

Pre-Conference Major Groups and other Stakeholders Forum 28 August (evening) and 29 August 2014

CONCEPT NOTE

THEME: “TOFA SAILI”

Taking partnership Opportunities that are Sustainable, Achievable and all Inclusive leading to effective Implementation.

A. Introduction

As part of the preparations for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to be held in Apia, Samoa on 1-4 September 2014, a pre-conference forum will be held on 29 August 2014. This Forum will focus on identifying durable partnerships through which the sustainable development of SIDS can be promoted. The outcome of the Forum will help to inform the Conference plenary discussions and Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Dialogues.

B. Background

The third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) will be held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa to be preceded by pre-Conference activities from 28 to 31 August 2014, also in Apia, Samoa. It will focus the world's attention on a group of countries that remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular circumstances and vulnerabilities.

The overarching theme of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States is "The sustainable development of Small Island Developing States through genuine and durable partnerships". The Conference will include six multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues, held in parallel with the plenary meetings.

The Conference will seek to achieve the following objectives:

1. Assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation;
2. Seek a renewed political commitment by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for further implementation;
3. Identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of SIDS and means of addressing them; and

4. Identify priorities for the sustainable development of SIDS to be considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 UN development agenda.

C. Key elements of Major Groups and other Stakeholder Forum

The aim of this Forum is to provide a space for Major Groups, civil society and other stakeholders to receive final briefings on the upcoming conference, its relation to Rio+20, Post 2015, UNFCCC, Beijing+20 review and other upcoming regional and global multilateral follow-up processes, and to participate in joint advocacy and partnerships to support implementation of the conference outcome.

C.1 Objectives

MGoS from SIDS, as well as those involved in SIDS, have a long tradition of engaging in their regions to foster sustainable development. The remoteness of SIDS regions has often been an obstacle to continuous peer learning and joint multi-stakeholder cooperation. This MGoS Forum will allow groups and networks from various regions to share lessons learned and build upon each other's work.

The Forum will focus on identifying opportunities for MGoS from SIDS and other potential partners to develop partnerships. This is important given the limited scope for civil society as a whole to connect with stakeholders from different regions.

The specific objectives are:

1. To develop and encourage just, accountable, innovative and effective partnerships nationally, regionally and globally, using practical and workable examples presented that other SIDS can emulate;
2. To integrate gender equality and human rights advocacy into SIDS, Beijing+20 Review, UNFCCC, the SDGs and Post-2015 sustainable development agenda;
3. To identify major key challenges and solutions to assist in resource mobilization for MGoS in SIDS.

In this connection, the Forum agenda will be based on the six themes of the multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues shown below, and reflect the five (5) specific priorities identified by the Major Groups and other stakeholders:

1. Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management
2. Oceans, seas and Biodiversity
3. Water and sanitation, food security and waste management
4. Sustainable Economic Development
5. Sustainable Energy
6. Social Development in SIDS, Health and Non Communicable Diseases, Youth and Women

Five Specific Priorities:

- a) Gender Equality, Women's Human Rights, and Human rights
- b) Sustainable Economic Development through Agriculture & Tourism
- c) Climate Change
- d) Effective MG, Civil Society and other Stakeholders' Participation Mechanisms
- e) Indigenous People's Rights

C.2 Expected Outcomes

Taking into consideration the SMART criteria, the Forum will be the space and opportunity for MGoS from SIDS to:

1. Share current information on international events and processes relevant to SIDS;
2. Discuss and coalesce on activities related to SIDS;
3. Receive statements from Civil Society, MGoS about key issues, and partnerships established;
4. Elaborate numerous innovative and creative solutions to development challenges that need to be supported with enabling environments to link, strengthen, upscale and mainstream into Implementation Plans, and progress through MGoS coalitions and partnerships;
5. Articulate Partnership Implementation Plans, to be announced during the Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Dialogues.

C.3 Structure

The day of the Forum will be divided into three sessions:

1. Short briefings on background and international context to support a better appreciation for the ongoing work of major groups and other stakeholders;
2. Dialogues on ongoing activities and potential cooperation between Major Groups, civil society and other stakeholders within and across all regions; and
3. Highlighting immediate partnerships and areas for future engagement.

C.4 Organization

Stakeholders' engagement in the meetings and their preparatory processes is being facilitated through a self-nominated Steering Committee composed of Major Groups, civil society and other stakeholders' representatives.

The SIDS Steering Committee is composed of fourteen members: one representative each volunteered from the major groups sectors for Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, and Business & Industry; plus nine representatives from civil society organizations and networks based in each of the three SIDS regions (AIMS, Caribbean and Pacific), chosen after an open nomination process led by UN DESA and UN-NGLS to facilitate the inclusion of stakeholder voices that have not traditionally engaged through the major groups structure.

In addition to developing an agenda for the MGoS Forum, the Steering Committee is also tasked with:

1. National, regional and global outreach;
2. Sharing information online;
3. Collecting and compiling existing activities that could benefit from partnerships;
4. Promoting communication through social media and other means.

The Steering Committee members' activities have been ongoing since its nomination in April 2014, communicating through e-mail and holding online and in-person meetings to organize its work. So far there has also been one set of regional conference calls.

C.5 Communications Strategy

To help build interest of Major Groups and other stakeholders in the Forum, as well as the Conference itself, social media will be actively engaged during the preparatory processes, facilitated by the Steering Committee members.

Social media which will be used for outreach:

- Twitter accounts: twitter.com/SustDev and www.twitter.com/un_dsd
- Facebook account: facebook.com/UNSDKP
- Google Hangout: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1555>

Another channel to reach out to the whole MGoS community will be the Conference homepage, which will have a special heading on the forum and be updated with documents and information, making them available to everybody that shows interest on the SIDS Conference by accessing the website.

Registration: The Pre-conference Forum is being held outside of the UN security perimeter and will thus not require any UN badge for entry. Please [register here](#) until 31 July 2014.