

**Symposium on  
“Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development  
and the SAMOA Pathway in Small Island Developing States -  
SIDS: Equipping Public Institutions and Mobilizing Partnerships”  
21-23 February 2017  
Nassau, Commonwealth of the Bahamas**

**Informal communiqué**

**Preamble:**

1. We, the ministers and high-level officials from Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and other countries, civil society and the private sector met at the Symposium on "Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway in Small Island Developing States: Equipping Public Institutions and Mobilizing Partnerships" from 21 to 23 February 2017 in Nassau, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.
2. We express our appreciation to the Government of the Bahamas, UNDESA and UN-OHRLLS for this successful event and this opportunity to bolster SIDS capacities for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.
3. 2017 is another important year for Small Island Developing States as the second year for implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and the year the United Nations convenes the oceans conference<sup>1</sup>.
4. SIDS face special sustainable development challenges in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. We reaffirm the commitments all world leaders made in the 2030 Agenda and pledge to realize their promises for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership and for leaving no one behind. We also reaffirm the commitments and priorities we defined in the SAMOA Pathway, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and other relevant international agreements. We call on all countries and actors to deliver on the pledges they made in these agreements and give special attention to SIDS, so that we can achieve the transformation that the 2030 Agenda necessitates.
5. National governments have the critical responsibility to mobilize efforts to realize the SDGs. We are determined to move ahead rapidly with implementation while also working to mobilize the means of implementation, bolster our capacities and further elaborate our legal and institutional frameworks.

**Integrated Policymaking and Implementation**

6. Many SIDS are already well advanced in implementing the SDGs. They have been adapting the SDG targets to their national circumstances and priorities and incorporating them in their development plans and policies. These exercises often show that the SDGs reinforce many existing national priorities and call for integrated approaches.
7. The SDGs and the commitments contained in the SAMOA Pathway, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the Sendai Framework are interrelated and mutually reinforcing-- they need to be implemented in a complementary and synergistic way.

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

8. We underscore the adverse effect of climate change for SIDS and the threat it constitutes for their efforts to achieve the SDGs. The effect of climate change amplifies the challenges associated with both poverty and sustainable development. Eradicating poverty and combatting climate change must go hand in hand. We call for urgent efforts to deliver on the commitments regarding adaptation, mitigation and recovering loss and damage.
9. We are committed to place disaster risk management and building resilience at the centre of policies and strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda and SAMOA pathway in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Policies and approaches to attain the SDGs should be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity and exposure of persons and assets. It is essential to integrate disaster risk into development planning and public and private investments at all levels. It is also important to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, as per one of the seven global targets of the Sendai Framework. We support the use of vulnerability indices and vulnerability-resilience tools in order to assess risks in SIDS and assist them in accessing financial resources both domestically and internationally.
10. Good governance is indispensable for realizing the SDGs. We are committed to make continuing efforts to make public institutions effective, inclusive and accountable and prevent corruption in SDG implementation.
11. Social equity should be a central focus of the action of public administrations. The poorest and most vulnerable should have equal rights and access to public services. Public services and social benefits should help overcome inequality.
12. The SDGs should be pursued through a whole-of-government approach. National development plans can provide the country's vision on how it will achieve the SDGs. It is critical to reflect the implementation of the SDGs in sectoral policies and national budgets.
13. Policies are most effective when they take into consideration the complex inter-relations, synergies and trade-offs between the targets. We stress the importance of elaborating and implementing integrated policies that take into account those various interrelations and economic, social and environmental dimensions. It would be useful to develop scientific and other tools and identify models to help develop such policies or understand how to leave no one behind. Institutions/ministries should work closely together to break silos.

#### Mobilizing governments, civil society and the private sector

14. A well-integrated, coherent and integrated implementation of the SDGs requires a strong political commitment and the continuing engagement of the highest level of Government. It is important that institutions leading implementation have sufficient authority to mobilize other institutions and resources. Successful implementation in SIDS will also require institutional frameworks, workflows and practices that bolster policy coherence and support effective and integrated responses at all levels. SIDS have been putting in place various coordination institutional arrangements, including inter-ministerial and/or multi-stakeholder coordination bodies, which are needed for rallying public administration for realizing the SDGs.
15. For the commitment to the SDGs to persist in times of political change, it is important to sensitise all levels of the governments as well as all institutions and actors to the SDGs. It is also urgent to mobilize local authorities in SIDS and equip them to implement the 2030 Agenda, SAMOA Pathway and other commitments. We call on local authorities to adopt local Agendas 2030.
16. Parliaments also have a critical role to adapt the legislative framework to the pursuit of the SDGs. Supreme audit institutions can likewise play an important role in advising the government on

implementing the SDGs and in overseeing progress.

