



QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

Follow-up to and implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States (ABAS)

Please note that strict word limits have been established for each question. The Secretariat is unable to consider any information beyond these established word limits. You are requested to report only on new or updated information. Information conveyed in previous surveys or Secretary-Generals' reports will not be considered.

PART A - FOSTERING RESILIENT PROSPERITY IN SIDS

1. Enhanced UN System Support for achieving Resilient Prosperity in SIDS (FOR the UN system)

Using the UN implementation Matrix¹ (attached) to guide feedback, briefly elaborate on any resilience building interventions or strategies (proactive or preventative) that were/are being implemented during the reporting period at national or regional levels aimed specifically at improving resilience in SIDS. Please include indications of resource allocations, if available (600 words).

Ireland's Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States has a focus on resilient (in particular climate-resilient) development, mainstreamed throughout all of our strategy objectives and associated initiatives.

Ireland is supporting a variety of resilience interventions in the Caribbean, Pacific and AIS regions. Many of these are delivered by multi-lateral development banks, international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Examples of dedicated Irish support to SIDS through the UN system in the reporting period include: Data for SIDS (UNDESA), SIDS Civil Society Engagement Forum (UNDESA), Media Development Programme (UNESCO), initiatives to support cultural heritage in SIDS (UNESCO), a rural women's economic empowerment initiative in the Pacific (FAO), and supporting UN capacity in SIDS country and regional offices (UN Volunteers). However, there are numerous other examples via our core support to individual UN agencies.

Ireland has also supported SIDS participation in a variety of UN initiatives / multilateral processes linked to resilient prosperity, such as: the Fourth International SIDS Conference and the 2024 Global Business Network Forum, the Third UN Oceans Conference, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, and CoP30. In parallel, Ireland contributes constructively to these and other relevant UN processes, for the benefit of SIDS, including in the reporting period as co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the SIDS Partnership Framework for 2024.

2. Enhanced and Tailored Development Cooperation for SIDS (For Development Partners, IFIs and SIDS Governments)

Successful ABAS implementation will require improved, tailored development cooperation approaches and financial resources, calibrated to the specific needs, capacity constraints, and economic challenges

¹ accountability framework developed to promote and monitor progress with implementation of ABAS

facing SIDS. It will also require that relevant national/regional plans programme and polices are implemented. Briefly elaborate on:

- i) any planned or ongoing strategies/approaches to improve and deliver on more tailored development support to SIDS. What are the expected results from these interventions in the targeted countries Please include indications of resource allocations if available (600 words)

Ireland launched its Second Strategy for Partnership with SIDS in late 2023 and since then has launched and expanded a wide range of initiatives to deepen partnership with SIDS, increase our climate and oceans supports, build capacity at national level and advocate for SIDS priorities.

An important part of this has been expanding financial support to SIDS, in line with Ireland's overall increase in our climate finance to €225m per year. This includes Ireland's pledge of €25m to the Loss and Damage Fund (to be fulfilled by end-2025), as well as a variety of programmes across a multitude of sectors and regions. In addition to the UN programmes mentioned above, this includes: the Ireland Trust Fund for Disaster Resilience in SIDS at the Asian Development Bank (€14m); support to Irish NGOs working on nutrition in SIDS; regional climate finance programmes in the Caribbean and the Pacific; an expanded programme to support small-scale, locally led development; and humanitarian assistance.

Ireland has developed a number of capacity-building initiatives to help SIDS address needs at country level. This includes the Ireland Fellows Programme for SIDS, our Marine Institute's Our Shared Ocean research programme, supports to cultural heritage, and building capacity for BBNJ ratification and implementation, among other activities (addressed in response to next question).

- ii) any planned or ongoing national programmes to develop more resilient SIDS economies. What are the expected results from these interventions. Please include indications of resource allocations if available (600 words)

Ireland continues to develop its trade and economic links with SIDS, including through Ireland's business and economic forums with the regions.

Ireland supports SIDS-led public-private initiatives and has funded the two most recent editions of the Global Business Network Forum.

Ireland is committed to building SIDS' capacity to engage in the multilateral trading system via an Internships Programme at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in which officials from SIDS currently participate via their Permanent Missions in Geneva.

Ireland is partnering with Climate KIC on entrepreneurship and blue economy in the Pacific, including via accelerators and a green business ideas programme.

Ireland supports SIDS participation in a Port Management Training Programme, managed by UNCTAD including sessions in Ireland delivered by our port authorities.

Ireland supports UNDESA to build national data and statistical governance and production capacity in three SIDS, one in each region, given the critical role of quality data for the implementation of ABAS and the SDGs, and access to finance.

Ireland is engaged in advocacy around SIDS access to finance, including in the context of FFD4.

Ireland works with EU partners to ensure that EU initiatives, including Global Gateway which offers investment opportunities, are responsive to the needs of the SIDS.

