

SIDS IACG

Meeting Summary

12 May 2016

Chair: UN-OHRLLS – Director Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox

Background

The IACG meeting was the first convened following the decision to have the IACG meetings chaired alternately by DESA and UN-OHRLLS. The meeting allowed for UN Secretariat based departments and offices to update the IACG on recent events, UN processes, and developments that are a priority for SIDS. These include: HLPF and work of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS, the Paris Agreement, the “BBNJ” intergovernmental process, Habitat III conference, and the JIU exercise on UN support for SIDS.

Summary

- **DESA** informed the meeting that the next Steering Committee meeting will take place on 7 June at 3pm in the Trusteeship Council Chamber. The meeting will be at the Ambassadorial level. Recalling the work of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS that is co-chaired by Maldives and Italy, the meeting was informed that DESA with the support of OHRLLS have launched partnerships process and template. IACG members are encouraged to follow up with their respective organisations to update their partnerships on the Action platform which has been launched: sids2014.org. The reporting template is also available on the same website.

DESA also informed that a stock taking event of SIDS partnerships is being discussed to take place during HLPF and in September a General Assembly mandated Global Partnerships Dialogue will take place, the dates for this dialogue are yet to be confirmed. DESA is also working on a publication on SIDS partnerships; publication - deadline 1 July deadline for inputs. On the annual Secretary-General’s report (which is separate from the SIDS partnerships publication), DESA has received 22 inputs so far. While the deadline has passed, IACG members are encouraged to submit inputs as soon as possible. The SG’s report will be out in early September.

- **Division of Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (DOALOS)** informed the meeting of UNGA resolution 69/292 that saw the UNGA deciding to develop an international legally binding instrument under the UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. To that end, the Assembly established a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) which is

expected to make substantive recommendations to the seventy-second session of the GA on the elements of a draft text of an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS. Before the end of its seventy-second session, and taking into account the report of the PrepCom, the GA will decide on the convening and on the starting date of an intergovernmental conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to consider the recommendations of the preparatory committee on the elements and to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the Convention. The first session of the PrepCom took place in New York from 28 March to 8 April 2016 and was organized around plenary sessions and informal working groups to address the topics identified in the package agreed in 2011, namely the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular, together and as a whole, marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits, measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology. The next meeting of the PrepCom will take place from 26 August to 9 September 2016. A new informal working group will also be established to discuss cross-cutting issues.

IACG was also informed that the upcoming Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of UNCLOS relating to the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks would convene from 23-27 May 2016 at UNHQ. The meeting was expected to assess the effectiveness of the Agreement in securing the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, including the review of the implementation of the recommendations adopted at the Review Conference in 2006 and 2010 and propose means of further strengthening the substance and methods of implementation of the provisions of the Agreement. The meeting expected to take up several other agenda items: a presentation of the report of the 12th round of information consultations of States parties to the Agreement; consideration of the report of the status of the Assistance Fund; and consideration of a report of the UN Secretary General. A Workshop will also be convened to discuss the implementation of relevant provisions of the annual General Assembly resolutions on sustainable fisheries relating to the impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep-sea fish stocks (1 to 2 August 2016).

DOALOS also took the opportunity to inform participants of other meetings and processes of relevance to SIDS, including the second phase of the Regular Process for Global reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects (3-9 August 2016), following the launch of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (January 2016). With regard to the latter, DOALOS highlighted that the Assessment (also referred to as the "First World Ocean Assessment") consisted of 55 chapters with many issues of concern to SIDS. DOALOS also noted that the 17th Meeting of the UN Open-ended Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea would convene in New York, from 13-17 June, and focus its discussions on "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics". The Informal Consultative Process is intended to facilitate the annual review by the General Assembly of developments in

ocean affairs and the law of the sea by considering the Secretary-General's report on oceans and the law of the sea and by suggesting particular issues to be considered by the General Assembly, with an emphasis on identifying areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels should be enhanced.

- **SG's Climate Change Support Team (CCST)** informed the meeting that during the signing ceremony of the Paris Agreement, the SG met extensively with SIDS leaders and he has been a strong advocate of their cause. The SG has emphasised that the hard work now begins towards implementation.

The CCST highlighted the four overarching elements that underscored the success of the Paris Agreement for SIDS. These include: 1. ambition of agreement, 2. finance – particularly availability and access, 3. legal nature of the agreement- commit trust and confidence and 4. building resilience and loss and damage - ensure focus on assistance to address uncertainties now and in future.

SIDS played an important role through strong leadership and a collective voice on the need to pursue a goal of keeping global warming well below 2C, and in particular to pursue efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5C. The meeting heard that on 22 April, 175 parties signed the Agreement with 15 parties depositing instruments of ratification of which 13 were SIDS. A further 25 parties have signaled their intent to join the Agreement in 2016. There is expectation that the 55% threshold needed for the Agreement to enter into force is expected to be reached by the end of the year.