17. Also critical is to mobilize public servants around the SDGs. We need to instill a deep commitment to the vision of the 2030 Agenda as well as new and transformative working methods based on cooperation and consultation. There is also a need to bolster the capacities and skills of public administrations to incorporate the targets in plans and policies, embrace integrated approaches and consult civil society and the private sector. A major effort is thus required to train public servants. The UN can support this effort, including by working with public administration schools.
18. We look forward to the continuing reflection on institutional arrangements and capacities for implementing the SDGs at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration.
19. We encourage further efforts to fully engage civil society and the private sector in decision-making and review of SDG implementation. This is necessary to ensure inclusive and accountable policy making and get buy-in into the national development plans. Some SIDS have already been consulting and engaging civil society in the implementation of the SDGs, including youth and the poorest and most vulnerable people. It is important to ensure that such efforts are owned by stakeholders and have an impact on decision making. We need a major effort to inform civil society at large about the SDGs and make people understand how they can support implementation.
20. We should engage and empower youth to fulfill their potential and contribute to realizing the SDGs. Realizing the SDGs requires a change of mindset in which education and training have a critical role to play. We call on the General Assembly to encourage all UN Member States to incorporate the SDGs into education curriculums at all levels. The private sector is an essential partner for realising the SDGs and dedicated efforts so that it supports the realization of the SDGs. The academia has also an important role for the development, transfer, diffusion and application of new knowledge in the implementation of the SDGs.

#### Policy coherence, capacities, resources and ICT

21. SIDS need adequate means of implementation for realizing the SDGs, including resources, capacities and technology. We call for stepping up efforts to revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people<sup>2</sup>. Cooperation among SIDS and with other countries is also very important at regional level.
22. We call on countries that are in a position to do so, the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations and stakeholders to provide effective and coordinated support for the efforts of SIDS for delivering on the SDGs. We welcome that Canada, Estonia, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) expressed their commitment to support SIDS during the Symposium.
23. We draw the attention of the international community to the challenges many SIDS face in accessing external financing for sustainable development. Criteria for allocating concessional resources should take into account the particular vulnerabilities of SIDS and help them cope with the impact of natural disasters or climate change as those can reverse years of progress. One of the most challenging of SIDS' vulnerabilities, the large stock of unsustainable debt, should be constructively addressed multilaterally. It is important to further improve support measures for SIDS undergoing graduation from LDC. We look forward to addressing those issues at the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development.

---

<sup>2</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

24. We call upon countries and international organizations to carefully assess the impact of their policies on the sustainable development of SIDS. There should be close consultations in elaborating and implementing policies that may have unintentional impacts on SIDS' efforts to implement the SDGs, such as in the area of de-risking. We express our concern about the impact of de-risking policies on the economies of SIDS.
25. Partnerships are crucial to the successful implementation of the SDGs and SAMOA pathway. We welcome the UN SIDS Partnership Framework which aims to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments and to encourage new, genuine and durable partnerships for the SIDS. We call on governments, civil society and the private sector to launch new multistakeholder partnerships to support the realization of the SDGs in SIDS especially where there are gaps and where capacity is lacking. We also call on existing partnerships to deliver on their commitments and engage with the Partnership Framework.
26. Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) including e-government can be a very important tool for delivering public services and supporting progress towards the SDGs. Further efforts are needed to put them at the service of the SDGs in SIDS. We are greatly concerned by the persistent digital divide. We call on the international community to support the building of ICT infrastructure in SIDS. We also call on the private sector and all other actors to develop innovations to ensure that SIDS can benefit from ICT and access to the internet. Such innovations and other important technologies for realising the SDGs in SIDS should be made available through the "Technology Facilitation Mechanism" (TFM) platform to support the implementation of the SDGs. We call on the Science, Technology and Innovation Multistakeholder Forum to give particular attention to the challenges of SIDS at its second meeting on 15-16 May 2017.
27. We call on the HLPF, in reviewing progress towards the SIDS, to give careful attention to the efforts that are needed to ensure that the SIDS are able to mobilise the means of implementation they need for realizing the SDGs.
28. A major effort is needed to build statistical capacities so as to support effective policies and review progress towards the SDGs in SIDS. Systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data are critical to implementing the SDGs. We also need to harness the power of open data and big data and address the related risks and challenges. The World Data Forum agreed on important actions to mobilize data for realizing the SDGs.
29. It is important to continuously review, monitor and evaluate our efforts to realise the SDGs. Reviews at country level should build on existing national systems and be inclusive and evidence-based. The voluntary national reviews of implementation at the HLPF are an important opportunity to share challenges and lessons learned from other countries and mobilise partnerships. We encourage our governments to volunteer for these reviews.
30. We support the outcome of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference. The conference recognized the importance of enhancing inter-island connectivity and linking the economies of SIDS to regional markets and global supply chains.
31. We look forward to the United Nations Oceans Conference<sup>3</sup>. We will use that opportunity to draw attention to the particular reliance of SIDS on oceans. We will support action at all levels, including partnerships and voluntary commitments, which will be identified at the Conference.

---

<sup>3</sup> high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

## Conclusion

32. There is no single blue print for implementing the SDGs. SIDS face similar challenges but each one has its own specificities. But we greatly benefitted from exchanging experiences and lessons during the Symposium.
33. This Symposium has also given new impetus to our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway, drawing from each other's experiences. Our discussions and proposed actions will inform the HLPF as the overarching UN platform to review the progress in achieving the SDGs, working with the rest of the United Nations system. SIDS are committed to regularly review their progress in the adaptation and implementation of SDGs at national and local level.