

QUESTIONNAIRE

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).

The ABAS calls for enhanced UN System Support for achieving resilient prosperity in SIDS. OHRLLS, inter alia, provided targeted support on a range of ABAS focus areas; building economic resilience towards reforming international financial architecture to incorporate **multidimensional vulnerability, sustainable debt management** and wider economic participation including through **the SIDS-GBN** with a private sector focus.

OHRLLS' work responded to the strong emphasis on the scaling up of **climate action** including the need to strengthen access to climate funds. OHRLLS' support also included various efforts towards the conversation **and sustainable use of ocean resources, mainstreaming disaster risk reduction**, and a focus on **harnessing digital technologies**.

OHRLLS continued to play a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of **UN support through its Co-Chairing of the IACG for SIDS**, convening the **Resident Coordinator network**, work with **regional commissions** and the **UN Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent**, support to strengthen **Partnerships, including Private Sector Partnerships**. Together with UNDESA, OHRLLS spear headed the work on the development of the **ABAS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework**.

In addition, OHRLLS continued its staple activities – cross cutting - providing extensive support to resilience building in SIDS through **advocacy, resource mobilization**, and efforts to enhance coherence in SIDS' issues at the national, regional and global levels – a mandate of the Office – in addition to its UN system support, by strengthening support to the **SIDS National Focal Point (NFP) Network**. Highlights of the support provided by OHRLLS in support of the implementation of ABAS is provided below:

To promote **digital transformation** in SIDS, OHRLLS commissioned a case study to explore progress in digital transformation for Kiribati, São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). The study sought to establish the challenges, opportunities and

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

extract some lessons learnt and best practices from these countries selected from the three geographic SIDS regions: the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and the South China Sea (AIS).

OHRLLS together with DESA, continued to co-chair the Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) on SIDS - a key mechanism in mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway, ABAS in the UN system. IACG meetings focused mainly on the preparations for the Fourth International conference on SIDS and MVI, the ABAS Implementation Matrix and the development of the ABAS M&E Framework, amongst others. The IACG continues to be guided by its terms of Reference, with a focus, inter alia, to promote complementarity and synergies and enhance coherence of planning and activities on issues related to SIDS.

The UN Resident Coordinator (RC) network for SIDS - the highest-ranking representatives of the UN Development System at the country level - received much needed support from OHRLLS and DESA including a targeted briefing on the implementation of the ABAS. The RCs were also instrumental in the formative work in the development of the SIDS NFP toolkit being developed by OHRLLS. OHRLLS also carried out engagement with RCs from the SIDS regions including in specific countries (for example, OHRLLS supported the AIS meeting at the High-Level Meeting of the Small Island Developing States of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, And South China Sea (AIS), 15-16 May 2025, Praia, Cabo Verde).

Advocacy @SIDS4 and other fora

OHRLLS led advocacy efforts on priority SIDS issues, in various fora. For example, OHRLLS continued to strongly advocate for the MVI which included targeted outreach to IFIs, MDBs, and other Development Partners and the broader support to the MVI intergovernmental process which saw its adoption by the GA on 13 August 2024. Debt sustainability, Loss and Damage, partnerships and private sector support equally received strong advocacy, including the context OHRLLS' engagements in key events and international Conferences e.g. Spring and Annual Meetings of the IMF/WBG (and Small States Forum), UNGA, SIDS4, Summit of the Future, COP29, bilateral meetings with leaders, media engagement including a targeted Journalism fellowship (i.e. the Voice the Future Journalism Campaign in relation to SIDS4), and development of focused knowledge products and other advocacy materials to support SIDS.

OHRLLS has also supported SIDS' advocacy to attract the financing need to implement their sustainable development goals. As part of the 3rd Preparatory Committee on the Fourth International Financing for Development Conference (FFD4), OHRLLS hosted a Side Event in collaboration with the World Bank Group's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), to inform SIDS about the Agency's de-risking tools, which can support SIDS in attracting Foreign Direct Investment inflows. Building on this, OHRLLS has supported advocacy for the SIDS Debt Sustainability Support Service (DSSS), including partnering on a side event on the DSSS during the Third Preparatory Committee, joining the Strategic Advisory Group, and supporting the operationalization of the DSSS, as described in relation to the SIDS Centre of Excellence. With the aim to ensure the FFD4 outcome document resulted in tangible support for SIDS, OHRLLS is hosting a High-Level event at the FFD4 Conference in Sevilla, Spain, bringing together leaders from SIDS and development partners, Multilateral Development Banks, the Private Sector and International Organizations to advance financing for development in SIDS. This event will support SIDS' efforts to improve their representation in International Financial Institutions, and aims to ensure the Small States Strategy, being developed by the World Bank Group, is aligned with the ABAS, as a direct outcome of the event.

