

## Meeting Summary

### Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Date: 12 September 2017

Venue: Conference Room 26 MM2

Time: 8:00 am – 9:30 am (New York Time)

**Members in attendance:** UNDESA, UN-OHRLLS, DOALOS, UN Environment, FAO, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), WIPO, IOM, UNFPA and UNICEF

**Chair:** Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS).

### Summary

In this third meeting of the IACG in 2017, the members reviewed and adopted its Terms of Reference (TORs) with the aim to enhancing coherence and effective coordination between UN agencies and relevant stakeholders in supporting the SIDS agenda and improving communication and consultation with Member States. The IACG meeting also reflected on several issues namely: follow up to the UN Ocean Conference; the findings of the final Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Report and its implications for system-wide coherence in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway; preparations for the 5-year Review of the SAMOA Pathway and preparations for the High Level Political Forum in 2018. IACG Members were encouraged to continue to share information on SIDS related activities. Director of the UN-OHRLLS Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, DESA director Mr. Juwang Zhu delivered opening remarks.

#### 1. Follow up on the Oceans Conference

- The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) provided an update on the follow up to the Oceans conference noting it as a landmark conference, as it was the first ever UN conference devoted exclusively to oceans. Approximately 5000 - 6,000 participants attended. SIDS provided leadership in the convening of the Conference as well as on the follow up. The SG has appointed Ambassador Peter Thompson as the first UN Special Envoy for the Ocean, with broad Term of References (TORs) to galvanize concerted efforts to follow up on the outcomes of the UN Ocean Conference. Both Kenya and Portugal have expressed their interest to host the next Ocean Conference to be held in 2020. The Special envoy is expected to consult with PGA regarding the GA process on this.
- The Secretariat will focus on voluntary commitments, working very closely with DOALOS and members of UN Oceans on the follow up. A preliminary analysis of the 1400 voluntary commitments has been conducted with funding from Sweden. The results of the initial analysis have been posted on the website, and were shared during the HLPF. An in-depth analysis is now being undertaken which should be published before the end of 2017.

- As a follow up to the Ocean Conference, DESA is also preparing a series of webinars. The first was held during the 1st week of September on mangroves. A proposed calendar of webinars is being discussed and will be posted on the Ocean Conference website in due course. DESA is also looking to work closely with DOALOS, UN Oceans and members of IACG in the follow-up work on voluntary commitments. The website will also be revamped to facilitate the online-discussion and establishment of the community of practitioners for voluntary commitments.
- The meeting was informed that UN-Oceans will organize a side event on 26 September 2017 entitled “Fit for Purpose- Looking at the Future of UN-Oceans”. The event will explore the challenges, lessons learned and opportunities stemming from the implementation of the UN-Oceans TORs and Programme of Work to date, including ways and means to make it fit-for-purpose to respond to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 14. A similar event is planned for COP 23 of UNFCCC in November. The 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the GA will also review of the Terms of Reference for the UN Oceans.

## Discussion

- Participants underscored that the success of the Ocean Conference will be measured by implementation of the Voluntary commitments. It was noted that the appointment of Ambassador Thompson will help to sustain momentum on the Ocean agenda and will focus on the follow-up on the implementation of commitments, which are considered a breakthrough and an innovate feature of the Ocean Conference.
- Convening a monthly webinar on 10 SDG targets is planned. The first one was very informative and the PGA himself actively participated. The summary will be posted online. There is a visible linkage between the results of the Ocean conference and action on the ground. Almost all presenters referred to the Ocean Conference and momentum generated from the Conference.
- It was noted that the PGA encourages taking advantage of some of the global and regional events to bring together various actors and participants of the voluntary commitments. While a gathering of the partners involved in the voluntary partnerships at the global level is not envisaged in the near future, it is hoped that every opportunity will be taken at the regional level or at major stakeholder events to bring together partners involved in the Voluntary Commitments. PGA will also be looking to mobilize resources to assist with implementation of the voluntary commitments.
- The GA side event aims to discuss the review of TORS for the UN oceans and a potential law of the ocean. Previous side events in June and a plenary at the HLPF in July were held in support of the SDGs and SDG 14 in particular. The COP 23 side event in Germany will discuss the nexus between climate and Oceans. Summary of the upcoming Teleconference will be shared with all the members of the UN Oceans.

## **2. The Final JIU report - system-wide coherence in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway**

OHRLLS provided an overview of the review process and findings of the JIU reports.

