

HLPF 2020

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Mobilizing international solidarity, accelerating action and embarking on new pathways to realize the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway:

Small Island Developing States

Talking Points from the floor

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1. Thank you Madam Under-Secretary General / HRLLS for giving me the floor.
2. I align myself with the Statement delivered on behalf the AOSIS.
3. **SIDS common Vulnerability background is internationally recognized.** Going from the Earth Summit in 1992 to the SAMOA Pathway process, both in 2014 and 2019, it is said that SIDS remain a special case of development considering their unique and particular vulnerabilities and the constraints impeding them to achieve sustainable development goals. SIDS diversity from the Pacific and Caribbean to the AIS Region in face of their heterogeneous GDP threshold and varying degrees of exposure to extreme events deserves also to be assessed and taken on board by most policies
4. **COVID 19 is the current example of how extreme events or external shocks act on SIDS.** In Cabo Verde, adding to an impactful recurrent drought on livelihood, the pandemic brought huge economic contraction an losses of jobs and a major fiscal deficit threatening the already debts distress situation. Sectors like tourism, air transportation and internal demand are deeply impacted. National efforts undertaken to respond and recover from the ongoing crisis need support from external resources.
5. **SIDS equation, under both structural conditions and emergencies** as with the pandemic involves achieving their sustainable own development goals, with the necessary support or access to external financing, in favorable conditions. SIDS, however, continue to struggle to access sufficient levels of finance trough sustainable and innovative modalities.

6. **It is time to bridge the gap between per capita GDP and Vulnerability** in view of building global, common and clear eligibility criteria for SIDS to access funding. The per capita GDP is as a poor indicator, penalizing SIDS in general, since it disregards their vulnerabilities, and graduating / graduated SIDS, as it leads to their exclusion from concessional financing. At the other hand a «Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)», with weighted indicators and metrics for the three dimensions of the sustainable development, would have the effect of better assessing and defining the countries' eligibility to financing, namely concessional, according to the real needs hidden by the level of economic growth. Several institutions have been working on the concept of eligibility based on vulnerability. Some proposals have been advanced and even implemented, but the difficulty lies in the fact that there are no common criteria and, above all, general harmonization and inclusive policies and practices.

7. The way forward

To move forward, having in mind the growing awareness of the reality of SIDS, a few suggestions are outlined below:

1) Coordinated and Inclusive Approaches

There have been regular calls for the international stakeholders to evolve from current fragmentation to a coordinated and / or integrated approach to SIDS, to harmonize their policies and converge in their practices, including the definition of common eligibility criteria based on vulnerability. On the other hand, the same integrated approach should target the SIDS equally in all the three regions, the Pacific, the Caribbean and AIS.

The UN Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Financing for Development, convened by the UN, appears to be the appropriate institutional place to seek answers to this dual need for coordination and convergence and to pool the efforts of key stakeholders in this direction.

2) Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF)

Further, in a context of a better international coordination as well as of a new eligibility criteria based on vulnerability, the seven areas of action in the Addis Agenda, revisited throughout the INFF, would bring greater or better adaptation to the benefit of SIDS. Both, partners and countries that are already pioneering to their own INFF, should not lose sight of this opportunity.

3) Strategies for channeling resources

Encouraging access to mixed resources with a strategic content. A *cooperative strategy* would support countries facing high economic contraction in the wake of natural disasters, extreme events or external shocks, in case of high debt distress, in social sectors in difficulty, and in building climate resilience, opening the eligibility to ODA, concessional flows, debt swaps and relief and other official flows to SIDS. A *competitive strategy* would support economic growth in the productive and service sectors, with instruments and facilities for domestic and international financing, private and foreign investment, productivity and innovation, business environment, trade and pooled funds to overcome the limitations of scale, a common case in many SIDS.

4) SIDS Package or SIDS Compact

SIDS have been targeted by many initiatives that are most welcome, inter alia, Samoa Pathway Program of Action , Samoa Pathway Review Calls for Action, SIDS Partnership Framework, SIDS global business network an Partnership Accelerator for 2030 Agenda and many others

For SIDS, that already have great challenges and limited institutional capacities, the results will remain uneven among them if they are let alone to compete to those initiatives and if implementation mechanisms are not created that can help to adapt the Programs of Action adopted at the global stage, to the national reality of the individual countries.. For that purpose, a simple two-pillar structure is proposed in the form of a SIDS Package or a SIDS Compact.

Pillar one, in supporting of development strategies to forge economic competitiveness in productive sectors and services, which may differ from one SIDS to another, induce social inclusion and build environmental resilience.

Pillar two, cross cutting ways and means, namely financing, through classical and innovative modalities including climate finance and debts solutions, as well as the "digital cooperation" and capacity building, all in support of Pillar one.

8. In conclusion

SIDS is far from being an issue for the UN only. The United Nations that, internally, have been doing the exercise called “System wide coherence in support of Small Island Developing States to implement the SAMOA Pathway... and taking into account its linkage to other global mandates”, could extend this exercise outward, aiming at a worldwide platform of broader coordination and innovative solutions for SIDS. The UN have the legitimacy and authority to do so.

I thank you.