

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).

Inputs from UNICEF:

UNICEF has supported the implementation of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014–2024) and is now actively supporting the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS). Our efforts are focused on accelerating support for mitigation and adaptation measures that ensure infrastructure, social services, communities, and individuals are climate-responsive and resilient to crises such as pandemics and natural disasters.

Given the deep interlinkage between climate and economic resilience in SIDS, UNICEF is contributing to the development of climate-resilient, affordable, and safe service delivery models, while also supporting income generation and business development programmes. In parallel, UNICEF is working to build shock-responsive and resilient systems and communities by applying multi-hazard risk analysis and integrating development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding interventions.

Eastern Caribbean

The UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area has implemented several resilience-building activities. For example, through the launch of *Climate FunDoo*, 236 young people across the subregion completed a climate literacy course. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, teachers from 19 schools were trained to incorporate a Climate Change-Disaster Risk Reduction curriculum into the lower secondary level.

UNICEF also supported the the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Youth Panel during the Caribbean NDC Investment Forum in March 2025, providing youth with a platform to influence climate finance policy. In Saint Lucia,

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

children's needs were reflected in the updated NDC 3.0, supported by youth engagement activities that reached 764 students and facilitated internships in nine government agencies.

National Adaptation Plans and NDCs in Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, and Saint Kitts and Nevis were also developed with child-sensitive lenses. UNICEF advocated for Grenada's endorsement of the *Declaration for Children, Youth and Climate Action* (May 2024). Additionally, the *Children's Climate Risk Index – Disaster Risk Model* was piloted in Saint Kitts and Nevis to inform risk-informed planning.

UNICEF deepened cooperation with Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to integrate child-focused data into the *Caribbean Community Risk Information Tool*, strengthening disaster risk assessment capabilities across the region.

Post-Hurricane Beryl, UNICEF reactivated national WASH coordination groups in Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Activities included the distribution of hygiene supplies, water trucking, and post-disaster needs assessments. In Trinidad and Tobago, 25 members of the WASH coordination group received training on information management and accountability to affected populations. A national WASH response plan was also developed.

In collaboration with the Caribbean Chambers of Commerce (CARICHAM), UNICEF supported 20 private sector representatives in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to validate a *Family-Friendly Business Continuity Checklist*, designed to safeguard children and families during crises.

Pacific

Building on the momentum from the SIDS4 Children and Youth Action Summit in May 2024, UNICEF Pacific advanced regional cooperation through key partnerships and platforms. UNICEF supported youth engagement at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in Tonga, where SIDS youth priorities were integrated into regional policy discussions following direct advocacy with the UN Secretary-General by Ms. Adelaide Matile Nafoi from Samoa. This resulted in clear directions for UN Resident Coordinators to coordinate implementation support across the Pacific.

Additionally, Mr. Penisimani Hopoate successfully presented SIDS4 youth outcomes to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) Civil Society Organization Forum, ensuring youth voices were included in policy recommendations are tabled during the Pacific leaders meeting.

UNICEF contributed to the *13th Commonwealth Youth Forum Declaration* during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) Youth Forum in Samoa in October 2024, in Samoa, led in part by a SIDS4 youth delegate from Fiji. Key policy recommendations included expanded youth participation, improved digital and climate finance access, and strategies for economic diversification.

A new Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) was finalised in 2024, establishing a structured collaboration across seven areas— health and nutrition, child protection and wellbeing, education, early childhood development, social policy, innovation, and disaster risk reduction—aligned with the 2050 *Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. This framework provides coordinated support for child-focused development initiatives across 18 Pacific Island Countries and Territories which have direct linkages to SIDS goals.

Ahead of SIDS4, UNICEF facilitated youth consultations across eight Pacific countries, engaging 180 young people aged 15-35 on themes such as climate change, education, access to digital technology, health services and violence prevention. The findings shaped the *Pacific Youth Consolidated Report*, highlighting access to technology, quality education, and unemployment as top priorities.

Papua New Guinea

UNICEF Papua New Guinea works closely with the government and its partners to promote wellbeing and resilience of children and youths. This objective is being pursued by integrating resilience building, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into all sectoral programmes. Specifically, UNICEF focuses on the development of resilient, cost-effective and safe water and sanitation solutions tailored to isolated and underserved communities, including informal urban settlements. This includes targeted support for disaster and climate risk assessments, as well as capacity building for governments and partners to facilitate comprehensive planning, coordination and monitoring. These efforts are directed towards enhancing disaster and climate resilience, mitigating environmental degradation, and promoting low-emission development and environmental sustainability. Furthermore, UNICEF is collaborating with the Ministry of Health to enhance the resilience of health infrastructure to disasters and climate change and with the Ministry of Education to strengthen emergency preparedness, climate resilience, and disaster risk management, with a focus on engaging youth and local communities in these initiatives.