Resource Mobilization

In 2023-24, together with DESA, OHRLLS led an extensive resource mobilization exercise to support the convening of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4). A total of approximately US\$ **3.7m** was raised which went to support SIDS' participation at the preparatory meetings and the Conference itself.

As a part of the extensive mobilization exercise, a SIDS journalism campaign “Voice the Future SIDS Journalism Campaign” received a total of **US\$109,156** aimed at promoting SIDS based reporting, by attracting both developing and accomplished journalists from SIDS member countries to cover SIDS4, to provide support to a total of 18 SIDS journalists were selected, covering all the three SIDS regions: Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Seas (AIS), Pacific and Caribbean).

Separately, to support resilience building in SIDS, OHRLLS also mobilized Extra-Budgetary (XB) resources for its work on the SIDS-GBN, vital for private sector partnerships, the SIDS National Focal Points (NFP) network and others. Approximately **US\$500,000** was raised, which supported, amongst others the SIDS-GBN Forum at SIDS4, and went to the support the Annual SIDS NFP meeting held in 2024.

M&E Framework

Working jointly with DESA, OHRLLS has led the development of the ABAS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework, which sets out a focused, actionable set of targets and indicators aligned with the 2030 Agenda and other global frameworks. To guide this process, OHRLLS and DESA established the Inter-Agency Task Force on ABAS (IATF-ABAS) and convened five times between September 2024 and June 2025. The Framework has been shaped through regular consultations with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) at both expert and Permanent Representative levels, including a dedicated expert workshop held on 19–20 May. OHRLLS and DESA have also worked closely with the UN Statistical Division and Custodian Agencies to ensure the indicators are relevant, measurable, and can realistically be reported on for SIDS. Member States have been engaged on 11 December 2024 and 28 May 2025, with a final consultation scheduled for June, ahead of the M&E Framework's inclusion in the Secretary-General's report on ABAS. Validation exercises will follow between July and September 2025 before the M&E Framework is included in the annual SIDS resolution. OHRLLS will coordinate with the NFPs and RCs system in SIDS countries to ensure this work is strongly informed and adapted to suit the needs of SIDS and their national context. The Framework will support data-informed decision-making, highlight priority areas, strengthen accountability, and mobilize resources—thereby enhancing resilience through robust reporting systems. OHRLLS has commenced work to develop a data platform, as currently outlined in Discussion Paper 3 of the IATF-ABAS on Governance and Institutional Arrangements for the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The data platform will enhance visibility and accessibility of data for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, including data collected under the ABAS M&E framework.

To support national implementation, OHRLLS is also developing a toolkit for National Focal Points. OHRLLS commenced work on this in 2024, through engaging a consultant to deliver a report on Unpacking the ABAS for Mainstreaming and Implementation at the National Level. This work has been informed by the outcomes of the 2024 Annual National Focal Points Meeting convened by OHRLLS in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Once the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is finalized, this report will be used as a foundation for the development of the final toolkit. It is envisaged that the toolkit could include a statistical handbook to guide NFPs in implementing the M&E Framework.

Access to Finance – MVI

Working jointly with DESA, as interim co-secretariat, OHRLLS is supporting advocacy efforts to operationalize the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index. This includes engagement with the MDBs and IFIs, most recently through a roundtable discussion held on the sidelines of the WBG and IMF Spring Meetings in 2025. This discussion was informed by a report produced on MDB Financing and Country Vulnerability that was widely circulated to participants ahead of the roundtable. The report was produced by a consultant engaged by OHRLLS and DESA and provided key findings from an assessment of the World Bank, Asian development Bank, African Development Bank and Inter-American development Bank. This will inform engagement with MDBs and IFIs to operationalize the MVI moving forward. In light of this report, OHRLLS will continue its advocacy efforts building on the outcomes of the roundtable discussion. In this context, OHRLLS looks towards the IDA mid-term review as a strategic opportunity to better incorporate vulnerability into the allocation of development financing and ensure financing better meets the needs of SIDS and other vulnerable countries.

With respect to the UN System, OHRLLS and DESA also engaged a consultant to deliver a report on the UN System's consideration of multidimensional vulnerability and potential use and applicability of the MVI. The final report was shared with UN entities for feedback.

