



Regional Partnership Dialogue for the Pacific

Held in support of the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Pacific

Agenda item 3 – Addressing Development Challenges through Partnerships

20-21 June 2018, Tonga

Summary

Background

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) regional partnership dialogue for the Pacific was held 20 – 21 June 2018 in Tonga, as part of the SIDS Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Pacific.

The partnership dialogue is part of the a capacity development project by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), designed to support the work of the SIDS Partnership Framework¹ and the preparatory process related to the SAMOA Pathway mid-term review². The work is undertaken with generous support provided by the government of Italy, and under the overall guidance of the Steering Committee on SIDS Partnerships, currently chaired by Belize and Ireland.

The dialogue was held to support SIDS in their deliberations around partnerships in the context of the preparatory process of the SAMOA Pathway mid-term review.

The dialogue was organized by UN DESA, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG). It was presided over by H.E. Ms. Lois M. Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations, co-chair of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sids/partnershipframework>

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sids/samoareview>

SIDS and Mr. Mícheál Tierney, representing H.E. Mrs. Geraldine Patricia Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, co-chair of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS.

The dialogue was structured around three distinct but inter-related segments:

1. **Developing genuine and durable partnerships – good practices and lessons learned:** examining how SIDS partnerships in the Pacific start and the process of developing and setting up partnership; who the main stakeholders and beneficiaries are; how the partnerships are structured, managed, governed and funded; challenges to implementation; and bright spots and critical ingredients for impactful partnerships.
2. **Identifying and addressing the gaps through partnerships for SIDS:** examining how partnerships can best address the gaps of the SAMOA Pathway priority areas; which priority areas for the Pacific require more partnerships to be forged; and what types of stakeholders and sectors need to be more involved in partnership arrangements for SIDS in the Pacific region.
3. **Strengthening the review and monitoring process of partnerships for SIDS:** examining how we can improve the current processes of monitoring and review of SIDS partnerships, ensuring the full participation of relevant stakeholders, and that no one is left behind; and how do we encourage the forging and launching of new, genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of SIDS.

1. Developing genuine and durable partnerships – good practices and lessons learned – summary and key messages

This session's objective was to look at various partnerships for SIDS in the Pacific, examining how they have been developed, how the partnerships are governed, what are the leadership roles, partnership evaluation methods, and challenges in implementation.

The session heard presentations from the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat on their analysis and mapping of partnerships, and from UN DESA on the SIDS Partnerships Framework. In addition, the following partnerships presented their experiences:

- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Pacific Youth Development Framework Partnership (PYDF Partnership)
- Mare Nullius? Sea-level Rise and Maritime Sovereignties in the Pacific - An Expanded Anthropology of Climate Change

The speakers highlighted that while SIDS have primary responsibility for their own development, they also require enhanced global partnerships and support. Many Pacific SIDS partnerships demonstrate how important ideas from the global level can

be taken up regionally, but also how many partnerships grow from the grassroots providing a bottom-up perspective to regional partnerships. This results in local community experiences and ideas guiding many partnerships, and partnerships having strong ownership at the local level. The interplay between local, regional and global ensures that the Pacific voice is heard in global conversations.

Other ideas relating to partnerships that were highlighted during the presentations and discussion included the following:

- Partnerships can combine research from different disciplines and knowledge systems.
- Large partnerships can be combined into a number of smaller ones to make them easier to manage.
- It is better to focus on the quality of partnerships rather than quantity, and it is important to also learn from those partnerships that don't work.
- Civil society can make an important contribution to partnerships, bringing to the partnership a homegrown perspective and experience of a lifetime. As civil society often represents those that are marginalized, they also ensure that no one is left behind.
- Partnerships need to be accountable to their beneficiaries and maintaining dialogue with communities throughout the lifetime of the partnership is important.