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 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)
- 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)

Inputs from UNICEF (question 1 and 2):

UNICEF remains committed to providing tailored development cooperation to SIDS, aligned with the objectives of the ABAS. In recognition of the distinct challenges facing SIDS, UNICEF works to design and implement programmes that are context-specific, equity-focused, and grounded in the rights and needs of children and young people.

UNICEF's approach recognizes that resilience is built through strong and inclusive systems, especially in social services and disaster risk management. Development cooperation must therefore be adapted not only to the geographic and economic features of SIDS, but also to their

demographic realities—particularly the significant proportion of children and youth. Throughout its work, UNICEF actively engages with regional bodies, national governments, youth organisations, and other partners to shape long-term, scalable solutions.

1. Strategies to Improve and Deliver Tailored Development Support to SIDS

Shock-Responsive Systems (SRS) Approach: UNICEF's *shock-responsive systems (SRS)* approach has become a key pillar in its development cooperation model across the Eastern Caribbean. The strategy is built around four areas of system strengthening governance, legal and policy frameworks; disaster financing; data collection and analysis; and programme design and service delivery. This model is designed to enhance government capacities to respond effectively during emergencies while maintaining continuity in essential services, particularly for children and the most vulnerable.

In practice, this includes strengthening national WASH and education coordination mechanisms, supporting the development of child protection toolkits, and advancing country-level shock-responsive social protection. UNICEF's comparative advantage lies in its sustained technical engagement with ministries of education, health, social development, and disaster management. With a permanent presence at both national and local levels, and a dual development–humanitarian mandate, UNICEF is uniquely positioned to deliver cross-sectoral support. Furthermore, its ability to convene key partners—such as the private sector, academia, IFIs, and NGOs—allows for more integrated and scalable resilience-building efforts.

Regional Partnership Framework: In 2024, UNICEF Pacific and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) finalised a Memorandum of Understanding that defines systematic regional cooperation across seven key sectors: health and nutrition, education, child protection, social policy, early childhood development, innovation, and disaster risk reduction. This partnership is directly aligned with the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* and allows for joint programming that is responsive to Pacific-specific contexts and priorities. needs.

Youth-Centred Development Cooperation: Following the *SIDS4 Children and Youth Action Summit*, UNICEF Pacific and UNFPA as co-chairs of the Pacific UN Inter- Agency for Adolescents and Youth, and in partnership with OHCHR, and ILO, continued to elevate the voice of young people through formal channels such as the *Pacific Youth Development Framework* review and the 2024 Pacific Regional Ministerial Meeting on Youth. With over 60% of the population in Pacific SIDS under the age of 30, such efforts are essential to ensure that policy responses are informed by the needs, perspectives, and leadership of youth. Expected results include enhanced policy development informed by youth perspectives, increased civic engagement, and strengthened capacity for youth-led development initiatives.

Climate-Responsive Programming: UNICEF Pacific developed climate-resilient programming specifically addressing Pacific vulnerabilities, including sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and freshwater scarcity. Initiatives include climate-resilient WASH systems in Fiji and Vanuatu, involving community-based water safety planning and disaster-resilient infrastructure. Expected results include enhanced community resilience to climate shocks, improved water security, and reduced vulnerability of essential services during disasters.

Multi-Country Service Delivery Models: In recognition of the structural limitations of many SIDS—including small population sizes and dispersed geographies—UNICEF has implemented multi-country frameworks that enable efficient resource allocation and knowledge sharing. UNICEF Pacific Multi-Country Office model, for instance, allows for specialized technical support across countries while maintaining local adaptation. Expected results include improved cost-effectiveness of programming, enhanced technical capacity across smaller SIDS, and strengthened regional learning mechanisms.

Green and Renewable Energy Transition for Youth and Education: The SDG Joint Programme for Green and Renewable Energy Transition for Youth and Education initiative is a 12-month programme aimed at enhancing climate resilience in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, and Saint Lucia. The initiative will directly benefit over 3,500 individuals, including 1,000 children and youth, and will serve as a scalable model for broader sustainable development across the region. The key output will be a skills certificate which teaches blue, green and circular economy concepts with the cross-cutting theme of entrepreneurial development and youth advocacy.

