

# Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue

7 June 2017, 1.15 – 2.30 PM, ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ

## Informal summary

### **Background**

The second annual Global Multi-stakeholder Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Partnership Dialogue took place on 7 June 2017, 1.15-2.30 PM in ECOSOC Chamber, organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN OHRLLS) in close consultation with the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS, co-chaired by Maldives and Italy.

The organization of the Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue is mandated by General Assembly (A/RES/70/202) as a key component of the *SIDS Partnership Framework*, which has the overall objective to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for SIDS, and to encourage new, genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of SIDS.

The *SIDS Partnership Framework* (Framework) itself is a direct follow up to the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS Conference) which was held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa, under the overarching theme "*The sustainable development of Small Island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*". Around 300 SIDS partnerships were announced in the lead up to, and during, the SIDS Conference in 2014. About two thirds of these partnerships are related to oceans, seas and marine resources.

The Framework, formally established in December 2015, consists of 1) a UN Member States driven Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS, currently chaired by Maldives and Italy, 2) the organization of an action-oriented, results-focused annual Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue, 3) a partnership reporting process, 4) encouragement to organize regional and 5) national partnership dialogues.

Organized on the occasion of *The high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development - The Ocean Conference -*, the Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue had a specific focus on ocean related partnerships in SIDS, and aimed to galvanize additional voluntary commitments for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) among the SIDS partnership community as a contribution to the outcome of The Ocean Conference.

The Dialogue, which was held in the ECOSOC Chamber at the United Nations headquarters in New York, was well-attended and included representatives of governments, United Nations entities, development organizations, and major groups and other stakeholders.

The critical role of partnerships in finding solutions to SIDS challenges was reiterated throughout the event, as was the need for SIDS in assuming leadership roles in developing these solutions in collaboration with all partners. Although significant progress has been made in SIDS since the SIDS Conference in Samoa, key challenges remain. The need to build upon, and increase, voluntary commitments and partnerships from all stakeholder in SIDS was highlighted by many participants.

Representatives from Australia, Cook Islands, Denmark, Israel, Italy, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Norway, Paulau, Seychelles, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) made interventions discussing their progress towards overcoming key SIDS challenges, and

the role of partnerships and voluntary commitments in addressing these challenges and driving implementation of SDG 14.

## **Opening panel**

The event was opened by His Excellency Mr. Sebastiano Cardi, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations who reminded participants that the Steering Committee on Partnerships for Small Island Developing States, the SIDS Partnership Dialogues, and The Ocean Conference -- all have similar objectives of forging genuine partnerships and driving new commitments for achieving sustainable development.

In a special keynote address, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly, stressed that a healthy ocean is critical to the health of SIDS, as these islands depend greatly on the ocean for their livelihood, including for a sustainable tourism industry and sustainable fisheries, among other areas. The organization of the event on the occasion of The Ocean Conference was therefore very timely and relevant.

Ambassador Thomson hailed The Ocean Conference as a game-changing conference with focus on solutions for advancing implementation of SDG 14. The Ambassador further stressed the leadership role SIDS have had in proposing solutions for ocean and climate action, something that was well noted during the negotiation process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development where SIDS actively lobbied for a stand-alone goal on oceans.

In his opening remarks, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Shainee, Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, Republic of Maldives, recalled that SIDS have set out a blueprint for sustainable development through the SAMOA Pathway. The SAMOA Pathway has defined the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships as a means for achieving the sustainable development in SIDS, including inter-linkages between oceans and SIDS, which along with its coastal areas form an essential component of the Earth's ecosystem and are intrinsically linked to sustainable development. Mr. Shainee recognized the SIDS Partnership dialogue as an opportunity to increase pledges to SIDS, and identify new areas for collaboration and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Her Excellency Ms. Silvia Velo, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea Protection, Italy, stressed that partnerships are widely recognized as a means for driving implementation of sustainable development objectives, including as effective instruments for mobilizing financial and human resources, sharing expertise, technology, and knowledge, and powerful drivers for change in innovation and welfare. Ms. Velo further noted that the most genuine and durable partnerships are the ones where SIDS are equal partners in a partnership based on mutual collaboration, ownership, trust, respect, accountability, and transparency, and where there is sustained political will to implement long term and predictable commitments - notions that Italy are happy to embrace.

