

Partnerships Briefs for Small Island Developing States



Oceans, Seas & Biodiversity



UN Conference on
Small Island Developing States

Division for Sustainable Development
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2014

Introduction

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS Conference) will be held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa, with the overarching theme as “The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships”.

The SIDS Conference will include six multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues (Partnership Dialogues) that will serve as a forum to build on existing successful partnerships as well as to launch innovative and concrete new ones, to advance the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Member States have identified six clusters of priority areas that the Partnership Dialogues will address respectively. These are: Sustainable Economic Development; Climate change & Disaster Risk management; Social development in SIDS, Health and Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), youth and women; Sustainable energy; Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity; Water and Sanitation, Food Security and Waste Management.

The SIDS 2014 Partnerships Briefs have been prepared by the Division for Sustainable Development (UN-DESA) in consultation with the UN System through the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA Plus), with the intent to contribute to the preparations leading up to the Partnership Dialogues by:

- Reviewing key priorities related to SIDS in the selected priority area,
- Reviewing existing north-south, south-south, and triangular partnerships in the selected priority area, and
- Identifying gaps in the priority area, which could inspire renewal, build-up and scale-up of existing partnerships, and the launching of new innovative partnerships, focusing on public-private partnerships.

The current Partnership Brief will look at the priority area of “Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity”, and highlights illustrative examples of existing partnerships based on information available in the SIDS 2014 Partnerships Platform (www.sids2014.org/partnerships) and as indicated through consultations with the Secretariat of the SIDS Conference.

Challenges related to Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity in SIDS

OCEANS AND SEAS COVER MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS

of the earth's surface and contain 97% of the planet's water¹. They are critical to sustainable development and poverty eradication by supporting life, driving the climate and hydrological cycles, as well as providing vital resources and ecosystem services for humans. Oceans are critical for global food security, sustainable economic prosperity and the well being of many national economies, particularly SIDS. Oceans and coastal ecosystems support the creation of jobs as well as provide tourism and recreational opportunities, shoreline protection from storms, carbon sequestration and many other benefits to people. All of these services support human wellbeing through economic opportunities, improved and diversified livelihoods, enhanced nutrition and cultural benefits.

Small islands could, in fact, more aptly be called large ocean states since their land area in general represents only a small fraction of the total space under their jurisdiction.

SIDS face growing issues in the sustainable use of oceans, which include, among others, marine pollution from a number of marine and land-based sources, unsustainable extraction of marine resources, including overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices, and physical alteration and destruc-

tion of marine habitat, caused by unsustainable coastal development, submarine infrastructure, unsustainable tourism, fishing operations in fragile or vulnerable marine areas and physical damage from ship groundings and anchors. Ocean acidification and climate change, which are both caused by increasing atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, also have a negative impact on oceans and their ecosystems. Ocean acidification can for example cause coral reef bleaching and negative effects of climate change include increased frequency and intensity of weather and climate extremes, ocean warming and sea-level rise.

SIDS account for approximately 3 percent of the world's land area and are home to about 20 percent of all plant, reptile and bird species on the planet. The latter of which is facing the highest rate of extinction due to anthropogenic influences such as habitat destruction, over-exploitation and introduced invasive alien species (e.g. predators) in SIDS.² Other taxonomic groups on land have experienced relatively high rates of extinction on a global scale. Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) have been discharged into the environment without forethought and will continue to impact environmental quality for many years yet.

Biodiversity is threatened by land use change and

1 TST Issues Brief: Oceans and Seas (2014)

2 UN-OHRLLS (2013) Small Island Developing States in Numbers.

land degradation, overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species, climate change and ocean acidification. The loss of biodiversity, in general, translates into the loss of genetic diversity and economic resilience, increased vulnerability of food sources to disease and climatic changes therefore aggravate livelihood vulnerability, particularly in rural and agriculture sectors³. The loss and degradation of biodiversity, ultimately impact all people, with the most severe, and more immediate impacts on the poor and vulnerable, women, children and indigenous peoples⁴.

3 Strachan, J. and Vigilance, C. Integrating Sustainable Development into National Frameworks: Policy Approaches for Key Sectors in Small States, Commonwealth Secretariat (2011).

4 TST Issue Brief: Biodiversity (2014).

Challenges such as high levels of post-harvest losses, including the increasing discards of catches at seas, limited technological and technical capacity, and entrepreneurship skills along the value chains, lack of profitable manufacturing industries, and unemployment are issues of great importance in relation to the sustainable utilization of biodiversity of SIDS.

Because of the large ocean areas and exclusive economic zones that SIDS manage, the issue of sufficient human and institutional capacity in ocean management, research, and observation is a major challenge to many SIDS.



Existing Partnerships

THE FOLLOWING PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES ARE brief examples of some of the existing north-south, south-south and triangular partnerships, global and SIDS-focused in nature, complementing the efforts of SIDS in the areas of Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity. Additional information on these initiatives, and more existing partnerships can be found on the SIDS 2014 Partnerships Platform at: www.sids2014.org/partnerships.



