

MEETING
Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
Date: 18 Dec 2018
Venue: S-2725
Time: 3:00pm – 4:30 pm (New York Time)

Members in attendance: UN-OHRLLS, UN DESA, UNIDS, IAEA, DOALOS, UN Environment, UNESCAP Pacific Office, FAO, UNFPA, UNDP (HQ, SAMOA), ECLAC (Port of Spain), UN-Habitat, UN RC/UNDP (Samoa)

Chair: Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS

Summary:

Discussions were held on the Interregional meeting for the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway, held 29 October to 2 November 2018, in Apia, Samoa. The meeting reported on the outcomes of the SIDS national focal points inaugural meeting and the Partnership Dialogue, both held on 29 October; the Interregional preparatory meeting of the Mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway (30 October to 1 November) and the VNR meeting held on 2 November. The meeting also discussed the preparations for the High-level meeting of the Mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway to be held on 27 September 2019, in New York. The meeting also briefed on the SIDS resolution, with specific reference to the resources required to support SIDS. The meeting also discussed the draft IACG workplan for 2019. IACG members were encouraged to share information on SIDS related meetings to be held in 2019, to facilitate better coordination of efforts for SIDS in the UN System.

1. Opening Remarks

- **The chairperson, Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox**, Director of the UN-OHRLLS, warmly welcomed all meeting participants. She noted the successful conclusion of all the regional preparatory meetings for the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway and noted the great collaboration in ensuring the success of the meetings. This included respective member states who successfully hosted all the regional preparatory meetings and development partners who provided financial support.
- **Chief, SIDS unit, UNDESA Sai Navoti**, welcomed participants and thanked OHRLLS for organising the Meeting. He referred the meeting to the SIDS Regional and Inter-Regional Preparatory Meetings and thanked the members of the IACG for their support and contributions to the success of the preparatory meetings. Mr. Navoti expressed special words of acknowledgement to ESCAP and ECLAC (the Regional Commissions) and to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their support in organising the production of the SIDS Regional Reports and Outcome Documents.

2. Mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway

SIDS national focal points inaugural meeting, 29 October

- The chairperson briefed the meeting on the SIDS national focal points inaugural meeting, held on 29 October 2018, in Apia, Samoa. The meeting; launched the network of SIDS national focal point which aims to enhance the coherence of SIDS issues in UN processes, including at the national, regional and global levels - a response to the mandate of the SAMOA Pathway; discussed how to strengthen the role of National Focal Points; shared

experiences on the implementation, including challenges, of the SAMOA Pathway within the context of MTR review of the Samoa Pathway and the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs; and also discussed statistical capacity and data issues as a critical capacity constraint in the monitoring and review of the SAMOA Pathway and 2030 agenda.

The following are some of the outcomes of the NFP meeting:

- A clear need of an active online platform and other ICT tools for the exchange of information and ideas with regard to the implementation of the SAMOA pathway and the 2030 as important mechanisms that the SIDS national focal points could utilize;
 - strengthening the SIDS NFPs will require drawing from lessons learnt from other earlier similar mechanisms, as well leveraging existing regional mechanisms;
 - A need for a harmonized approach for monitoring and reporting on the SAMOA Pathway across SIDS, focusing on what is relevant, feasible and possible
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- The chairperson informed members a draft workplan for the NFPs has been shared for inputs and the Office is looking forward to drafting the TORs for the NFPs to be adopted in the first half of 2019.
 - The intention of the office is to hold bi-annual NFP meetings, one in New York and one at the regional level. A follow up meeting will be held in April/May 2019 in one of the SIDS, contingent on available resources, and further information will be shared in due course.

