

Meeting Summary

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

Date: 15 March 2018

Venue: Conference Room S-1520

Time: 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm (New York Time)

Members in attendance: UN DESA, UN-OHRLLS, DOALOS, UNEP, FAO, PIFS, WIPO, IOM, UNFPA, UNESCAP(Fiji), UNISDR(NY), UNDP (HQ, Fiji, SAMOA), ECLAC (Port of Spain), GEF, UNESCO, IRENA, UNFPA, UN RC/UNDP (RR Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau)

SIDS Member States (Observers): Belize, Maldives, Tonga, Mauritius.

Chair: Sai Navoti, Chief of SIDS Unit, Division for Sustainable Development, UN DESA

Summary:

Focused discussions were held on the preparations for the upcoming Mid Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway. The Meeting was provided with an update on the status of preparations (roadmap, timelines, reporting and budget) for the Mid Term Review. The vital role of the Regional Commissions and UN country teams (UNCT) in accordance with General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/217 in the preparatory processes was also emphasised. The Meeting underscored *inter alia* the importance of promoting the linkages and synergies between the 2030 Agenda/SDGs and the Samoa Pathway, while at the same time maintaining the distinct character of the Samoa Pathway throughout the review processes. The specific priorities of the regions were also discussed within the context of the need to ensure country ownership of the processes, focused discussions during the preparatory meetings and a focused outcome to the Mid Term Review. The Meeting was also encouraged to share information on SIDS related Meetings to be held in 2018, to facilitate better coordination of efforts for SIDS in the UN System.

OPENING REMARKS

Director of DSD/UNDESA, Mr. Juwang Zhu – Mr. Zhu opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. Special greetings were extended to the Observers. Regarding the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway, he raised the following key points; i) the importance of promoting synergistic implementation and reporting on the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other international development agendas during the reviews; ii) the consistently low rate of SIDS participation in the VNR process, for which solutions need to be collectively identified and implemented and iii) the need for proper follow up and analysis of the partnerships announced at the Samoa Conference, and how these partnerships contribute to implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. In thanking IACG members for their participation, Mr Zhu gave assurances of UNDESA's commitment to continued collaboration with them for the benefits of SIDS.

Director of the UN-OHRL, Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox - Ms. Schroderus-Fox underscored the importance of a well-coordinated and well-informed MTR preparatory process, which would allow for the full and effective participation and contribution of the small island developing States from the outset, to ensure full buy-in and ownership of the MTR preparatory processes and Outcomes. She noted that the Midterm review presents an opportunity to assess the status of implementation, identify gaps and challenges and to establish focused priorities for the next 5 years. She expressed concern for challenges to the MTR and mentioned the importance of being mindful that SIDS are not overburdened by the reporting processes and indicated that resource mobilization efforts are also a key challenge. Ms. Schroderus-Fox also used the opportunity to introduce Ms. Tishka Francis, who recently joined the UN, as head of the OHRLS SIDS sub-programme. In conclusion, she informed the meeting that OHRLS is presently organizing the 3rd Business Network Forum, scheduled to take place in late May 2018 and that the theme of the Forum is “Sustainable Tourism”.

1. AGENDA ITEM 2

i. Road Map and Timelines for the Review process

The Chairperson briefed the Meeting on the progress and status of preparations for the Mid-Term Review. He indicated that DESA and OHRLS had initiated informal consultations and preliminary exchanges with the regional commissions (ECLAC, UNESCAP) and UNDP, to determine *inter alia* what role and possible support the UN system agencies could provide to the preparatory processes. He also conveyed the schedule of Meetings as follows:

- AIMS region: Mauritius, 23- 25 May 2018
- Caribbean region: Belize, 7-9 August 2018
- Pacific: Tonga, 19-21 June 2018
- Inter-regional: Samoa, end of October 2018.

37 UN SIDS members and 20 Non-UN Members/Associate members of regional commissions will be accommodated in the Mid-term Review. For this UN-DESA and OHRLS have formulated a proposed budget of approximately US\$1.8 million plus to cover the cost of participation to all the Meetings inclusive of the 2019 High Level Review. The proposed budget is currently being shared with Donors in a joint UNDESA/OHRLS solicitation drive. So far, the donor countries with whom the Units have met have expressed interest and a willingness to contribute. No specific dollar commitments have yet been announced.

ii. Expected Documentation for the Review Process (Reports, Outputs, templates etc) &

iii. Role of the Regional Commissions, UN Country Teams and other IACG Members as appropriate

The Chair informed that the issue of the most efficient approach to securing appropriate reports/documentation to inform the preparatory meetings had also been discussed with the Regional Commissions. He advised that it was suggested, that given the limited time and current resources constraints, it might not be practical to insist on the production of national reports, that these should be voluntary, and that SIDS should consider using a draft regional report, formulated with assistance and support from the regional commissions, UNCTs and other regional partners, as basis for their regional discussion. In this regard countries would be given all assurances that they will have the opportunity to review and input to the draft prior to the preparatory meetings. With respect to the outcomes of the Meetings, the need for SIDS to be focused and to articulate a limited number of priorities going forward was the most desirable option.

With respect to Partnerships, the Chair reiterated importance of reviewing and analysing the partnerships that were announced in 2014 as well as and new ones, since the member states have repeatedly called for this exercise to be carried out. In this regard, the Meeting was informed UNDESA will hold consultations on the Partnerships in the margins of the preparatory Meetings to discuss the issues.

Discussions:

In the discussions, there was general support for a regional approach to reporting, with the understanding that space would be created in each report to adequately reflect the specific priorities of the respective regions. For the AIMS region, the absence of a regional commission covering all AIMS countries, warrants the involvement of UNDP HQ and the UNCT to support preparation of this report. The importance of evenness in the reporting and the need for a consistent outcome across the regions was also emphasized. It was agreed that UNDESA and OHRLLS would circulate a draft template of the regional report for review. The Meeting was informed that the template could be easily adapted for the national context, for any country wishing to undertake voluntary reporting.