1. Global Island Partnership (GLISPA): The Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) assists islands in addressing one of the world's greatest challenges — to conserve and sustainably utilize invaluable island natural resources that support people, cultures and livelihoods in their island homes around the world. <http://glispa.org/>

2. Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security (CTI-CFF): is a multilateral partnership of six countries, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste, working together to sustain extraordinary marine and coastal resources by addressing crucial issues such as food security, climate change and marine biodiversity. <http://coraltrianglecenter.org/>

3. Caribbean Challenge is an historic conservation initiative that brings together for the first time governments, companies and partners to accelerate action on conservation in the Caribbean. Together, the 9 participating countries and territories have committed to conserve at least 20% of nearshore and coastal environments in marine protected areas by 2020 with the help of private and public sector partners. The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund has been established to support achievement of the CCI commitments by 2020. <http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?page=view&type=1006&nr=2320&menu=1507>.



4. Micronesia Challenge: is a commitment by five governments—the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands — to effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020. The Challenge has grown into a network supported by over 50 partners globally and has seen enormous progress.

<http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?page=view&type=1006&nr=2371&menu=1507>

5. Pacific Mangroves Initiative: The Pacific Mangroves Initiative (PMI) is a partnership-based initiative promoting investment and action for sustainable mangrove futures in the Pacific Islands. Since its inception in 2009, PMI has been assisting Pacific Island countries and territories to implement sound practices and capacity building in mangrove management. The initiative also aims to raise awareness on the value of coastal ecosystem goods and services and build capacity at all levels to aid local governments make informed decisions.

https://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/priorities/priority_naturebasedsolutions/oro_initiatives_pmi

6. Pacific Invasive Partnership (PIP): A regional coordinated approach to biosecurity and invasive species management and building capacity of SIDS to address the threats and mitigate the negative impacts caused by invasive species on biodiversity, economy and health. PIP draws from the expertise and resources of its membership which consists of regional inter-governmental organisations, academic and scientific research institutions and international organizations to assist national governments on issues of biosecurity and invasive species, and accelerating actions on the ground through close liaison with the civil society and non-government organizations.

<http://www.sprep.org/Pacific-Invasives-Partnership/invasive-partnerships>.

7. Regional Seas Programme: The Regional Seas Programme aims to address the accelerating degradation of the world's oceans and coastal areas through the sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal environment, by engaging neighbouring countries in comprehensive and specific actions to protect their shared marine environment

<http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/>



8. Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities: aims at preventing the degradation of the marine environment from land-based activities by facilitating the realization of the duty of States to preserve and protect the marine environment". It is unique in that it is the only global initiative directly addressing the connectivity between terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems.

<http://www.gpa.unep.org/>

9. Partnership on Development of the fisheries value chain for rural development and food security: aims at strengthening the productive and trade capacities of small-scale businesses in the Tuna fisheries value chain for rural development and food security in the South Pacific.

<http://www.3adi.org/south-pacific-islands>.



10. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission:

established by the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC Convention). The WCPFC Convention seeks to address problems in the management of high seas fisheries resulting from unregulated fishing, over-capitalization, excessive fleet capacity, vessel re-flagging to escape controls, insufficiently selective gear, unreliable databases and insufficient multilateral cooperation in respect to conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks

<http://www.wcpfc.int/about-wcpfc>



11. Global Partnership for Oceans (GPO): an alliance of over 140 governments, international organizations, civil society groups, and private sector interest committed to addressing the threats to the health, productivity and resilience of the ocean. Through the mobilization of financial and knowledge resources, GPO aims to address issues related to the depletion of natural resource reservoirs that sourced nutrition, livelihoods and vital ecosystem services, including overfishing, pollution and habitat loss.

<http://www.globalpartnershipforoceans.org/about>.



Suggested opportunities for Partnerships

In moving forward, the Partnership Dialogue may consider key partnerships in the areas of Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity, to include, among others:

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- Strengthen national and regional efforts to improve coastal zone management, including prevention of marine and land-based pollution.
 - Undertake coherent and sustained efforts to address the impacts of ocean acidification and climate change together with an improvement of resilience of marine ecosystems and local communities.
 - Promote an inclusive and sustainable development of local economies utilising the oceans, seas and biodiversity, while conserving coastal and marine ecosystems to maintain their multiple ecosystem services (e.g. carbon sinks, shoreline protection).
 - Enhance the contributions of fisheries and marine aquaculture, shipping and shipbuilding, ports, tourism, oil, gas, mining, and maritime transportation industries to food security, nutrition and sustainable livelihoods.
 - Enhance sustainable fishing and reverse decrease in fish stocks, including through enhancement of and capacity building for monitoring, control and surveillance of illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
 - Support sustainable small scale fisheries and strengthen their productive capacities and trade competitiveness.
 - Enhance sustainable and ecosystem-based ocean and fisheries management through efficient application of climate information.

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www.sids2014.org

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