats** and risk of **teenage pregnancy**⁵. Furthermore, the current underrepresentation of SIDS youth within national and international decision making constitutes a barrier for addressing that affect us.

OUR CALL FOR ACTION

We, SIDS Youth from AIMS region, need governments, businesses, inter-governmental organizations, NGOs and the civil society to collectively come up with lucid, immediate, concrete and committed action strategies towards Sustainable Development. We recognize the importance of an inter-SIDS and a youth-policy makers partnership, and call upon governments from the SIDS AIMS region, as well as other stakeholders to collectively invest resources and political will in:

1. Strengthening capacity-building and the quality of education

Developing SIDS would be a human-resource and technologically intensive endeavor. As such, we require:

- a) Revamping of the school curriculum at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels that targets 100% sustainability literacy by integrating the following elements in its core curriculum: science and technology; environmental education; self-development courses focusing on leadership, entrepreneurship and social businesses; experiential learning; community/moral values; creativity and arts; fitness; interculturalism, and vocational training.
- b) Obligatory internships at high school levels, and more graduate programmes.

¹ In terms of vulnerability, the prospects of any sea-level rise based on the IPCC estimates of 18–59 cm by 2100 would be dire to the low-lying nation of the Maldives - IPCC. Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2007

² Seconde Communication Nationale sur les Changements Climatiques, 2013

³ Internet users represent 5.5% and 2.7% of the population in Comoros and Guinea Bissau respectively

⁴ UNODC’s study on Homicide rates in America and Africa 2011 states that “[c]rime and violence are strongly associated with large youth populations, especially in developing countries

⁵ In Maldives for example, 92% of the population involved in substance abuse are below the age of 30.

- c) Better access to tertiary education for SIDS youth in terms of proximity and affordability, specifically through partnerships with outstanding regional and international universities such as the university consortium of small island states.

2. National and regional youth mechanisms for economic opportunities

SIDS youth should be able to collectively and effectively access funds, whilst contributing to a green and ocean-based economy and reducing reliance on imports. Thus, provisions should be made for funding and frameworks for social entrepreneurship and social business. This should be accompanied by a clear commitment to promote decent, green jobs for youth to reduce unemployment. Examples include creation of a Youth Entrepreneurship Development Fund / Green Business Fund, set up of national business incubators infrastructure and compulsory youth chapters in regional organisations such as the IOC and the IOR-ARC.

3. Promote volunteering

Volunteering schemes within the non-profit sector which could provide unemployed youth with valuable experience required in landing a job, whilst fostering a spirit of social citizenship within young people. Some examples include:

- a) Facilitating volunteerism through the setup of a national volunteer database which match volunteers with NGOs.
- b) Providing incentives such as free transport, reduced taxes and educational scholarships to volunteers.
- c) Promoting exchange programs for volunteers within the AIMS region and other SIDS.

4. The active inclusion and participation of youth in decision-making processes

- a) The inclusion of youth within the official governmental delegations to SIDS 2014, and the national processes leading up to it and beyond.
- b) The demographic election of a Youth Ombudsperson for Sustainable Development (at national levels) who will act as a bridge between young people and decision-makers, and participate actively in national, regional and international processes leading up to the post-2015 agenda/SDGs discussions.

5. Technology and enhanced connectivity inter-SIDS and SIDS-international community

We believe that connectivity is a global right and that no person from our generation should be on the wrong side of the technological divide. Hence we require:

- a) 100 % access to reliable, affordable and fast speed Internet across the AIMS region.
- b) Provision of a crash course in web page creation and blogging and the efficient use of social media and other online tools within the IT syllabus compulsory for secondary school students.

6. The phasing out of global fossil fuel subsidies

We want governments to stop supporting the fossil fuel industry and instead:

- a) Further develop technology for renewable energy sources such as marine energy as the prime source of energy for SIDS – including offshore wind farms, OTEC and biofuels from seaweed.
- b) Reinforce capacity building and involvement of youth in energy efficiency and renewable energy development, in a way that enables the creation of enterprises and contributes to energy security.

- c) Have a common position within the post-2015 agenda/SDG discussions to demand “Sustainable Energy for All” as one of the SDGs, with the phasing out of global fossil fuel subsidies (with safeguards) as one of the indicators.
- d) Lobby for a new institutional role which will facilitate the collection, analysis and transparent reporting of fossil fuel subsidy data for all countries involved.

