



ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

SUBMISSION OF INPUTS TO THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE STATE-LED REVIEWS AT THE HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM AND THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

1. The institutional responsibility for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) is vested in the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). In order to enable the HLPF, the General Assembly (GA) and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to work coherently, it is important to identify and map out the existing ways in which the work of each body is affected and informed by the other. This includes analysing the relationship between ECOSOC and the Specialised Agencies and other entities, including the processes and mechanisms that feed into the work of the ECOSOC. The relationship between the meetings of the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, and the processes and mechanisms under ECOSOC must also be better clarified and understood. When this mapping exercise is carried out, then the gaps, possible loopholes, duplication and complementarities can be identified and addressed accordingly.
2. The GA is a universal body comprising all Member States of the United Nations. The ECOSOC is a body of 54 Member States. This restricted membership affects Small Island Developing States (SIDS) negatively, as most SIDS due to the small size of their delegations to the United Nations, are often not able to serve as Members of ECOSOC or able to engage in its discussion, even as Observers. Therefore in establishing institutional responsibility it is important that decision-making and concrete discussions are held in a body where all Member States are able to engage effectively, which is an opportunity provided by the HLPF. This includes the agenda setting functions as well, as currently the agenda of the HLPF is under the responsibility of the Presidency of the ECOSOC and the Bureau.
3. The participation in the agenda setting as well as the discussions of the ECOSOC on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, by all Member States is of paramount importance to ensure there is coherence between the work being undertaken in the GA. Therefore, one possible option is to consider the reports on the implementation of the

2030 Agenda by both the GA and the ECOSOC including through joint sessions to be fed into the HLPF process.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: THE AGENDA AND WORKING METHODS OF THE GA INCLUDING THE MAIN COMMITTEES

4. There is a need to adjust the working methods and agenda of the General Assembly, and main Committees, including the plenary. This exercise however cannot be restricted to just the Second or Third Committee but must be carried out for all Committees, including the Fifth, which could assess how the human and financial resources of the United Nations will be oriented to implement the political messages encapsulated in the work of the other Committees. The first step in this process could be to agree on broad principles. In this regard, the following principles could be considered:
5. First is the need to ensure effective and adequate linkages between the programmes of action for LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs, and the 2030 Agenda. Necessary linkages must be ensured so that all processes lead to the same end point: the realisation of sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, and the building of resilient communities.
6. Second, a holistic approach must be adopted. The 2030 Agenda encompasses 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are integrated in nature, and inter-linked. Rationalising the work of the GA to better align it with the 2030 Agenda does not only require a re-think of the work of the Second Committee, but also a discussion on how the 2030 Agenda relates to the work of other Committees, and in fact the entire UN system. Formal and institutionalised links must be made between the work of the main Committees and the ECOSOC and the GA, as well as how the relationships between the work of all these entities could be better improved.
7. Third, rationalisation should ensure that existing mechanisms are used as far as possible. For example, the existing reports under the Main Committees and the plenary could feed into the SDG Progress Report, to the extent that the agendas and the resolutions are aligned with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. A key reason to ensure the use of existing mechanisms also relate to reporting coherence, and reporting burdens, which are particularly worrying for small delegations like the SIDS.
8. In order to have a robust discussion and make an informed decision there is a need for an analysis of the work, items and resolutions on the agenda of the main Committees, and ECOSOC, and to see where there are direct linkages or clear impact on the 2030 Agenda. It would be easier to move forward on establishing the modalities of follow-up and review when existing arrangements and linkages are clearer.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: THE SAMOA PATHWAY AND THE HLPF

