



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Issue Briefs

6. Island Voices, Global Choices: Promoting Genuine and Durable Partnerships

Background

As stated in the Rio+20 Outcome document, 'The Future We Want', Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities, 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. Their peculiar characteristics and vulnerabilities make it especially difficult for them to realize sustainable development. Food insecurity, human settlements exerting pressure on land, lack of adequate transport networks, degradation of coastal and marine environments, water insecurity, inadequate waste management system, lack of decent work opportunities, and heavy debt burdens are among the key challenges that continue to impact negatively on SIDS.

The special challenges faced by SIDS need to be recognized and addressed as the international community elaborates the post 2015 development agenda. International cooperation plays a critical role, as does the building of partnerships among SIDS and with other countries and actors. Genuine and durable partnership for sustainable development was therefore chosen as the overarching theme of the forthcoming Third International Conference on SIDS, to be held in Apia, Samoa, from 1-4 September 2014.

The agreed objectives of the Samoa Conference are to: (i) assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation; (ii) seek a renewed political commitment by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for further implementation; (iii) identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of SIDS and means of addressing them; and (iv) identify priorities for the sustainable development of SIDS to be considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 UN development agenda.

As decided in the General Assembly resolution on the format and organizational aspects of the HLPF, the sustainable development challenges facing the world's most vulnerable states will be a priority for the Forum. The resolution stipulates that "the meetings of the forum shall devote adequate time to the discussion of the sustainable development challenges facing developing countries, including the most vulnerable countries, in particular the least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and African countries with the aim of enhancing engagement and implementing commitments¹".

1. United Nations General Assembly A/RES/67/290.

Addressing Vulnerability: The HLPF and SIDS

As SIDS are particularly vulnerable to economic and environmental global shifts, given their geographical and structural limitations as well as other challenges, these states should be given strong voices during the HLPF and in the elaboration of the SDGs. GA resolution A/68/41 welcomes "the inaugural meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development held in New York on 24 September 2013, and looks forward to the future meetings of the Forum, at which adequate time shall be devoted to the discussion of the sustainable development challenges facing small island developing States". Recognizing the importance of coordinated, balanced and integrated actions to address the sustainable development challenges facing SIDS, the HLPF will dedicate a special meeting to addressing their particular vulnerabilities and sustainable development issues. . A special focus will be placed on the theme of the Third International Conference on SIDS which will take place in Apia, Samoa on September 1-4, 2014, The Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States through Genuine and Durable Partnerships. The HLPF will focus on promoting partnerships for SIDS, with perspectives from both the SIDS themselves, as well as the international community.

Partnerships

Partnerships to advance sustainable development, including North-South, South-South and triangular co-operation, as well as cooperation programmes implemented at intra- and interregional levels are important for all developing countries, but particularly important for SIDS. Support is needed for SIDS efforts to strengthen co-operation and ensure genuine and durable partnerships at the national, regional and international levels to address issues related to SIDS sustainable development needs.

During the SIDS Conference, six multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues will run parallel to the plenary, which are expected to provide an opportunity for recognizing successful partnerships; launching innovative and concrete partnerships, and interactive and focused discussions on key priorities related to SIDS. The themes of the partnerships dialogue will be (1) Sustainable Economic Development (2) Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management; (3) Social development in SIDS, Health and NCDs, youth and women; (4) Oceans, Seas, and Biodiversity; (5) Sustainable Energy; and (6) Water and Sanitation, Food Security and Waste Management.

Hearing SIDS Voices

The HLPF segment on SIDS will provide a platform for a general discussion on the challenges faced by SIDS and on how to promote genuine and durable partnerships for SIDS. It will revolve around the following questions:

- How best can the resilience of SIDS be built and their unique challenges met in the post-2015 development agenda?
- How can genuine and durable partnerships for sustainable development in SIDS be developed and supported?
- How can effective implementation of the Outcome Document of the Samoa Conference on SIDS be ensured?
- How can the UN system as a whole provide support for the Samoa follow-up and post-2015 development agenda?



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