Ms. Velo highlighted a genuine and durable partnership Italy enjoys with the Pacific SIDS aimed at addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation. The partnership, with partners including Luxemburg, Austria, Spain and IUCN – among others – has during its current 10-year lifespan mobilized nearly 25 million USD, increasing access to low-cost energy in remote areas of SIDS. Italy has also launched a number of additional environmental initiatives, and noted that the regulation of ocean resources and the end of overfishing are key elements for maintaining health, resilient and productive oceans for millions of people and our future generations. Furthermore, Italy intends to strengthen its support in establishing marine protected areas in SIDS, including in Palau and Kiribati, among others.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, reminded participants that the SIDS Partnership Framework, of which the meeting is an integral part, is a key outcome of

the SAMOA Pathway. The Framework and the Steering Committee, which were formed to follow up on sustainable development commitments, showcase best practices, and identify new challenges to full implementation, represents a truly global partnership, open to all Member States of the UN and members of the specialized agencies. It includes representatives from SIDS, developing and developed nations around the world, as well as the UN System and other stakeholders. Such an arrangement could also serve as an important model for maintaining accountability in other processes.

Mr. Wu informed the audience that to date, an impressive number of over 930 voluntary commitments have been announced for The Ocean Conference. Many of these commitments are from SIDS, and many others are directly benefitting SIDS. This is a true testament that the partnership approach adopted three years ago, in Samoa works, and is really the only pathway to future sustainability – across SIDS regions and indeed across the world.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, High Representative for the Least Development Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Development States (UN OHRLLS) congratulated the Steering Committee for focusing this years' SIDS Partnership Dialogue on oceans. She emphasized that for SIDS where the ocean is intertwined with every aspect of sustainable development from social, economic to the environment, the need for a global response to address these problems is eminent. Strengthened collaboration among various stakeholders, sharing of information on best practices and exchange of ideas on what works and what does not is critical to meet these challenges highlighting that the SIDS Partnership Dialogue provides an important platform for partners to come together.

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu then outlined a few areas in which her department has intensified its efforts in forging partnerships in support of SIDS; firstly, within its mandate to mobilize international support and resources for the implementation of SAMOA Pathway, UN OHRLLS has initiated a series of activities on private-sector promotion as well as Public-Private Partnerships models for SIDS. One of the key achievements from this is the SIDS Global Business Network – a dedicated web-based platform, developed with the support of the Government of Denmark. It is a tool to complement the work of the SIDS Partnership Framework by promoting the sharing of information and networking of businesses working across the three SIDS regions. The ocean is one of the seven key thematic areas of focus of the Global Business Network. She also stated that her office is also looking for and strategizing on the best ways the UN system as a whole can enhance coherence and coordination on SIDS issues – a mandate OHRLLS was entrusted with in the SAMOA Pathway.

## **Interactive dialogue with all participants – Partnering with SIDS and Oceans**

His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Sareer, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations, then opened the interactive part of the event, guiding statements and remarks from the audience.

In a remark, His Excellency Mr. Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, mentioned that the Cook Islands have concluded a comprehensive consultative process on policy legislation for establishing the Marae Moana Cook Islands Marine Park for integrated management of the ocean. The *Marae Moana Bill* is soon to be introduced in the parliament - a legislation that will establish a marine protected area (MPA) of 324,000 square kilometers around Cook Islands where no large scale commercial fishing or seabed minerals activities will be permitted.