9. The precursor to the HLPF, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), had devoted one day to the follow-up and review of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This stemmed from the fact that SIDS was a programme area under the Agenda 21, identified as a “special case for sustainable development”. For SIDS, the HLPF must therefore address the special case of SIDS equally, if not more than that which was accorded in the CSD. SIDS, being identified as a special case for sustainable development, do not have another forum for review and follow-up of the special vulnerabilities they face. Therefore, one way of ensuring that the follow-up to the SAMOA Pathway and the HLPF are aligned is to devote the necessary time in the HLPF annually, in addition to giving opportunity to address all the other issues on the 2030 Agenda from a SIDS perspective. Thus there would be both “mainstreaming” of SIDS perspective throughout the considerations and deliberations of the HLPF, as well as the devoted time to the follow-up and review of the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.
10. The thematic reviews of the HLPF should also include a SIDS component. The priorities identified for SIDS in the SAMOA Pathway are directly and indirectly reflected across the 2030 Agenda. As such, review of any cross cutting issue or clusters of goals can be looked at from a SIDS perspective. And SIDS would have a unique perspective to offer and separate challenges to address in realizing every goal of the 2030 Agenda, as the challenges they face in sustainable development are unique and require targeted assistance.
11. Therefore it is important that the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and the SAMOA Pathway are aligned through inter alia, mapping out the clear linkages in objectives, priorities to begin with, and looking at what additional measures may be taken to ensure that the priorities of the 2030 Agenda are realized for SIDS.
12. It is also important to note that the as mandated by GA Resolution 69/217 of 19 December 2014, and further elaborated in Resolution 69/288 of 8 June 2015, The Joint Inspection Unit is working on a comprehensive review of United Nations System support for SIDS, the results of which are expected to be submitted by the end of the seventieth session. Specifically, one of the parameters of the study is as follows, which would need to be reflected in future discussions on the HLPF and the review and follow-up of the SAMOA Pathway
“The General Assembly should ensure that the comprehensive review addresses the necessary linkages between the SAMOA Pathway and the United Nations global mandates on related key issues, such as the post-2015 development agenda, disaster risk reduction, financing for development, climate change, chemicals and waste management, human rights and gender

equality, with a view to strengthening system-wide coherence and ensuring effective system-wide support for the sustainable development of SIDS through adequate provision of resources.”

13. A key component of the follow-up and review of the SAMOA Pathway is the Partnership Framework mandated in paragraph 101. This Partnership Framework will be launched in 2015. One of its key components will be the annual Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnerships Dialogues. These dialogues could provide key inputs into the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda in the HLPF, the devoted follow-up and review of the SAMOA Pathway, and the Annual ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum. The HLPF is also mandated to provide a platform for partnerships, including through its engagement with Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders. Provisions could also be made for possible partnerships platforms to follow-up on partnerships established to realise the 2030 Agenda. The SIDS Partnership Framework, as the first of its kind, could provide valuable guidance and knowledge on following up on partnerships for the 2030 Agenda.
14. The global follow-up and review is to be informed through a SDG Progress Report, as well as the Global Sustainable Development Report. There could be dedicated components in these reports with related analysis to the special challenges faced by SIDS in realising the 2030 Agenda. The annual report of the Secretary General as mandated through the annual Second Committee resolution on Follow-up to the Programmes of Action for SIDS could also serve as inputs to the global follow-up and review process.
15. It is important to note that, while there are clear linkages, the SAMOA Pathway is distinct from the 2030 Agenda. Therefore the implementation, the follow-up and review of the SAMOA Pathway must be distinct from that of the 2030 Agenda, and should not be subsumed under the 2030 Agenda.

THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: THE ECOSOC FORUM ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

16. SIDS focus must also be ensured in the follow-up to the outcomes of the Financing for Development Conferences. As established in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda this follow-up and review will be carried out through the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development. It is important that SIDS have a part in agenda setting of this Forum through a consultative process, given that SIDS are often not represented in ECOSOC.
17. As a special case for sustainable development, the challenges faced by SIDS in financing for development must be addressed through dedicated time or thematic focus in the

ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development. The SIDS Partnership Dialogues could also feed into the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development.

18. SIDS have also identified technology and innovation as a key means of implementation in the SAMOA Pathway. It is important that the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation take into account SIDS specific concerns including addressing capacity building in this regard, and ensuring access to relevant technology.