7. Economic resilience

Recognising that the Ocean is our greatest resource, we support the mainstreaming of the blue economy in our region, and we-

- a) Urge the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to assist us in the development of a criteria succeeding the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) metric which will enable us to give a truer picture of our developmental needs.
- b) Call for facilitation of access to grants (as opposed to loans) in order to stimulate sustainable development in the SIDS region.
- c) Propose that a SIDS-specific regional/inter-regional development bank be set up to finance such projects.

8. Integrated Land-Ocean management

SIDS in the 3 regions should collaborate to curb overfishing, Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and marine pollution. This means:

- a) Placing stringent regulations on land use and land-based activities which affect the ocean such as the affluence of chemicals from farming.
- b) Developing clear plans for sustainable cities and land development, encouraging the development of smart green cities through innovation and providing incentives such as the subsidisation of green materials.
- c) Considering the establishment of regional, commonly adopted Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in order to protect our marine resources.

9. The creation and implementation of Environmental Fiscal Reform as a framework for a green economy such as carbon taxes to monitor carbon footprint of businesses and charge the highest polluters.

10. Integrated waste management becoming a national priority across the region

An integrated waste management system should be a top priority for our region. We suggest:

- a) Organisation of national competitions and awards to promote sustainable waste management projects.
- b) Allowing youth to tap into waste as a resource by setting up mechanisms to facilitate waste segregation and make it accessible, together with information on recycling and repurposing enterprise.

11. Health and safety

We urge that special attention is paid to the physical, mental and emotional health and safety of youth, through the nurturing of a caring culture in neighborhoods, schools, academic institutions and at the workplace.

12. Facilitating communication and traveling within the AIMS region

Agreements that allow visa-free entry within AIMS to other members of the region and facilitate affordable flights between the member states should be made, so as to enable connectivity and partnerships. In addition, communication and marketing strategies which promote the region and its countries amongst each other should be established.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO

We are the millennial generation, and we stand for action and change. We commit to take action, doing whatever is within our capacity, to attain a sustainable future. Therefore, we are making the following commitments to make SIDS 2014 a success.

- 1) Adopting more sustainable lifestyles, educating our local communities and acting as Ambassadors for Change by spreading our message using all available tools.
- 2) Playing a key role in the post-regional processes for youth nationally
- 3) Mobilizing young people for SIDS 2014 and building their capacity as sustainable development advocates.
- 4) Lobbying our governments to make SIDS 2014 and the post-2015 agenda/SDG discussions a top priority and hold them accountable to their commitments.
- 5) Working towards developing sustainable technologies and processes, and other green solutions.
- 6) Contributing to global, regional and national discussions on sustainable development, for example by proposing a draft SDG for SIDS with children and youth indicators.
- 7) Working collaboratively with youth from other SIDS regions to consolidate our voice and the voice of the SIDS.

PARTNERSHIPS

We, the SIDS youth from Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Maldives, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Cape Verde, Seychelles and Singapore commit to set up a Regional Youth Network, and request support and collaboration from UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, One Island Institute, the Indian Ocean Commission and others.

This network and associated partnerships will:

- a) Provide funding, technical know-how, professional and technical training to youth in the region;
- b) Be composed of an administrative board which is voted by youth across the region through a yearly democratic process;
- c) Organize yearly seminars, training workshops, fairs and conferences for youth leaders of the region to share skills, ideas and solutions, and collaborate on projects and strategies.
- d) Provide a platform for AIMS youth to be effective advocates for SIDS youth within international processes related to sustainable development.

We understand the interconnectedness of issues and thus have come up with holistic projects which provide multiple environmental, social and economic co-benefits. We recognize that the success of this integrated approach depends on the involvement of all stakeholders. As such, projects are to be implemented in collaboration (1) between youth of the three SIDS regions; (2) between SIDS youth and the international youth community (for example under the UN CSD Major Group of Children and Youth); (3) between youth and other key stakeholders including governments, private sector and civil society.

