

Meeting of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as part of the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework

26 April 2017, 3pm to 4:30 pm Conference room 5, UNHQ

Informal Summary

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Sareer, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations (Co-chair) opened the meeting, recalling that the SIDS partnership framework is rooted in the SAMOA Pathway, and that many of the specific challenges facing SIDS articulated in this document can be achieved through partnerships. He encouraged members to forge ahead to support and create innovative projects and relationships, while also collaborating with capitals to identify successful partnerships that could be scaled up and shared with other islands. In this regards, the importance of looking at how the Partnership Framework itself can continue to improve and evolve was also noted.

Mr. Sainivalati Navoti, Chief of the SIDS Unit, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), provided an overview of the activities carried out under the SIDS Partnership Framework to date. Recapping the activities of 2016, he noted that; the mandated partnership reporting process was established; two SIDS partnership dialogues were held and a publication on SIDS was prepared. He then gave an overview of the upcoming UN Ocean Conference to support the implementation of SDG 14. Mr. Navoti spoke on the online registry to collect voluntary commitments and underscored the need for all governments, United Nations system entities, NGOs, and the private sector- either individually or in partnership- to continue to contribute to the implementation of SDG 14 and to register their commitments. In conclusion, Mr. Navoti assured DESA's continued commitment to supporting the co-chairs and Member States for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Sandagdorg Erdenebileg Chief of the Office of the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing State (UN-OHRLLS) underscored that no single stakeholder group on their own can meet the goals with regard to economic, social and environmental sustainability. He informed participants of the specific activities undertaken by OHRLLS. Mr. Erdenebileg highlighted that a conference on public-private partnerships (PPP) was organized by the Office in Aruba last year, which have helped to institutionalize the annual SIDS Business Forum. The Forum, he said, provided a valuable platform for open discussion and exchange of practices in areas of sustainable fisheries, agriculture, tourism, and renewable energy among others. One of the outcomes of the PPP conference is the launch of the SIDS Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN) -- a web-based platform to provide information and networking opportunity for SIDS private sector, civil society, local communities, and other relevant stakeholders. The website, he said, had enhanced reporting and sharing of success stories and best practices at the national, regional, and global levels. He also informed Member States that OHRLLS is currently reaching out to all SIDS to give their voice to the Parley A.I.R Strategy which is an initiative intended to tackle ocean plastic pollution.

Presentation on the partnership status

Ms. Shifaana Thowfeequ, UN-OHRLLS, presented an overview of the status of partnerships registered on the SIDS Action Platform. To date, the platform contains 308 partnerships, and information was shared on the distribution of these partnerships across the various priority areas as identified in the SAMOA Pathway document. The presentation also included a snapshot of voluntary commitments for the Ocean Conference which showed around one third of commitments listed SIDS as its target beneficiaries. Speaking on reporting and review activities for 2016 and 2017, it was noted that, the low rate of submission remains a major challenge to better understanding the status of current partnerships and the ability to conduct more in-depth

analysis on trends, best practices and lessons learnt. She conveyed that a call for submission to complete the reporting template is now open in preparation for the 2017 SIDS Partnership publication.

H.E. Mr. Sebastiano Cardi, Ambassador of Italy to the United Nation (Co-chair) recalled the progress made since the establishment of the Committee under resolution 70/202 of 2015 and reminded the members on the need not to lose focus or momentum, especially in this “Ocean year, for threats of climate change, including rising sea level and extreme event with changing patterns, remain a great challenge for development in SIDS. He said more work needs to be done on strengthening the accountability framework and on monitoring and reviewing of progress. He also highlighted that the Committee is committed to support existing partnership and to promote the launching of new, genuine and durable partnerships. Ambassador Cardi reaffirmed Italy’s commitment to SIDS, and pledged that Italy will continue to remain a strong partner and the continuation of its long-lasting collaboration on climate change mitigation through promotion of renewable energy. He then opened the floor for interactive dialogue between members.

Open discussion

During the open dialogue, delegations acknowledged the progress of work by the Steering Committee and outlined recommendations and proposals on translating commitments to concrete action for SIDS. It was noted that Samoa Pathway compliments the commitments made under Agenda 2030 and others and the upcoming Ocean Conference provides an opportunity to catalyze more partnerships for SIDS. Delegations also welcomed the convening of the annual Global Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for SIDS Forum in the margins of the Ocean Conference this year.

Existing initiatives - Singapore, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United Kingdom shared information on ongoing projects to support SIDS. Singapore has renewed the technical cooperation package for SIDS – an initiative committed to SIDS capacity development efforts where over 1000 participants have attended training courses. The UAE informed that the country has launched a USD\$50 million grants fund for renewable energy in the Caribbean region. UAE also called for sharing of more information including information on existing initiatives, and capacity gaps which will enable partners to target their efforts towards areas where support is most needed. The United Kingdom has quadrupled assistance to SIDS including GBP 300 million in contribution to the infrastructure fund through the Caribbean Development Bank and GBP 15 million on climate mitigation to support Pacific islands.

Several delegations underscored the need for more analysis on status of partnerships to be shared with the Steering Committee. More specifically, information on number of inactive partnerships, breakdown of partnerships by implementing entities, SIDS regions and thematic areas were noted. A suggestion was made to use data from progress reports to drive action -- which would help to improve the overall quantity, quality and durability of partnerships. A recommendation was also made to include the trends analysis on partnerships in the annual Secretary General’s Report to demonstrate how partnerships are helping in the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and the SDGs. One delegation proposed the Committee to consider meeting at regular intervals rather than the current biennial arrangement.

A comment was made on the importance of SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production and the need to encourage more partnerships for SIDS in this area. On the same point, it was highlighted that great strides in conservation are being made by many SIDS however sustaining conservation requires partnerships.

Information was also shared on two upcoming meetings that may be of interest to SIDS. The first of which is the side event on Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) technical cooperation program by Japan to promote scientific research in partnership with developing

countries, including SIDS on 15 May. The second is the high level Ocean Conference hosted by the European Union in Malta from 5-6 October 2017.

In closing the meeting, Ambassador Cadi made remarks in response to the interventions from the floor noting the key proposals made and assured to report back to the Committee in the meeting in June. He thanked everyone for their participation before declaring the meeting closed.