The Secretary-General also continues to engage non-state actors to promote climate action. On the next steps, early entry into force is a priority and SIDS are playing an important role in championing the ratification of the agreement at the national level. On technical details the process resumes in Bonn which will take several years for these to develop. The message from the CCST is that SIDS must remain engaged recalling that the Paris Agreement decided to convene a facilitative dialogue among Parties in 2018 to take stock of collective efforts on progress and likewise the importance of countries reporting on the progress of their INDCs every five years. The IPCC will produce a special report which is due to be released in time to inform review in 2018

The CCST raised two key concrete issues that the IACG needs to consider:

1. Access to finance, - Paris has not improved access. (2.5 billion dispersing this year by GCF). The IACG is encouraged to explore any ideas - using SG's convening power on this issue of finance.
2. Supporting SIDS to implement their INDCs and make these more ambitious. INDCs now need to be integrated into national development plans. This is where the IACG and wider UN system can help in how to integrate INDCs into national development plans and how to turn these into bankable projects.

- **ESCAP** shared information on implementation of Samoa Pathway – a process which involves working closely with PIFS. ESCAP also raised the need for more consideration to be given to how the SDGs and SAMOA Pathway partnerships can be implemented in a more coherent and cohesive manner. The meeting was informed that PIF leaders decided for Pacific to have open- inclusive process on the implementation of these global policy frameworks at the regional and national levels.

- **ECLAC** also shared that they are undertaking similar initiative to ESCAP's in exploring synergies between SAMOA Pathway and 2030 Agenda/SDGs. They informed the meeting of an August meeting involving the 29 programme countries looking at indicators from global framework of particular interest to Caribbean - priorities in SDGs and synergism with Paris Agreement, Sendai and SIDS into one monitoring framework. Also, national workshops on assisting countries to set up national institutions to monitor SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway are also being developed. A large regional workshop will be convened. An online platform to encourage countries to input information for designing monitoring framework is also being developed.

- **UN-HABITAT** informed the meeting of the process towards Habitat III which is has been an inclusive process of covering over the last two years. The third PrepCom will be convened in Surabaya, Indonesia, and the Habitat III conference will be convened in Quito, Ecuador, from 17-20 October. In the process all inputs, commitments - action oriented – as well as a strong local authorities presence have been integrated. The meeting was informed about the need for paradigm shift on urbanization and there is a sentiment coming from the processes for the need for proper planning and building of cities that are resilient.

- **UN-OHRLS** informed that an EGM on Sustainable Urban Development in SIDS will be convened on 13-14 June in New York. All IACG members are invited to attend - main idea - feed concrete recommendations into process - negotiations - Samoa pathway weak on urbanisation issues, timely that SIDS issues are recognised with habitat 3. On updates, UN-OHRLS informed the meeting on the preparations for the LDCs Midterm Review (MTR) to be convened in Antalya from 27-29 May, noting that nine SIDS are also LDCs. The issue of graduation from LDCs status, an issue that is very close to SIDS given the recent graduations have all been SIDS, was going to be discussed at the MTR and its roundtables. OHRLS also briefed the meeting on P3A PPP forum convened from 22-24 March which allowed for exchange of views and best practices on PPPs including in the areas of ocean, renewable energy, and sustainable agriculture. The P3A Forum was a follow-up of the private sector partnership forum convened as a pre-conference event in Apia, Samoa. There are plans for something similar in AIMS region.

UN-OHRLLS recalled that the JIU is undertaking the final phase of its work on UN support for SIDS, and they will be visiting several SIDS. The need to ensure some coherence in messaging, where appropriate, particularly on the work of the IACG and its linkages to the regional level, was highlighted. ESCAP informed that the JIU was recently in Fiji and was travelling on to Samoa.

- **UNEP** informed the meeting that there will be a high level round table on implementation of SAMOA Pathway and 2030 Agenda, also draft resolution in front of UNEA on SAMOA Pathway. The resolution on "The role, functions and modalities for UNEP implementation of the SAMOA Pathway as a means of facilitating achievement of the SDGs" has since been adopted at UNEA2. Further information on the resolution can be found at:

http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/cpr_portal/Portals/50152/UNEA2%20RES/4.pdf

- **FAO** informed the meeting that they were working with DESA and OHRLLS on the Food and Nutrition Action Programme for SIDS (as called for in the SAMOA Pathway). FAO has recently held regional consultations between March and April where 32 SIDS participated in the regional consultations - fisheries, oceans, agriculture etc. The zero draft being prepared over next few months and will be shared with UN system for further consultations.

- **The Commonwealth Secretariat** informed the meeting of its climate finance initiative in Small States (the Climate Finance Access Hub) to support their efforts in accessing finance. Recent consultative missions to Small States in the African and Pacific regions had been undertaken in this connection and a similar mission to the Caribbean will take place later this month, with a total of 17 Small States to be consulted in the current round.

- **PIFS** sought some clarification on the development of SDGs indicators and whether there will be specific dialogue on SIDS in HLPF. DESA informed that there is expectation that some time would be devoted to SIDS knowing full well that other countries have also requested. On indicators DESA informed that discussions are ongoing with indications that there is no appetite among the membership of ECOSOC for these to be subjected to intergovernmental debate.

- **The next SIDS IACG meeting will be convened under DESA's chairmanship.**