Partnership Dialogue, 29 October 2018

- DESA briefed the meeting on the Partnership dialogue which was structured in two segments; a plenary and a series of networking exchanges held in the margins of the Dialogue. The Networking Exchanges provided some space for networking among partnership focal points and government officials, for showcasing and discussing partnerships and innovative solutions, and for further exploring the potential of scaling-up existing and launching new partnerships in line with the priorities of SIDS. The plenary was a culmination of all the three regional partnership dialogues that were organized in the margins of the regional preparatory review meetings and brought together the outcomes of these meetings.
- Several pieces of work related to Partnerships were presented during the Dialogue: (1) an in-depth analysis of partnerships for SIDS, including partnerships that were announced in the context of the SIDS Conference in 2014, the UN Ocean Conference in 2017, and other relevant partnerships; (2) elements of the SIDS Partnership Toolbox, which is being developed to support the outcomes of the regional dialogues, and the Samoa Partnership Dialogue. The Toolbox, which will be available in print and online, will include the in-depth analysis of existing partnerships for SIDS, online learning material based on case studies and best practices of SIDS partnerships, and tools for assisting in the monitoring and review of partnerships for SIDS; and (3) SIDS Partnership Criteria and Norms (which expands the smart partnership criteria), and proposals for strengthening monitoring and review of partnerships for SIDS.

The Interregional preparatory meeting of the Mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway (30 October to 1 November)

- The huge success of the meeting was attributed to member states who deliberated the outcome before the meeting. The Outcome document has 11 priorities, and other key areas which will form the basis for the negotiation that will commence in the second quarter for the high-level political declaration. Members are encouraged to read the outcome document.
- In terms of structure, the meeting had 5 sessions looking at various aspects identified by SIDS, spanning the economic, social and environment pillars, which unfolded with robust discussions. The review of UN reform system took centre stage as SIDS affirmed the need for SIDS to be at the centre, a focus likely to permeate the MTR.
- The host participated in chairing of the sessions in an enthusiastic manner. The report of the meeting is being finalized and will be shared in a week or so for comments after which it will be finalized and also posted on the website.

Voluntary National Review (VNR) meeting, 02 November

DESA conveyed that the VNR Meeting on 2nd November was a capacity-building Event specifically, targeting Pacific SIDS who will be presenting VNRs at the HLPF 2019. UNDP, ESCAP and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat provided support. Participants included representatives of the five (5) PSIDS targeted countries, namely, Fiji, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands and Tonga. Taking advantage of the opportunity and their presence in Samoa, the representative of Mauritius and Samoa also participated. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants were able to formulate a timetable for the preparation of their report. Countries were also informed they will need to put it in a request with DESA for capacity building. The event was well received.

Preparations for the MTR

- The chairperson informed the meeting the one-day high level review of the SAMOA Pathway, will take place on 27 September 2019 in New York. SIDS have expressed concern that a one-day meeting in the busiest week, high-level week, as one of the 5 special events, their issues may not get enough attention. The one-day pales in comparison to the 5 days review for Mid-term review of LDCs.
- It is imperative for the UN system to come together and help raise the profile of the meeting. The focus should be ensuring the event generates political will and commitment for SIDS, and progress, gaps and challenges, emerging issues and interlinkages with the 2030 agenda are flashed out.
- There will be a negotiated political declaration as Outcome of the High-Level Review of the SAMOA Pathway, under the co- chairmanship of the two Co-Chairs, Fiji and Ireland, appointed by the President of the UN General Assembly.

Modalities for the high-level review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway - A/RES/72/307:

- Stipulates that the High-level Review will be structured around an opening plenary meeting, followed by two multi-stakeholder round-table sessions, with time provided for

an interactive dialogue and a closing plenary meeting; and be chaired by the President of the General Assembly

- Asks Secretary-General to submit a report on the follow-up to and implementation of the Samoa Pathway, making it available, on an exceptional basis, in early 2019, following the regional and interregional preparatory meetings for the high-level review, so that it can serve to support the intergovernmental consultations and be considered by the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session
- Invites all Member States of the United Nations and all members of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, relevant regional and international agencies and organizations, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the General Assembly, to participate fully in the preparatory activities and the high-level review
- Invites heads of the United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and regional commissions, as well as heads of intergovernmental organizations and entities having observer status in the General Assembly, to participate, as appropriate, in the high-level review, in accordance with the rules and procedures as established by the General Assembly
- Encourages enhanced, closer and early consultation with small island developing States in the planning and coordination, as appropriate, of the activities related to the high-level review of the Samoa Pathway, and emphasizes the importance of enhanced interaction between small island developing States and the relevant agencies of the United Nations system addressing issues concerning small island developing States