ANNEX

A: Additional Recommendations

- a) Introduction of a Carbon Tax which enables national Governments to monitor the carbon footprint of businesses and charge the biggest polluters for their carbon emissions.
- b) Clear accountability features so that taxpayers are aware of the end result of their carbon tax payments.
- c) Compulsory green certification and/or implementation of an Environmental Management System (for eg. ISO 14001) for businesses.
- d) Imposition of by-catch fees and a Marine Resources Fund Levy of landed catch to finance fisheries research and training.
- e) Regulations on the chemical contents of fuels and differential taxation prices must be designed to reinforce each other to discourage the most polluting fuels. Regulations on vehicle maintenance standards can also be useful, in countries where administrative capacity is sufficient to ensure enforcement.
- f) Creation of a Regional Environmental Agency (with presence in all the countries in the AIMS region)
- g) Cooperation, networking and building a community of thinkers, policy-makers and leaders are important components of a democratic agenda for the region. We propose the setting up of a Regional Environmental Agency with local presence in all the countries of the AIMS region. This Agency should:
 - (i) Be composed of governmental, NGO and private sector stakeholders, including researchers and other members of the civil society.
 - (ii) Have a strong youth representation within its steering committee.
- h) Creation of a national waste management authority which is responsible for overseeing national waste management operations such as:
 - Obligatory waste sorting schemes through the provision of proper bins.
 - Training workshops on composting for at least one person per household.
 - Connection of all households and industries alike to sewerage networks that ensure proper treatment, disposal and potential reuse of wastewater.
 - Investment in national recycling centres and waste-to-energy projects.

B: Project Concepts:

PROJECT 1: Educational anti-deforestation module for the preservation of water	
Project description: Creation of an educational module for school in SIDS regarding forest and water ways - relevant to climate change adaptation and mitigation, food security and regional/national freshwater needs.	
Logical Framework	
Goals: <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. To create awareness on the importance of forest to water ways and water preservation.	Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. This learning activity becomes integrated in national school curriculums.

	ii. Materials are shared within the region.
Inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Educational materials ii. Field trips to expose school students to cases of rivers where surrounding forest is protected and where it is not. 	Outputs <p>Youth knowledge on the relationships between infrastructure, forest ecosystem services, climate change adaptation with regards to water resources. Knowledge on reforestation and forest maintenance.</p>
Stakeholders and potential partners: <p>Relevant national ministries, Private Sector (CSR), NGOs, local communities, education institutions engaged in schooling for sustainability (eg. Bureau de l'Education Catholique in Mauritius), UNESCO, UNICEF, EU, IOC-ISLANDS, SGP-GEF, UNFPA.</p>	
PROJECT: Establishment of a World Volunteering Program	
Project description: <p>Establishment of a volunteer network and database for advertising volunteering opportunities and matching with non-profit organisations, including volunteer exchange around the world.</p>	
Logical Framework	
Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Empowerment of young people by giving them the opportunity to help instead of being helped and advocate for non-discrimination by making people aware of the richness of the multiculturalism. ii. Skill building and acquiring work experience. 	Objectives: <p>The building of World Volunteering Service Platform (WVSP) and encouraging institutional support advocating for a systematic funding and overview of programme.</p>
Inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Assessment of volunteer base in the region and non-profit organisations requiring volunteer workforce. ii. IT design and platform building expertise. iii. Administration. 	Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. CCIVS and UN related Bodies consider funding a programme for WVSP to exchange volunteers. ii. Capacity building and attracting skilled volunteers from outside the SIDS region.
Stakeholders and potential partners: <p>Relevant national ministries, NGOs, local communities, UNESCO, UNICEF, EU.</p>	
PROJECT: Support project for access to basic health care	
Project description: Creation of a dedicated regional vulnerable youth health fund	
Logical Framework	
Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To provide health care assistance for vulnerable youth 	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Basic health care is accessible to vulnerable youth across the region
Inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Assessment of regional health needs of vulnerable youth, ii. Creation of a dedicated regional vulnerable 	Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The population is aware of the needs of vulnerable youth ii. Access to basic health care by vulnerable youth

<p>youth health fund and awareness campaign based on the above assessment,</p> <p>iii. Coordination mechanism for distribution and monitoring of funds and health care provided.</p>	<p>is facilitated, monitored and supported.</p>
<p>Stakeholders and potential partners: Relevant national ministries, Private sector (CSR) NGOs, local communities, WHO, UNICEF, Red Cross.</p>	