SIDS CoE & Debt sustainability

OHRLLS is supporting the operationalization of the SIDS Centre of Excellence (CoE), which is a key outcome of the ABAS, and coordinating the UN system's combined support to the Centre. The CoE supports resilience-building in SIDS by addressing their priority needs through its four components, the SIDS Global Data Hub, Innovation and Technology Mechanism, Island Investment Forum, and the Debt Sustainability Support Service – for which OHRLLS serves on the Strategic Advisory Group. OHRLLS is supporting the operationalization of the centre through a technical expert who will set up the governance structures for the Centre's four components, ensure broad stakeholder engagement and support resource mobilization for the centre. As such, OHRLLS is supporting the political and economic sustainability of this initiative, by helping to ensure the Centre has essential buy-in from SIDS and Partner Governments, and financial support from multilateral banks and the Private Sector. Hereby, OHRLLS' support adds to the credibility of the Centre, by ensuring broad stakeholder engagement and robust governance structures, which contributes to ensuring this initiative can support the long-term resilience of SIDS at the national and regional level.

SIDS National Focal Point Network

The SIDS National Focal Points (NFPs) Network has an integral role to play in supporting the localization, implementation and monitoring at the country level of the ABAS. To support the network, a SIDS NFP engagement strategy was launched at SIDS4. Additionally, in its annual meeting, held in Vanuatu in October 2024, the SIDS NFP network discussed ABAS in detail to ensure effective understanding and implementation, explored challenges and opportunities, shared experiences and best practice approaches, while emphasizing the important role of enhancing coherence in its implementation at the global, regional and local level. The meeting underscored collaboration with the UN System, including Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams, and UN Regional Commissions and strengthening NFP Partnerships, to foster stronger relationships and collaborative efforts among NFPs to support ABAS implementation, and discussed the importance of monitoring and evaluation and NFPs' potential role in these processes, supported with the NFP toolkit OHRLLS is developing.

Partnerships and SIDS-GBN

OHRLLS is strengthening resilience in SIDS by mobilizing private sector support through the SIDS Global Business Network (GBN). The 2024 GBN Forum, held during the Fourth International Conference on SIDS in Antigua and Barbuda, produced key recommendations and action points which will guide engagement leading up to the 2026 Biennial Forum. These outcomes were further refined with private sector input during a follow-up webinar in November 2024, ensuring alignment with SIDS

priorities and fostering ownership. To build momentum for the 2026 biennial GBN, OHRLLS supported private sector participation in the Asia-Pacific Business Forum, April 2025, and hosted a side event on the GBN at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, in June 2025. In response to paragraph 37 of the ABAS, and informed by recommendations from Member States, the UN system, and civil society on strengthening the SIDS Partnerships Framework and the SIDS-GBN and its Forum, OHRLLS developed a new strategy and work plan with the aim to increase engagement of, and coordinated support for, private sector representatives. These efforts reinforce the critical role of the SIDS private sector in implementing the ABAS and contribute to building a more resilient and engaged business community.

Inter-Agency Working Group – 2050 Strategy

OHRLLS also led the UN Inter-Agency Working Group to advocate at the global level for support in implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, - a key regional framework for sustainable development and regionalism in the Pacific. This included coordinated efforts to elevate Pacific priorities within the UN system and global fora, and to ensure alignment with the ABAS. As part of this, OHRLLS supported the Secretary-General's visit to the Pacific in 2024 which helped amplify the voices of Pacific SIDS. In parallel, the Office actively engaged with the Pacific Islands Forum's Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF), a regionally owned and led initiative aimed at financing community-level climate and disaster resilience projects.

PART B - COHERENT AND EFFECTIVE 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 (QCPR) 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.

1. Coherent and effective UN system support to SIDS (For UN System Responses, 750 words)

- i. What challenges are encountered by UN agencies, to deliver a 'whole-of-system response' in addressing the needs, risks and vulnerabilities and to provide development programmes that address the underlying drivers of needs in SIDS?
- ii. What percentage of your entity's programming expenditures on development activities in SIDS in 2024 were allocated to joint programmes? What percentage will be allocated in 2025?
- iii. What are the lessons learned, challenges and best practices of the UNSCDF (including multi-country frameworks) and their respective Country Implementation Plans (CIPs) in promoting joint programming?
- iv. What improvements would you recommend enhancing the UN's system-wide approach to capacity development in SIDS?