However, creating such MPAs comes with a cost: the loss of economic opportunity. Innovative ideas are therefore needed to leverage the protected area so it also adds economic value, particularly for industries such as fisheries and tourism. The Prime Minister highlighted that the Cook Islands have enjoyed genuine collaborations with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), IUCN,

Conservation International, Ocean 5s, and others, but additional strategic partnerships are crucial for realizing their goal of integrated ocean management, from ridge to reef, and from reef to ocean.

Her Excellency Ms. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and Pacific, Australia, highlighted The Pacific Ocean Alliance - an open ended voluntary alliance where Australia is a partner. The alliance aims to foster partnerships to provide effective ocean policy coordination and implementation, facilitate regional cooperation for the high seas, as well as provide support for national ocean governance and policy processes. Ms. Fierravanti-Wells further stressed that defining jurisdictional rights is an important first step towards deriving economic benefits from the ocean and its resources. To this end, Australia is working with the Pacific community to implement the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea by providing technical and legal support for maritime boundary delimitation. The partnership with the Pacific community has led to more than two thirds of shared boundaries in the Pacific region. Ms. Fierravanti-Wells reiterated Australia's commitment to the Pacific Alliance by announcing that an additional 2 million Australian dollars will be devoted to its work.

The Minister for Equal Opportunities and Nordic Cooperation in Denmark, Her Excellency Ms. Karen Ellemann stated that SIDS are faced with fundamental challenges from climate change and the unsustainable use of natural resources. Ms. Elleman provided concrete examples on how Denmark supports the SAMOA Pathway, including support to the *Mangroves for the future* initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystem conservation for sustainable development. Other support included capacity building on low carbon development and climate change adaption in twelve SIDS, financial contribution to Green Climate Fund in the area of water investment, as well a docking station for connecting islands to sustainable energy networks, with projects in Seychelles, Mauritius, and Sao Tome and Principe. Denmark has also recently donated \$450,000 to the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and SIDS in the work of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

The State Secretary of Norway, Her Excellency Ms. Tone Skogen, stressed that it is fully possible to combine activities of ocean-based industries while ensuring a healthy marine environment, as long as proper environmental standards are maintained and enforced. The Norwegian ocean areas are a clear example that this is possible. To promote sustainable management of fish stocks worldwide, Norway collaborates closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), including supporting developing countries' efforts to foster sustainable small-scale fisheries. Furthermore, the Norwegian Government has decided to allocate up to 10 million Norwegian kroner (approximately 1 million Euro) to support the implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

Her Excellency, Ms. Ngedikes Olai Uludong, Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations announced the successful implementation of The Palau National Marine Sanctuary – an ambitious ocean conservation initiative aimed at not only protecting Palau's marine resources, but also at protecting the world's tuna stocks. This law will, after a four-year transition, 1) create a no-take Marine Sanctuary (approx. 500,000 square kilometers) covering 80 per cent of Palau's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), in which no fishing or any extraction of natural resources will occur and 2) create a Domestic Fishing Zone covering approximately 20 per cent of Palau's EEZ in which traditional and domestic fishing activities will be allowed to provide fish solely for Palau's food security and the domestic market. Her Excellency also highlighted the Global Island Partnership as an excellent example of a multi-stakeholder collaboration, and thanked the UN for having supported this initiative over the years.

Ms. Rebecca Loustau Lalanne, Principal Secretary, the Blue economy department, Office of the Vice President, Seychelles announced that Seychelles has joined the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) - a global multi-

stakeholder initiative that has been developed as a unique effort to complement and support other national, regional and global efforts for achieving responsible fisheries governance.