Integrated, Child-Centered Climate Action: In Timor-Leste, UNICEF is embedding climate adaptation across all aspects of child-focused programming. This includes strengthening essential social services – health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection, and social protection – to be climate-smart and shock-responsive. UNICEF is developing proposals for GCF and other global climate financing sources. These proposals aim to mobilize large-scale funding to strengthen resilience, particularly for children who are disproportionately affected by climate shocks. In the meantime, UNICEF has already begun implementing a climate-smart social services programme funded by KOICA (2024–2027) with a total allocation of USD 6.2 million.

Strengthening Social Protection Systems: UNICEF Timor-Leste is working to build shock-responsive social protection systems with focus on child-responsive public finance management that can quickly scale up to support vulnerable families during crises, mitigating negative impacts on children's health, nutrition, and education. This includes exploring flexible cash transfer mechanisms and other safety nets. **Data and Evidence Generation:** Recognizing the data gaps, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Finance through the National Institute of Statistics in strengthening national data collection and analysis capacities. This allows for more precise targeting of interventions and better monitoring of their impact on children's well-being and resilience.

Strengthening Climate Resilience for Children and Communities: UNICEF Papua New Guinea co-chairs the Outcome on Inclusive Human Capital Development under United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in PNG. UNSDCF prioritises environment and climate change, under Outcome 5, in which UNICEF actively contributes to strengthening of resilience and risk reduction for children and families in the face of disasters and crises as a key priority in the current country programme cycle 2024-2028. UNICEF also collaborates with Climate Change and Development Authority (CCDA) in supporting efforts to integrate climate change adaptation and disaster risk management into national development planning. This includes the development of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the implementation of the Climate Change (Management) Act. Expected results include enhanced resilience to climate change impacts, improved disaster preparedness, and strengthened institutional capacities for climate

action. UNICEF-EU and UNICEF-KOICA partnership focusses on supporting climate smart infrastructure and social service pilots, for the eventual scale up to across the country. This partnership focuses on building resilient infrastructure and enhancing community-based adaptation strategies.

2. National Programmes to Develop Resilient SIDS Economies

Investing in Early Childhood Development (ECD): UNICEF co-chairs the *Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Development (PRC4ECD)* and supports systematic investments in early years programming across Pacific SIDS. This includes policy development, workforce training, and service delivery improvements. Every dollar invested in quality early childhood development yields 7-10 dollars in economic returns through improved educational outcomes and workforce productivity. Expected results include enhanced school readiness across Pacific SIDS, improved cognitive development outcomes, and stronger future workforce capacity essential for economic diversification.

Education Systems Strengthening for Economic Competitiveness: UNICEF Pacific prioritizes foundational literacy, numeracy, and digital skills development, with particular focus on green and blue economy skills. Programming focuses on transferable skills that enable economic adaptation. Expected results include improved educational outcomes, enhanced workforce readiness for emerging sectors, and reduced skills gaps that constrain economic growth.

Climate Resilience as Economic Foundation: UNICEF Pacific's climate resilience programming directly supports economic stability by protecting essential infrastructure and services. This includes renewable energy systems for health facilities and schools, climate-smart community planning, and disaster risk reduction training. Expected results include reduced economic losses from climate disasters, enhanced energy security, and improved continuity of essential services that underpin economic activity.

Social Protection for Economic Stability: UNICEF Pacific supports development of shock-responsive social protection systems that serve as economic stabilizers during frequent disasters and economic shocks. This includes child-sensitive disaster risk finance mechanisms and family support systems. Expected results include enhanced household economic resilience, reduced vulnerability during shocks, and improved capacity to maintain economic stability during environmental and economic disruptions.

Health Systems as Economic Infrastructure: Recognizing that health systems are essential economic infrastructure, UNICEF Pacific supports primary health care strengthening with focus on maternal and child health, nutrition, and mental health services. Expected results include improved health outcomes that enhance workforce productivity, reduced healthcare costs, and strengthened human capital foundation for economic growth.

Employability and Entrepreneurship Training: UNICEF Timor-Leste has supported with training on employability skills that equip young people with the competencies needed for the evolving job market. This includes vocational training, digital literacy, and soft skills development. UNICEF is also promoting youth entrepreneurship through fostering youth-led organizations. For instance,

UNICEF has supported mentoring programs for youth organizations in Timor-Leste to help them become sustainable as CSOs.

Piloting Youth-Led Innovation, including Hackathons: UNICEF Timor-Leste champions youth-led innovation as a driver of economic resilience. This includes piloting youth-led innovation initiatives, such as hackathons. These events bring together young people to develop innovative solutions to local challenges, often leveraging technology. This not only fosters creativity and problem-solving skills but also can lead to the creation of new products, services, and entrepreneurial ventures.