OVERARCHING ANNUAL THEME OF THE HLPF VS THEMATIC REVIEWS OF PROGRESS OF THE SDGS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE HLPF:

19. If the HLPF thematic reviews are focused on clusters of closely related SDGs, the emphasis that all goals and targets are inherently interlinked and should not be viewed in silos will be disregarded. When one starts grouping the issues into environment, health, economy etc, this may discount the strong relationships between goals and between themes.
20. Should the HLPF decide to do annual themes, one way of doing it could be through the annual Ministerial Declaration for the years that the HLPF is held under the auspices of the ECOSOC. However, in doing so there might a danger in spending too much time on deciding on what the theme would be, which some states like SIDS may not have an avenue to be engaged in. Another danger in setting a theme for the entire session is to set one where every country cannot engage actively.
21. Every Goal must be taken in its own right, but also in relation to all the other Goals. Moreover, every Goal has specific Means of Implementation targets, which are encompassed in the Means of Implementation Section of the 2030 Agenda, which should be considered as well, in relation to the follow-up and review of every Goal.
22. Whatever mode the thematic reviews take, the inter-related nature of the Goals must not be compromised where one Goal or a cluster of Goals are prioritised over the other, neither should anyone be excluded from participating fully through irrelevant themes, and nor should the opportunity to review them in relation to the means of implementation be excluded. Thematic reviews must also be balanced with the need for the HLPF to devote time to the review of outcomes of other UN Conferences including the SAMOA Pathway.

HLPF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL REVIEWS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

23. It is important that the SDG Progress Report goes beyond a compilation of inputs from various agencies and countries. The SDG Progress Report with the Global Sustainable Development Report could serve as important analytical tools that collect information, and also analyse the information to identify global trends, and emerging challenges. These reports could further be informed by regional and national level information, provided on a voluntary basis by Governments, as appropriate.
24. The SDG Progress Report is to be based on robust data, and in this regard it is important to invest initially in the establishment of global baselines for all the relevant targets and Goals, without which analysis may be incomplete. For SIDS, it is important that data from SIDS national authorities are counted in the global statistics, along with more support for capacity building. There could be a focus on capacity building and institutional strengthening at the regional level.
25. The Regional level could be used primarily for experience sharing and identifying common challenges and trends, as appropriate. For this purpose, data collection and analysis could be strengthened at the regional level in addition to the national level, where appropriate. It will be crucial for the regional commissions to work with regional organisations, where they exist, for regional level consultations of the 2030 Agenda.
26. Countries with limited capacity, such as SIDS must be ensured support at national level, as appropriate and upon request. The Country Offices where applicable could serve as focal points in this regard, to among others channel useful trainings, materials and other resources in this regard. This is especially important in the transition period, where it must be recognised that while the 2030 Agenda is universal, not every country is starting from the same level, nor has the same capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda. These considerations need to be taken into account in the development of the global level indicators being developed by the United Nations Statistical Commission.
27. With regard to voluntary common reporting guidelines, they need to be simple and straight forward, while establishing that all reporting is voluntary and countries can submit information on all goals, on specific goals, partial information depending on availability – whatever is appropriate at the national level. It is imperative to be cognisant that each country will implement the 2030 Agenda and track its progress in the way that best suits its national circumstances. And necessary support has to be provided for countries with limited capacity to report. This includes restricting short reporting cycles at the national level, and ensuring that existing mechanisms to report are taken into account as far as possible, to avoid request for multiple national reports.

INCLUSION OF UN SYSTEM AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN GLOBAL FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW:

28. With the involvement of the Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of 2030 Agenda, the involvement and participation at all levels of representatives of SIDS must be ensured, as this is often not the case, due to small size, or lack of resources. Innovative ways of participation, including though online platforms could be used.

29. While the private sector is important, ways of including the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises that are often instrumental in SIDS must also be sought out, particularly local enterprises.