Also at EU level, Ireland has supported strengthening EU trade relations with SIDS via the relevant trade Agreements.

Ireland is exploring opportunities for cooperation with SIDS on domestic resource mobilisation.

PART B - COHERENT AND EFFETIVE UN SYSTEM WIDE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO SIDS

Paragraph 36 of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) requests the UN Secretary-General:

“..... within his annual report to the General Assembly for the 80th Session on the implementation of the ABAS, to present proposals to ensure a coordinated, coherent and effective UN system wide capacity development approach to SIDS and to enhance the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ABAS, including a potential single SIDS dedicated entity at the UN Secretariat.”

At the global level, the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) oversees UN efforts for sustainable development in 162 countries and territories, guiding, supporting, tracking and overseeing the coordination of development operations. The UNSDG derives its mandate from the Comprehensive Policy Review (QPCR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, which serves as an important instrument for the monitoring and the assessment of UN development operations. The integrated nature of ABAS calls for a UN Development System that works in a coordinated and coherent manner while preserving each entity's mandate and role and leveraging each entity's expertise.

For Governments

- i. How would you assess the current level of coordination among UN agencies in supporting capacity development for SIDS at the national, regional and global levels? What challenges do you believe hinder effective coordination among UN entities in providing support to SIDS? What mechanisms would you suggest to improve the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of UN support for SIDS? (600 words)

In terms of mechanisms to improve effectiveness of UN support, the timely finalisation of a monitoring and evaluation framework for ABAS is necessary foundation for effective implementation. Once issued, we look forward to engaging with that framework, as well as with the UN-system wide response to it, setting out each entities' responsibilities in terms of implementation and any associated indicators/targets. Robust monitoring and evaluation will be crucial, to deliver coherent UN support for SIDS and achieve the commitments of ABAS. Within the structures, coordination at regional, as well as national, level will be important. In this context, multiple layers of coordination will be required: intra-UN, as well as coordination with relevant regional organisations (Caricom, PIF etc) and other stakeholders (MDBs, civil society), to ensure all parties understand their respective roles across ABAS implementation.

2. Interagency Mechanisms for improved coherence

Under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) provides broad guidance, coordination and strategic direction for the UN system in the areas under the responsibility of Executive Heads. Focus is placed on inter-agency priorities and initiatives while ensuring that the independent mandates of organizations are

maintained. One particular focus of the CEB is system-wide coordination and policy coherence in the programme areas. The CEB has to date created three inter-agency mechanisms to increase coherence across the United Nations system in addressing urgent development challenges. These are UN-Water, UN-Oceans and UN-Energy.

ii. As there is no single entity in the United Nations system that has sole responsibility for SIDS, do you see value creating a UN-SIDS to serve as the primary agent for promoting system-wide collaboration on SIDS issues, and to promote coherence in the UN system's multi-disciplinary response to SIDS? (500 words)

We look forward to concrete proposals of the SG in line with the mandate provided by paragraph 36 and informed by evidence-based evaluation of the effectiveness of the current structures, particularly in terms of coordination and clarity of responsibilities. It is vital that UN structures deliver effectively and efficiently for those we serve.

Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs Plus (ECSA Plus)

Coordination of UN System actions for the implementation of politically agreed documents e.g. ABAS takes place through the Executive Committee on Economic and Social (ECSA Plus). Its over fifty members have developed a matrix for the follow up to ABAS, focusing on mandates specifically directed at the United Nations system as well as on areas where the UN system is already engaged through its programmatic work. The UN Implementation Matrix, which is being continuously updated, serves as an accountability framework and as a working tool to promote and monitor progress. ECSA Plus meets regularly to *inter alia* SIDS related matters and is convened by the Under Secretary General of DESA.

viii How can ECSA Plus be used to more effectively harness UN agency contributions and to amplify systemic synergies?)

It would be useful if the UN Implementation Matrix could be made available online (as seems to have been the case for the SAMOA Pathway matrix previously). This could allow Member States, and other stakeholders, to better understand and engage with the streams of work being taken forward by actors across, and beyond, the UN system. Consideration might also be given to provision of debriefs / updates on ECSA-plus committee meetings, perhaps via the Steering Committee of the Partnership Framework.

3. HLPF

ix. How should the HLPF SIDS session be structured to effectively monitor progress to scale up implementation of the SDGs while at the same time driving implementation of ABAS? What role should the monitoring and evaluation framework of ABAS play in this? (250 words)

We would suggest that this year's session should follow from the 2024 discussion that addressed UN entities' plans for implementation of ABAS, and focus on contributors presenting concrete updates on progress made. Contributors should include the wide range of actors involved, including UN HQ offices, Resident Coordinators, Regional Commissions and facilitate feedback from civil society, Member States, and other stakeholders. The HLPF session would also provide an opportunity for all to engage with follow up to FFD4 and UNOC3 in terms of SIDS priorities.

Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations

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