The session also discussed the qualities of successful partnerships as well as challenges, which included the following points:

- **Success of partnerships depends on national ownership, mutual trust, transparency and accountability** – in other words open and honest relationships. Without ownership by all partners, a partnership is not sustainable.
- **Successful partnerships have a clear mandate and focused objectives.** Funding also needs to be clarified and tailored to meet the objectives and will need to be long-term and sustained.
- **Inclusion and innovation need to be part of a successful partnership,** and partnerships need to ensure that no one is left behind.
- **Critical ingredients to ensure impactful partnerships need to be itemized,** including identification of responsibilities of partners, of beneficiaries, of funding and in-kind support
- **Challenges** to partnerships include resources and funding; ensuring that the right people with the right expertise are involved in each partnership; and following through so that commitments filter to communities. Challenges also include practical working arrangements and scheduling issues, particularly where there are multiple partners from different entities and islands.

2. Identifying and addressing gaps through partnerships for SIDS – summary and key messages

This session focused on gaps in partnerships and looked at the priority areas where further partnerships could be forged for the sustainable development of SIDS in the Pacific Region. The session also addressed the types of partners from sectors and groups that are underrepresented in partnerships in the region.

The session heard presentations from UN DESA and from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) relating to the status of SIDS partnerships both globally and in the Pacific.

The session also heard perspectives from the following partnerships:

- Pacific Islands Private Sector Organization (PIPSO)
- Pacific Adaptation for Climate Change (PACC) Project

The speakers highlighted that the Pacific has a larger number of partnerships than other SIDS regions, but that the numbers reported vary depending on the source. In addition, governments may be unaware of some of the existing partnerships, and the level of awareness, available data and reporting need to be improved. PIFS has identified 304 partnerships to implement the SAMOA Pathway, with the bigger islands generally having more partnerships. Many partnerships have finished their work, or are closing, and some that have reported being “on track” have passed their year of delivery. Thus there is a need to undertake a full review of the Pacific partnerships and their status, and remove those that are no longer active. There have been good efforts in aligning regional frameworks down to the indicators level. The existing partnerships are broadly aligned with regional priorities on oceans, with climate change and economic development also well represented. SAMOA pathway priorities such as poverty, equality, peace and human rights are not as prominently addressed and may need more attention. In addition, the content, quality and effectiveness of partnerships is important, and the ongoing in-depth analysis of partnerships undertaken by UN DESA should also seek to go beyond numbers to look at what is needed to build effective partnerships.

In regards to underrepresented partners, there is a need for meaningful private sector engagement and for building business networks and coalitions. In the Pacific, the private sector tends to consist mostly of small and medium-sized enterprises rather than large private sector bodies, and the private sector has promoted social inclusion through women in leadership positions, and by being a provider of jobs for people with disabilities. Going forward, there is a need to strengthen national private sector bodies, data and statistics; undertake collaborations with universities to articulate private sector research needs; and engage with non-traditional investment, such as impact investment.

In reference to the Pacific Adaptation for Climate Change (PACC) Project, which has now closed, it was noted that there was a still need to maintain access to the extensive number of studies, documentation and publications that were collected. This is likely the case with many closed projects, which can offer important information and lessons learned. In addition, while this project was successful, its implementation was limited to a few sites. Thus there is a general need to expand successful pilot projects and develop full projects for implementation.

In addressing gaps in partnerships, the participants in the session emphasized the following points:

- **There is a need to further examine lessons learned from genuine and durable partnerships and main challenges in implementation**, in order to improve the ongoing in-depth analysis of SIDS partnerships.
- There is also the need to examine **the potential to mobilize future partnerships to target under-addressed priorities in the Pacific**.
- **The current processes related to the SIDS partnership framework need to be assessed and strengthened as part of the mid-term review**, to allow it to better fulfill its mandate of monitoring and reviewing existing partnerships, act as a platform for stimulating the launch of new partnerships for SIDS, and ensuring an annual, action-oriented, results focused Global Multi-Stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue.
- **The SIDS partnership framework should also include SIDS partnerships from other processes**, such as relevant voluntary commitments announced during the UN Ocean Conference among others.
- **The SIDS Action Platform should also clearly indicate the status of partnerships and archive those that are complete**.
- **There are many different types of partnerships registered, and they would need to be categorized and assessed differently**, e.g. separating projects from partnerships, distinguishing between regional and international partners, and funding amounts.
- **Enhanced engagement with private sector** is important, as the private sector is the future for investing resources into the SDGs
- In order to strengthen partnerships in the region, **it is important to move incrementally from stand-alone project-based support from partners, toward more program-based support**, and also toward more sector budget support and general support as well as greater accountability through common assessment measures.

