

Building Capacity for Implementation and Monitoring of SDG14: The Commonwealth and the Higher Education Community

Side-Event at the UN Oceans Conference,
“Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development
Goal 14”,

6 June 2017, 11:00-12:30, Conference Room A, UNHQ, New York

Organised by: UN SIDS Partnership “Learning from the Sharp End of Environmental Uncertainty in SIDS” (The ‘Sharp End’ partnership) with:

- The Commonwealth Secretariat*
 - The University of the South Pacific* (USP)
 - The University of the West Indies* (UWI)
 - The World Fisheries University* (Korea)
 - The Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) (podcast)
 - The University of Malta* (tbc)
 - The University of Seychelles (UniSey)* (tbc)
 - The Commonwealth Human Ecology Council
 - The Caribbean Studies Association: Environment and Sustainability Group.
- (* = speaker)

Overview

The UN SIDS Partnership “Learning from the Sharp End of Environmental Uncertainty in SIDS” (the ‘*Sharp End*’ partnership: <http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?page=view&type=1006&nr=2705&menu=1507>) was launched on 2 September 2014 at the Samoa UN SIDS Conference. This side event will highlight work of Sharp End partners and others in supporting research, training and education to develop capacities for sustainable marine livelihoods in SIDS’ coastal communities in the context of the blue economy.

The event will include an overview of related Commonwealth developments since the 2009 Trinidad CHOGM, at the Rio+20 conference and the FAO Committee on Fisheries. Speakers will address Commonwealth work on the Blue Economy and draw on examples from sustainable livelihoods, food security and social cohesion in small-scale fisher (SSF) communities and related threats to security; Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (‘IUU’) fishing, with particular emphasis the ‘UU’ of ‘IUU’; the challenges of securing SSF data for SDG14; implementation of the *FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries*; ecosystem-based and community-based management, integrated coastal management and sustainable tourism; institution-building; citizen engagement and behaviour change of consumers and producers.

Particular emphasis will be given to the role of educational and training institutions in supporting capacity building for SDG14, across the range of disciplines and issues in the blue economy, as well as to the potential for inter-institutional collaboration on a south-south and south-north-south basis.

Indicative agenda

Brief presentations from the Commonwealth Secretariat and across its regions (University of the South Pacific, University of the West Indies, University of the Seychelles, University of Malta) will open the event for discussion and exploration of options for capacity development in support of SDG14. Particular attention will be paid to the role of higher education teaching and research, and the strengthening of the *Sharp End partnership*. It is envisaged that this side-event will reflect the potential of the Sharp End partnership and its university partners to address key issues raised in the subsequent high-level side-event ‘A Blue Commonwealth’ proposed by the Commonwealth

Secretariat (6 June, 13:15). It is intended that the Side Event start a conversation at UNOC about the added value education and training institutions and organisations across the Commonwealth can build capacity for blue economy, including in partnership with other key international actors.

Desired outcomes

In bringing together partners attending the UNOC to address themes of capacity building by and for higher education institutions in SIDS in support of SDG 14, the side event is designed to reflect on existing international partnerships such as the Commonwealth of Learning's Virtual University of Small States in the Commonwealth, or between universities and fisher communities, such as the role of USP in Fiji's programme of Local Marine Managed Areas (LMMA's), or of UWI-CERMES in development of the Caribbean Network of Fisherfolk Organisations (CFNO), and to fertilise the development of new ones. It will also help prepare a *Sharp End partnership* co-sponsored *International Conference on Higher Education and the SDGs* at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London (11-12 October 2017).

Format:

Presenters will speak for 5-7 minutes each to lead into a roundtable discussion to include active audience participation

Please refer also to:

1. *The Commonwealth Curriculum Framework for Enabling the SDGs, First Edition (January 2017)*: <https://www.thecommonwealth-educationhub.net/frameworkforsdgs/> in particular pages 67-70 (SDG 14)
2. The new University of California Press refereed journal *Case Studies in the Environment* (<http://blogs.evergreen.edu/mesweekly/2017/01/23/publication-case-studies-in-the-environment-university-of-california-press/>), which provides an opportunity to build a cumulative knowledge base of contextualised studies of 'blue economy' across SIDS.

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