



**FIRST MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE
THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

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When it comes to disaster risk and small island developing States there are three well understood challenges:

1. SIDS have the world's highest relative disaster risk;
2. Climate change will magnify disaster risk in SIDS; and
3. Disasters challenge the economic resilience of SIDS.

These challenges are not abstract. The long-term impact, cost and implications of disasters on the lives of people across SIDS is felt long after the event fades. Previous disasters have diverted much needed funding away from investments in education and health, and have directly undermined development efforts by SIDS and their partners across all sectors.

Disaster-related economic loss and damage continues to increase. In SIDS, economic growth in the tourism sector has led to a massive increase in hazard exposure, as private investment has been concentrated in hazardous areas, such as cyclone and tsunami prone coastlines.

Despite the importance SIDS place on disaster risk reduction – and an awareness that there can be no sustainable growth without addressing disaster risk – more needs to be done by all actors.

As the UN's Global Assessment Report set out, the high risk-low resilience faced in SIDS means that investments in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are likely to reap greater benefits in SIDS than in any other country group. Investing in disaster risk reduction is therefore a high traction strategy for SIDS to attract investment, strengthen resilience and improve competitiveness and sustainability.

Disaster risk reduction is a powerful tool for development; it allows communities to continue their progress in spite of hazards. Identifying, averting, reducing and managing risks responsibly and effectively saves lives, averts economic losses, reduces social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters, prevents development setbacks, and unleashes opportunities.

SIDS are not starting from nothing. In the Pacific, States and territories have come together to integrate disaster risk management and climate change, and linkages to sustainable

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development, through the establishment of a *Strategy for Disaster and Climate Resilient Development* (SRDP). This is at the forefront of the region's efforts to take a lead role globally in addressing climate change and disaster risk management in a more integrated manner.

Central to building the economic resilience of SIDS is the private sector. How and where the private sector invests in SIDS will play a determining factor in future risk levels. Partnering with, and guiding the private sector will be critical. The private sector must share responsibility for reducing risk.

Against the backdrop of a renewed global agreement for small island developing States, the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction – the successor to the *Hyogo Framework of Action* (HFA) – will coincide with the adoption of two other major instruments relevant to sustainable development; namely the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, including sustainable development goals, and an international agreement on climate. There is widespread demand to ensure coherence across these agendas and international instruments, and to ensure they are mutually-reinforcing for the benefit of SIDS.

The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction will continue to work with SIDS, and their partners as they build disaster resilient communities.

Background

- SIDS are located among the most vulnerable regions in the world in relation to the intensity and frequency of natural hazards, facing high levels of disaster risk and low economic resilience.
- Expected annual average losses from earthquakes and tropical cyclone wind damage in SIDS represent, respectively, only 2 per cent and 1.4 per cent of the global total. However, because of their size, 8 of the 10 countries that would lose the largest proportion of the value of their produced capital stock in a one-in-250 year earthquake are SIDS. In the case of a one-in-250 year cyclone, 6 of the 10 countries most at risk are SIDS.
- SIDS are among the countries that contribute least to climate change, with less than one per cent of total carbon dioxide emissions, yet stand to suffer most from its negative impacts.
- In 2007, international tourism receipts accounted for 51 per cent of total value of exports of SIDS, in comparison to less than 10 per cent in other developing countries.
 - o Tourism was the driving factor behind the economic growth in the Maldives and Cape Verde which was instrumental in their LDC graduation.

Source: UN Global Assessment Report 2013

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2013/en/home/index.html>