ECLAC reiterated the need to maintain a focus on the vulnerabilities and special challenges of SIDS throughout the review process. In this regard, for the Caribbean, they would be seeking to push for the articulation of a very short and focused set of priorities for the region such as partnerships, development assistant funding and learning from post-disasters. They also indicated that ECLAC would discuss the preparatory process and the issue of appropriate reporting with its member states at the upcoming RCM/TAC Meeting scheduled for the following week and again at the CDCC Meeting scheduled for late April. At both meetings Partnerships would also be discussed.

UNESCAP-Pacific(Fiji) also expressed the importance of not losing the Samoa Pathway, in attempts to synergize with the SDGs. ESCAP informed of the Pacific's agreed set of regional priorities, as articulated in "*The Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development*", which integrates *inter alia* the Samoa Pathway and the SDGs. These would be used to inform any pacific regional

report for the Mid Term Review. ESCAP indicated priorities for the Pacific regional meeting need to include energy, oceans and climate change, and these areas along with food security and sanitation may not be well reflected in the SDGs. ESCAP also pointed the need to focus on SDG 16, 17 and social protection and agreed that Partnerships should also be reflected in the regional reports. ESCAP expressed their interest in working on the regional report in collaboration with PIFS, UNDP and UNCT.

UNDP (RCO Samoa) – indicated that in her view, the Samoa Pathway should not be completely disconnected from the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and that the outcome document needs to report on the extent to which the SAMOA Pathway has been achieved and indicate how progress is being tracked. In this regard, she reminded the Meeting that in September 2019, Heads of States will gather in New York for both the HLPF and the mid-term review of the Samoa Pathway. On Partnerships, she reminded the Meeting of the UNDP/OECD led process on “Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation”¹ which takes place in April 2018 and which will include data provided by national focal points on *inter alia* capacities and quality of engagements. In this regard, country profiles are currently being produced which could feed into the section of Samoa Pathway review on Partnerships. She also indicated that extensive country information could also be made available from the UNDP led MAPS processes that have already been completed in several countries and two SIDS, one being Mauritius. UNDP expressed their interest in being involved in reviewing any regional template for reporting.

PIFS- The Pacific leaders have taken an integrated approach to implementation, monitoring and reporting on *inter alia* the Samoa pathway and the SDGs i.e. The "Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development". The PIFS is preparing a Pacific regional SDG report, to be reviewed by its member States in May/June. PIFS will examine the possibility of holding that review meeting jointly with the Pacific regional review meeting on the Samoa pathway to alleviate the travel burden on States. PIFS is also supporting Kiribati to prepare its VNR for this year where reporting on the Samoa Pathway will be integrated. Nine (9) other Pacific countries are planning to report on their VNRs in 2019. A similar integrated approach will also be taken in these countries. The PIFS expressed an interest in supporting the preparation of the Pacific Regional report.

Belize – Belize indicated that given the limited time and current situation with financial resources, that it didn't appear Member States had much choice but to proceed with a regional approach to reporting with support from the regional institutions and UN system agencies. Belize also expressed concern as to the needed resource mobilization efforts.

UNDP (New York) – given the absence of a single regional commission responsible for all the AIMS, the UNDP country offices could provide support to the SIDS in this region to prepare reports. Several countries in AIMS have benefited from UNDP's MAPS mission and some have developed national Roadmaps for implementation of the SDGs. These could be used to inform the AIMS regional reports or any voluntary national reports for the regional preparatory

¹ <http://effectivecooperation.org/monitoring-country-progress/global-partnership-monitoring-2-0/>

meeting in AIMS. UNDP underscored the importance of the inclusion of the UNCTs and Regional Coordinators in supporting the preparatory processes.

Mauritius – expressed the view that despite the limited time left before the May Meeting, it might still be possible for countries in the AIMS to prepare national reports using information available at the national level. He also emphasized the need for a uniform template to ensure even reporting across all levels. For AIMS, the UNCT would be important partners in supporting the processes.

UN DESA and OHRLLS emphasized the importance of national ownership and participation in the preparatory process. Countries need to fully engage at all levels (national, regional global) to ensure that priorities are appropriately reflected and that the outcomes are focused.

iv Resources

The Chair informed the meeting that a draft budget had been prepared amounting to an estimated sum of US\$1.8 million plus. This fund will be utilized for travel, any consultancy needs and miscellaneous conference costs. Resource mobilization has already started in New York. UNDESA expressed gratitude to the IACG members that have expressed willingness to support the preparatory process.

UNFPA conveyed that they are considering ways to support the process and will leverage its presence in the Latin American and Caribbean, Pacific and AIMS regions, for support and follow up of the MTR.

ECLAC confirmed that they will provide in-kind support, in preparing the regional reports for the Caribbean SIDS.

OHRLLS will also consider advocacy strategy to work together with all members to determine the outcome message of the meeting.

Maldives, as the Chair of AOSIS, expressed their willingness to working closely with the UNDESA and OHRLLS, in preparation for the review processes.

iv. Update of calendar of Events

UN-DESA conveyed that they had created a shared googledoc of the IACG Calendar of Event.

The link to the page is at:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vm5uW_XBuB_YXLweNElGcYVbg3pAUS-Q66gld_Eziw8/edit.

IACG Members were encouraged to share information on their organised events and on the efforts of their organisations towards SIDS to avoid duplication and improve internal coordination among UN systems. Special mention was made of an upcoming event on

23 March 2018 on LDC Graduation, being organized by Maldives, for which the invitations are to follow.