- v. How can the UN better partner with regional development stakeholders e.g. CARICOM Secretariat, SPC, PIF, SPREP etc to improve programme delivery, improve coherence and avoid duplication

A key challenge in delivering a coordinated, system-wide response to the needs of SIDS is the multitude of UN entities, with varying degrees of staff and budget constraints, providing support through individual mandates, across international, regional, and national levels. This fragmentation can hinder coherence and impact. OHRLLS plays a central role in addressing this challenge by leading and facilitating several key coordination mechanisms. At the global level, it co-chairs the Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) with UN DESA, which convenes UN entities and relevant intergovernmental organizations to align support to SIDS. Together with DESA, OHRLLS also leads the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on the ABAS, mandated to develop the ABAS' monitoring and evaluation framework. To ensure coherence of UN support at the global level to the Pacific SIDS, OHRLLS convenes the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent which includes coordination and information sharing with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. At the national level, OHRLLS engages with Resident Coordinator Offices to align UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks with ABAS, convenes the National Focal Points Network to support country-level coordination, and mobilizes private sector engagement through the SIDS Global Business Network. The Office is also co-Secretariat of the Steering Committee for SIDS Partnerships which convenes the annual multi-stakeholder dialogue on SIDS partnerships and the annual SIDS partnerships awards.

These mechanisms help deliver more coherent and aligned capacity development support across the UN system. To enhance this work, it is recommended that sufficient resources continue to be allocated to these coordination functions, and that engagement with regional development stakeholders—such as CARICOM, SPC, and SPREP—is further strengthened to improve programme delivery, coherence, and to avoid duplication, noting that OHRLLS is already engaging PIF, through the IAWG.

For Governments

- vi. 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)

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.

- vii. 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)

The General Assembly, in its resolution 56/227, established the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, with the objective of ensuring the effective implementation of the programmes of action for least

developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. According to this mandate, OHRLLS places great importance on promoting system-wide support for SIDS, with a focus on ensuring that assistance is harmonized, coherent, and effectively delivered.

Since its establishment in 2001, OHRLLS has played a central role in advocating and mobilizing resources for SIDS, strengthening partnerships that drive implementation, as well as in ensuring coherent support for SIDS across global, regional, and national levels. This ranges from supporting intergovernmental processes to establishing the National Focal Points network, in collaboration with Resident Coordinators, Regional Commissions and other stakeholders, including CARICOM Secretariat, SPC, PIF, and SPREP. OHRLLS also supports the SIDS Partnerships Framework and created the SIDS Global Business Network as a platform for increased private sector engagement in the SIDS agenda.

With the adoption of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), these mandates have been further strengthened, which includes developing and implementing the M&E Framework for ABAS. In considering the potential establishment of a dedicated UN-SIDS coordinating entity, OHRLLS stresses that any such decision must be guided by an objective and evidence-based assessment. To this end, an independent external review of the current UN system's support to SIDS is recommended to provide concrete steps on the way forward, while ensuring that ongoing implementation activities continue at the highest quality. OHRLLS underscores that while creating a single entity may offer value, other avenues may exist to ensure harmonized support to SIDS. Ultimately, clarity of roles and mandates, as well as enhanced coordination across the UN system remain essential to ensuring efficient and impactful support for SIDS.

Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs Plus (ECESA 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 (ECESA 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. ECESA Plus meets regularly to *inter alia* SIDS related matters and is convened by the Under Secretary General of DESA.

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

OHRLLS and DESA can convene and co-chair a regular meeting at the principal level (perhaps twice a year) dedicated to SIDS issues. The agenda of these sessions can be informed by the output of the ABAS M&E Framework, as well as from other SIDS-related processes, including Regional Reviews, etc. It can serve as a high-level review of the Implementation Matrix as well.

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)

The HLPF SIDS Session should be guided by the following:

- The session should dedicate adequate time to review progress in implementing ABAS, especially with regard to the SDGs under review and their interlinkages, using the ABAS M&E Framework as its basis.



- Session's thematic reviews of progress on the SDGs/ABAS, including cross-cutting issues, should be supported by inputs from the Regional Commissions, and other intergovernmental bodies and forums (dedicated to SIDS, e.g. UNIDO Ministerial). The session should also continue to engage all relevant stakeholders.
- Consideration should be given to a presentation on the M&E Framework outputs (as well as from other relevant processes) under related themes of ABAS along with the keynote address, which should be more action/solutions oriented.
- Panels should include more focus on commitments/best practices as well as outputs from SIDS NFP process.