



2021 High-Level Political Forum

Official Side Event

12 July 2021 @1:00 – 2:45pm

The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (*working title*)

Hosted by the **United Nations Resident Coordinators in Small Island Developing States** in partnership with

the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

and

the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations

Background:

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face a unique set of vulnerabilities which impede their ability to achieve sustainable development. Structural factors, including their size, remoteness, limited resource base, market size, exposure to climate risks and natural disasters impact socio economic outcomes and their ability to achieve the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified those vulnerabilities with many SIDS countries being particularly affected by the drop in international tourism and travels and international remittances. In August 2020, the UN Secretary-General committed the United Nations to advocate for SIDS on the issue of access to concessional finance, and in November 2020 called for the development and coordination of work within the UN on a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), including its finalization and use.

This event hosted by the United Nations Resident Coordinators in the Small Island Developing States together with SDSN and the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations brings together government and UN officials as well as representatives from civil society and academia to discuss the issue of multidimensional vulnerability, including its relevance for international financing mechanisms. The UN RCO of Samoa and SDSN will provide an update on the conceptualization and development of a new MVI and its importance in the context of the SDGs and Agenda 2030. SIDS public officials and civil society organizations will share their experience, identify their priorities post COVID-19, and emphasize the policy relevance of the MVI and the need to urgently address these vulnerabilities by strengthening resilience and access to financing.

Representatives from international organizations and multilateral development banks will share their views on how the concept of multidimensional vulnerability and associated measurement tools can help support better resource allocation and help strengthen resilience and emergency response in the context of SIDS.

The outcome of the 12 July 2021 discussions will inform the next steps in the development of the MVI including the consultations with the SIDS Governments, international and regional financial institutions and the broader development cooperation community.



Draft Agenda

Welcoming Remarks (15 min) moderated by Mr. Neil Buhne, UNDCO Regional Director:

- **HRLS Under Secretary-General Courtenay Rattray**
- **Prof Jeffrey D. Sachs, President, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**
- **H.E. Ambassador Walton Webson, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations**

Panel 1. Measuring Multidimensional Vulnerability post COVID-19 and staying on track for Agenda 2030

The UN Resident Coordinators in the Small Island Developing States in partnership with Prof. Jeffrey Sachs and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network developed a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for SIDS access to development cooperation. In this session, Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator for Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau will deliver a very brief presentation of the Index and seek views of the panelists on the importance of identifying, measuring and targeting SIDS structural vulnerabilities in development cooperation for better results and SDG progress.

Moderator:

- **Dr. Simona Marinescu, UNRC Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau (presenting the MVI)**

Panellists [5 to 7 min max]:

- **H.E. Ambassador Chet Donovan Neymour, Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of Bahamas to the United Nations**
- **Dr. David Smith, Chair, SDSN Caribbean; Director, Centre for Environmental Management, The University of the West Indies; and member of the Independent Group of Scientists**
- **Ms. Josie Pagani, Executive Director, Council for International Development (CID)**
- **Ms. Ana Patricia Graca, UN Resident Coordinator in Cabo Verde**

Q&A (10 min)

Lead question – Ms. Catherine Haswell, UN Resident Coordinator in the Maldives

Comfort break (5 min)



Panel 2. International financing to address multidimensional vulnerability in SIDS

The mounting challenges that SIDS are facing as a result of their structural vulnerabilities that exacerbate impact of disasters and shocks cannot be addressed within their means. A more equitable system for countries to access development cooperation based on their actual needs, not on the GDP per capita alone, is essential to SIDS progress on the 2030 Agenda.

The session aims to foster discussions around the prospects of changing criteria and approaches in development cooperation to restore fairness and needs-based development financing.

Specific financial instruments for SIDS may be required to ensure there is SDG progress and is irreversible.

Moderator:

- Assistant Secretary-General Elliott Harris, UN Chief Economist

Panellists [5 to 7 min max]:

- Mr. Haje Schütte, Senior Counsellor and Head of Division of the Financing for Sustainable Development Division (OECD)
- Dr. David Rosenblatt, Sector Economic Advisor, Inter-American Development Bank
- Dr. Katherine Baer, Deputy Director of Fiscal Affairs Department, International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Hon Dr. Ashni Singh, Senior Minister, Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Cooperative Republic of Guyana
- Dr. Garry Conille, UN Resident Coordinator in Jamaica

Q&A (10 min)

Lead Question – Mr. Roy Trivedy, UN Resident Coordinator in Timor-Leste

Next steps – UNRC Simona Marinescu and Guillaume Lafortune, Vice President and Head of the Paris Office, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)

Adjourn