- The mandate for the JIU emanated from the SAMOA Pathway in which the Secretary-General was requested to conduct a Comprehensive review of United Nations System support for Small Island Developing States with a view to enhancing the overall effectiveness of such support and the respective roles in supporting the sustainable development”.
- In its two consecutive reports **(JIU/REP/2016/3)** and **(JIU/REP/2016/7)**, the JIU made thirteen (13) recommendations aimed at strengthening UN system wide response to the special needs of SIDS. In particular the report recommends to submit to the General Assembly the needs assessment for UN Secretariat resulting from the evolving mandates in relations to SIDS; UN System organisations are requested to ensure the adequate allocation of resources in line with their mandates in relation to SIDS; to ensure that the priorities of the SAMOA Pathway are mainstreamed into their strategic plans; include specific objectives related to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway; to align their strategic plans and work programmes with the regional and national priorities of SIDS; to coordinate the planning and implementation of capacity-building activities with SIDS; the allocate predictable multi-year funding; and that the SG’s report should build upon the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on SIDS to adequately reflect the support provided by the entire United Nations system, so as to provide Member States with a strategic document to monitor and assess progress made and gaps to be addressed as priorities for a more effective implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report also contained specific recommendations for further strengthening of synergies between OHRLLS and DESA, particularly its SIDS unit and work of the Inter-agency consultative group on SIDS.

### **Discussion**

- Participants noted the relevance of the JIU recommendations to the work of the IACG. The discussion also noted the aspects of monitoring and accountability, and the need to avoid the burden of multiple reporting frameworks. The SG’s report to the General Assembly and the Multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue are the tools envisaged for monitoring and accountability, linking these to the governing bodies. It was noted that information for the annual report should be drawn from all levels – it was further noted that incorporating specific indicators to measure the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs could be discussed in the IACG to strengthen monitoring and accountability.

- It was noted that the recent SG SIDS report included a section addressing the recommendations of the JIU and hopefully the information provided will benefit member states by informing them what has been done. It was mentioned that the Central Executive Board have also made comments regarding recommendation 7 of the JIU report and members are encouraged to have a look.
- It was noted that at the level of the resident coordination, at the regional level there is more scope to deliver as one, including developing joint frameworks for monitoring and reporting.
- PIF Secretariat informed of their initiative on an integrated approach to monitoring the SAMOA Pathway and Sustainable development goals. PIF also commended recommendation 3 on Capacity building.
- In relation to JIU recommendation 2, it was noted that the HPLF is expected to organize a session of preferably two hours devoted to SIDS. There is some resistance to give this space. The Bureau gave the mandate as it gave approval. Up until 2018, HLPF will continue with a session on the SAMOA and SDG as applicable for SIDS. The partnership for multi-stakeholder dialogue will also continue, alongside a big event to achieve good participation.

### **3. Preparations for the 5-year Review of the SAMOA Pathway**

- OHRLLS provided the background to this agenda item, and noted that the SIDS resolution A/71/224 decided to review progress made in addressing the priorities of Small Island Developing States through the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, with a view to generating renewed political will and commitment, assessing the progress made, lessons learned, trends, gaps and new and emerging challenges, as well as mobilizing further action to accelerate implementation, and for this purpose also decides to convene a one-day high-level review, in September 2019 at United Nations Headquarters, as part of its seventy-fourth session, which will result in a concise, action-oriented and intergovernmentally agreed political declaration.
- The mid-term review is a very important exercise. The review needs to be preceded by national, regional and global preparations. There should be thematic reviews, and these can be conducted as pre-conference events. Agencies should play a lead role in preparing and organizing of the thematic reviews. OHRLLS and DESA will work closely to coordinate UN substantive support and contributions to the mid-term review. It is also expected the SG will prepare a progress report for the mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway, and members will be requested to provide inputs.

#### **4. Adoption of the Terms of Reference for IACG**

- OHRLLS provided an overview noting that the draft ToR were first discussed on the IACG meeting of 19 January 17, and briefly at the last IACG meeting of 19 May 2017 following inputs from members. It was noted that the ToR outlines the main functions of the IACG, composition of membership and modalities of operation. The IACG is a forum for representatives to exchange information on SIDS; to enhance complementarity and synergy of activities by its members; to enhance coherence of planning and activities; for coordinated and inclusive preparations of the Secretary-General's report, to strengthen cooperation among its member organizations and with AOSIS; and enhanced outreach activities to inform member states and other stakeholders about activities conducted by the UN.
- After discussions and final amendments, the IACG Terms of Reference were adopted.

#### **5. Preparations for HLPF 2018**

- DESA informed the meeting that a total of 5 SIDS member states will be preparing National Voluntary Reviews for HLPF 2018, which are Bahamas, Cabo Verde, Jamaica, Kiribati and Singapore.
- It was noted that the HLPF 2018 will focus on Energy, water, sustainable cities, production and consumption, and forests, biodiversity and combating desertification. The Bureau members will have their first discussion on the next HLPF in the next month. Members will be provided updates on the status of the preparations for the HLPF online or through the SIDS times, and member's contributions are welcome.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

Under this agenda item, IACG members were informed of the following upcoming events related to SIDS.

- "High level Breakfast meeting: 2030 Agenda and Paris agreement – Harnessing Synergies Through coherent implementation" will be held on 22 September.
- SIDS retreat on 28-29 September, invitations will be issued.

Before closing, IACG members were encouraged to continue providing updates on relevant SIDS events.