In her statement, Ms. Cristelle Pratt, Deputy Secretary General, of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat, outlined how the Pacific Islands Forum has performed a mapping exercise of the 300 partnerships that came out of the SIDS Conference in 2014, of which, 44 are related to ocean. Issues with availability of data on partnerships, and national ownership and accountability of partnerships were noted as a major challenge in assessing progress and status of partnerships. Dame Taylor encouraged countries to consider integrating partnerships into national planning mechanisms. The PIF will continue to report on SIDS partnerships, and while they are encouraged by the establishment of new partnerships, she stressed that focus also needs to remain on existing partnerships that were launched in Samoa, and called for overall accountability and continued reporting on partnerships by all stakeholders.

Ms. Grete Faremo, Under Secretary General and Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) highlighted that UNOPS actively works with SIDS, including through water resources management projects in collaboration with the Global Environmental Facility Trust Fund. UNOPS is also advancing in discussions with Pacific SIDS in supporting infrastructure and procurement, working on the ground to raise awareness and increase the economic viability of oceans. She noted that the development needs of SIDS will require both soft and hard infrastructure investments. Ms. Faremo also mentioned that UNOPS uses local resources and employs people locally to the full extent possible.

Mr. Nik Sekhran, Chief of Profession, Sustainable Development, Bureau of Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) highlighted that UNDP has a presence in many SIDS countries and has committed to 47 SIDS partnerships announced in Samoa – 12 of which have an ocean focus. In addition, in the context of The Ocean Conference, UNDP has announced an additional five voluntary commitments in SIDS. Mr. Sekhran further stressed the need for better access to finance for SIDS and informed of the working group to strengthen official development assistance (ODA) for SIDS which the UNDP co-chairs with the World Bank and OECD.

His Excellency, Mr. John M. Silk, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marshall Islands highlighted several commitments, including commitment to conserving coastal and marine areas, upscaling an approach to curb marine pollution through the development of a blue fee, banning of plastic bags, addressing the issue of marine debris and abandoned fishing gear or ghost gear through a conservation management measure at Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, and their participation in the Fisheries Forum Agency Vessel Monitoring Scheme, among others. The Minister further noted that the Marshall Islands are currently heavily reliant on foreign assistance and are working to build their own capacity to be an active player in international investments through various partnerships.

In his statement, His Excellency Mr. David Roe, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, expressed their full commitment to the implementation of to the SAMOA Pathway and the implementation of the SDGs in SIDS, and their interest to become more involved in SIDS partnerships. The Ambassador mentioned that much of their work has been focused on capacity building and innovative technology and highlighted several activities, including dispatching mobile water desalination systems in Nauru and other Pacific SIDS, expert assistance on disaster risk reduction in Papua New Guinea, enhancing their partnership with the University of South Pacific, and a large-scale industrial center in Papua New Guinea that Israel is supporting. The Ambassador further also noted the importance of engaging the private sector in moving forward.

Mr. Roland Roesch, Senior Programme Officer, Innovation and Technology Center of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) provided an update (*submitted in writing*) on the SIDS Lighthouse Initiative, one of IRENA's landmark initiatives. The SIDS Lighthouses Initiative, launched in September 2014 to support the transformation of the SIDS' energy systems, has already 36 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as members, as well as 19 development partners. Through the Lighthouses Initiative, IRENA continues to carry out a wide range of activities within all the SIDS regions, such as resource assessments, grid integration studies, energy transition plans, capacity building activities and project facilitation. A few significant examples include: targeted advisory services, and capacity building and training as an important part of transferring knowledge.

In closing the event, His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Sareer, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Maldives to the United Nations noted the need to clearly define and understand the challenges and gaps in implementation in SIDS in the area of oceans. His excellency further highlighted that partnerships need to be based on national engagement, accountability, and mutual trust, as was stated at the SIDS Conference in Samoa.

His Excellency further stated that it was encouraging to hear about the progress that has been made by several partnerships, which is benefitting the lives of citizens in SIDS everywhere. The Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS will continue to review process by SIDS partnerships, and provide additional space to showcase best practices, identify gaps and challenges in implementation to scale up what works, and hoped that all stakeholders will join the movement to value, preserve, conserve, and protect marine resources for this generation and generations to come.

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