- DESA provided an update on the Secretary-General report. The preparation of SG report is underway, and DESA will send a note to IACG members with a questionnaire requesting inputs. The inputs should fill gaps on questions of financing, programming info, outcomes and outputs and guidelines will be issued on what type of information and data is required.
- The deadline to submit to DGACM is 15 March and hence Members states, IACG and heads of UN agencies will be requested to send their inputs by the end of January 2019, to allow several tiers of reviewing before finally submitting to DGACM. The preparation for the political declaration will need inputs, with emphasis on adequate guidelines.

Discussions

- **UNFPA** thanked DESA and OHRLLS for organizing a successful preparatory Mid-Term Review process and affirmed their support to get inputs into the SG report, and further advised of the need to use inputs to link with SDGs. UNFPA also appealed for the resurrection of the UN System Implementation Matrix for the Samoa Pathway implementation, which UNFPA still uses as much as possible. UNFPA also wanted to know how will the IACG be involved in the process, including the preparation the draft, and working with co-chairs and emphasized the needs for needs to be brought to their attention as early as possible. UNFPA will encourage the secretary general participation in the High-level reviews.

- **UNESCAP** emphasized the need to bear in mind the emphasis on climate change as a SIDS priority as issued in the declaration in Apia going forward in the preparation of the SG report and the High-level political declaration. Given 5 VNR countries comes from MCO Fiji, ESCAP informed they are still to coordinate the UN on the ground and 8 UN agencies

indicated will support the 5 countries. The procedure for requesting support from the UN in the Pacific is to direct to the countries of the RCO in Fiji. RCO will then coordinate delivery of the support in accordance with the VNR mandate and list the kind of support that is available in the UN system.

- **UNDP** thanked the show of force, with excellent preparations and presentations by the UN team in Samoa. She also sought clarity if there will be new modalities resolution for the High-level meeting, and if a review of progress, informed by the priorities of the SAMOA pathway, is still on the table?
- **The chairperson**, in her response, underscored that the political declaration is member state led process; and it will consider reports including the regional and interregional and SG report specifically requested for this. DESA also confirmed there will be no new modalities resolution and reiterated the regional preparatory meetings related documents and the SG report will feed into the political declaration. The discussion also made it clear there will be one SG report which draws from all inputs including member states and UN system and other International organizations.
- **UNIDSR** informed they have collected data under the Sendai Framework monitoring and will be able to provide their inputs to the SG report.
- **UNDP** affirmed their support, including on the methodology for gathering inputs to the SG report, and assured will send the guidance to country offices. UNDP will continue to support the SIDS including support to the AOSIS new chair, including preparing the new mandate of the chair and mobilizing resources for the next two years.
- **ECLAC** cautioned that it may not be a safe strategy not to have a resolution adopted at the second committee in addition to the political declaration. The political outcome is always followed by a resolution that ensures that there is continuity. Therefore, there is need to be some sort of mandate to the UN system to continue to give support to the agenda, which could be achieved through a resolution.
- **ECLAC** sought to establish ways to ensure a higher-level priority of the SAMOA pathway at the national level.
- **UNDP**, responding to ECLAC, suggested connecting the SAMOA pathway and the SDGs through the VNR will be the best way forward to keep the SAMOA pathway relevant.

3. SIDS resolution

- The chairperson informed the meeting of the SIDS resolution, - A/RES/73/228 “Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States”, which was adopted in the Second Committee in first week of December. The resolution requests the SG, by 2020, within existing resources to respond to the expanding mandates in support of the sustainable development agenda for SIDS. The resources in support of the sustainable development

agenda of the SIDS are to be assessed in the context of the preparation of the upcoming proposed programme budget for the year 2020.

4. Strengthening the IACG workplan for 2019

- The Chairperson highlighted that the JIU underscored the absence of an established work programme is hampering the realization of this group full potential. In the light of these; a draft workplan was shared, centred around the priority activities for SIDS in 2019, in particular the mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway.