3. Strengthening the review and monitoring process of partnerships for SIDS – summary and key messages

This session's objective was to review the current processes for monitoring the progress of partnerships for SIDS, and to consider how monitoring and review and the participation of stakeholders in these processes could be improved.

The session heard presentations from the following partnerships:

- Global Action Program (GAP) on Food for SIDS
- Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) –
- Pacific Islands Universities Research Network (PIURN)

The issues highlighted in these discussions included the following:

- The Pacific region faces oversized burden on food security, nutrition, and health issues including long-established and emerging NCDs.
- Trade is critical to addressing these issues, and it also has potential for generating income and empowering women.
- A good system of governance is important for partnership success, as is a strong sense of ownership of the project by partners and member countries. Support from the highest political levels, mainstreaming partnership work to that of government departments, and basing work on science and quantitative goals are also important.
- Universities are important development partners and play a critical role in promoting local wisdom and producing new knowledge to address regional challenges.

This session agreed that partners, including civil society organizations, private sector, and universities have made significant contribution to sustainable development in the region.

Ongoing monitoring and review of partnerships continues to be a challenge for effective implementation of the SAMOA pathway. Better reporting is needed not only from UN agencies, but also from member states. Information flows and coordination between the global level and SIDS on the national level require improvement in the context of the mid-term review. Lack of monitoring leads to weak intervention, reporting, and contribution by PSIDS at high-level events.

Effective monitoring and review is dependent on active participation of all partners, and partners with a sense of ownership are more likely to actively contribute.

To facilitate effective review and monitoring of SIDS partnerships, it is important that the reporting process does not place an undue burden on partners. The reporting burden could be reduced by:

- linking monitoring and review of partnerships with monitoring that is already being undertaken by existing regional processes and frameworks. This also ensures that national and regional actions will be captured at a higher level.
- developing a strong governance structure for the partnership, including mainstreaming the partnership into governmental processes and departments, and thus facilitating participation and monitoring.

To facilitate effective support from the UN system to SIDS, the following suggestions were heard:

- Development of a report card to monitor support from the UN system, as a whole and from UN agencies and programs to SIDS.
- The UN reform presents an opportunity to review the regional architecture to ensure appropriate and sustainable responses from the UN system to regional challenges.

This session confirmed that effective coordination of partnerships is critical to the successful implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and that each challenge and priority area needs a tailored partnership to generate the right responses.

Summary of key points from the partnership dialogue

At the end of the partnerships dialogue, the co-chairs highlighted the following key points and expectations as take-away messages from the dialogue:

- Categorize partnerships on record, by distinguishing discrete-type arrangement partnerships from development assistance type partnerships, multilateral-mandated events and meetings – and that these be on the International Aid Transparency Initiative standard.
- Need to prioritize our needs within the existing priorities, and identify the partnerships that match those priorities.
- Itemize critical ingredients that will make a partnership have an impact e.g. identify the partners and their responsibilities, the beneficiaries to partners so that the most vulnerable are assisted and no one is left behind, identify the funding or in-kind support needed, and develop plans for engaging at the grass-root level to ensure buy-in.
- Include the takeaways from this partnership dialogue in the results of the Pacific preparatory meeting (19-21 June 2018), so that the deliberations over the three days will inform the upcoming inter-regional meeting in Samoa in October 2018.