OHRLLS briefly presented the plan which identifies the following possible work streams:

- **Thematic discussions:** The IACG meetings for 2019 will provide a forum for representatives of its member organisations to dialogue on thematic issues that are of importance to SIDS. IACG members would be able to decide on the theme for discussion prior to the relevant quarterly meeting. Relevant agencies, including non-IACG members, could be invited to make a presentation on the chosen thematic area to inform the discussion.
- **Preparations for Mid Term Review of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway:** General Assembly resolution sets the modalities for the one-day High Level Mid Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway, which will take place on **27 September 2019** at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Secretary General will submit his report on the follow-up to and implementation of the Samoa Pathway, making it available, on an exceptional basis, in early 2019. The UN system will engage in a number of activities on the priority areas identified during the preparatory process for the Mid-Term Review of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. The IACG will:
 - (i) contribute inputs to the report of the Secretary-General for the 74th session
 - (ii) enhance coherence in the planning of these activities, which may include undertaking joint activities with AOSIS, joint interagency projects, mission, studies, and other forms of cooperation, through, *inter alia*, enhanced complementarity and synergy to curb duplication of activities.
- **Support the activities of the SIDS National Focal Points (NFPs) mechanism**

In the context of the SIDS National Focal Point mechanism, OHRLLS will coordinate *the preparation of a toolkit* for the harmonized approach for monitoring and reporting on the SAMOA Pathway. The IACG will contribute inputs to the preparation of the toolkit, as appropriate.

 - (i) SIDS national focal points could be active, if funding is available, in *regional or global meetings organized by the UN secretariat* on key accelerators of sustainable development. The IACG will engage in outreach activities to inform member states and other stakeholders about relevant regional or global meetings conducted by UN agencies for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, informing where funding might be available as well as opportunities for NFPs meetings on the margins of these regional or global meetings.
- **Multi-Country Office (MCO) Review**

The MCO review will cover issues of effectiveness, impact and efficiencies of the UN development system in MCO institutional arrangements and development services, and to

identify gaps and recommend solutions to seize opportunities or address short-comings. The findings will be presented to the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment in 2019.

- (i) The IACG will provide a forum for the exchange of information in regards to their work on SIDS, in particular as it relates to MCO review, identifying critical issues, challenges and opportunities, weaknesses, gaps and best practices on the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway at the country level, as well as at the regional and global levels.
- (ii) The IACG could meet at the principal level on these issues, as appropriate.

Discussions

- **UNDP** affirmed their support of the draft workplan, and also informed of their MAPS engagement in countries, a UNSG initiative and will be happy to report to the UN system on the results and how it contributes to the SAMOA Pathway.
- **UNFPA** offered their support to the draft workplan. There is lot of potential to link the capital and the political regarding national focal points, and affirmed they are keen to assist; however, they will need more information. If the work is substantive work will need to inform colleagues in the region to include in their plans. UNFPA also reiterated the implementation matrix is critical to report in a coherent manner. UNFPA countries will support VNRs and also requests the HLPF to be included as a stream in the draft workplan.
- **FAO** requested the inclusion of the HLPF as a workstream, including the VNRs. On the Thematic stream, FAO highlighted non-communicable diseases as a challenge to SIDS, a theme that could be linked to the MTR. FAO also proposed a joint IACG side event at the HLPF or MTR.
- **UNESCAP** emphasized that there are mandates and guidance on how to go about improving coherence, reporting and monitoring of the SAMOA pathway and 2030 agenda.
- **The chairperson** underscored JIU's report emphasizing the need for the IACG group to be better organized and supported the idea of a Joint IACG event/program in the preparations of the MTR to show the effort of the group to work together in support of SIDS. Further discussions emphasized that the IACG work plan is not something to be adopted, but to help the group to be better organized.

5. Any Other Business

- OHRLLS encouraged members to provide updates on relevant SIDS events, in particular key events in the first quarter – 2019 through this link : https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vm5uW_XBuB_YXLweNEIGcYVbg3pAUS-Q66gld_Eziw8/edit
- UN-environment will launch a SIDS waste management outlook 2019, likely at the UNEA in 2019.