While specific comprehensive resource allocations for all these programs are challenging to quantify due to diverse funding streams, UNICEF's emphasis has been on leveraging multiple partnerships, securing climate finance, and prioritizing investments in human capital, particularly youth, to build sustainable and resilient economies. Looking ahead, UNICEF is also supporting green and digital economic transitions. This includes efforts to promote renewable energy, reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, and explore green job opportunities, especially for adolescent girls.

A key focus so far has been on improving the digital infrastructure that can create new economic opportunities, improve government services, and enhance communication and early warning systems, all contributing to economic resilience. For example, Timor-Leste launched its first submarine cable installation in mid-2024, expected to accelerate economic development through high-speed, and in alignment with this, UNICEF, through its education programme, has been leading the modernizing the schools with digital infrastructure for 21st century skills and training, which will have a significant impact on employment scenarios in coming years, with children learning new skills and competencies with digital literacies.

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 (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 to enhance 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

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)

Inputs from UNICEF:

UN agencies face a wide array of challenges when attempting to deliver a “whole-of-system” response to the complex and intersecting needs of SIDS. These challenges reflect broader, systemic issues across the UN system, which are made more acute by the distinctive vulnerabilities of SIDS.

UN Agencies often find themselves, sometimes unintentionally, competing for increasingly scarce funding due to shifting global priorities. At the same time, siloed programming hampers the alignment of resources and actions towards shared outcomes. Limited implementation capacity within SIDS further complicates multi-agency coordination.

A true whole-of-system approach requires the integration of a broad range of programmes, policies, and interventions. These span disaster preparedness, economic development, education, social protection, youth skills development, and environmental sustainability—areas that demand long-term, cross-sectoral planning.

Pacific:

In Pacific SIDS, the interconnectedness of climate, economic, and social vulnerabilities makes integration even more difficult. Sea-level rise, for example, simultaneously affects schools, health services, food security, and livelihoods, requiring coordinated responses from multiple agencies. However, UN entities often operate on different planning cycles and timelines, complicating synchronisation.

The lack of disaggregated and timely climate-related data also hampers coordination and joint learning. Without a unified evidence base, agencies struggle to deliver harmonised and effective responses.

To improve system-wide capacity development in SIDS, several measures are needed. Chief among these is the continued alignment of UN agencies' work through frameworks like the UNSDCF and MSDCF.

In the Pacific, building on the UNICEF–PIFS Memorandum of Understanding, regional coordination should be enhanced through existing Pacific governance structures. Platforms such as the Pacific Islands Forum and the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) offer established mechanisms for collaboration. Rather than creating parallel structures, the UN should strengthen its partnerships with these bodies.

Capacity building must be context-specific, rooted in local realities, and shaped through the active participation of local communities—including marginalised groups. Enhancing climate resilience, such as improving access to and management of climate finance (e.g. the Green Climate Fund), is essential. Public–private partnerships should also be encouraged.

Pacific SIDS require tailored approaches, including multi-country service delivery models suited to small populations, climate-responsive programmes that blend traditional knowledge with modern technology, and youth-centred development. Over 60% of the Pacific population is under 25, and the SIDS4 Children and Youth Action Summit outcomes offer a blueprint for systematic youth engagement across the UN system.

Disaster preparedness remains a core priority. Investment is needed in early warning systems, risk reduction training, and climate-resilient infrastructure. Technological capacity must also be scaled up. Improved digital infrastructure is key to addressing educational gaps and ensuring inclusive learning. Strengthening national data systems will also support better evidence-based planning and monitoring.

Digital solutions in the Pacific must take into account specific challenges such as vulnerabilities in submarine cables, satellite coverage gaps, and affordability. Joint UN investments in regional digital infrastructure can boost both service delivery and coordination.

Human capital development is vital. UNICEF, through Generation Unlimited, is set to launch the Green Rising Initiative in June 2025. This initiative will promote green/blue entrepreneurship, climate leadership and advocacy, community-led climate resilience, and digital skills training, helping young people lead in the blue-green economy.

For the UN to deliver more coherent and sustainable capacity development in SIDS, coordination must be grounded in regional realities. Climate resilience must be a cross-cutting theme, and traditional knowledge systems should be valued. Enhanced resource pooling, joint monitoring, and regional technical support can help overcome the limitations faced by individual SIDS.

Eastern Caribbean

In Eastern Caribbean, UNICEF has a strong record of collaboration with CARICOM. In October 2024, COHSOD endorsed the Transforming Education Task Team—of which UNICEF is a key member—to provide regional coordination and technical support. This will include a Business Model Innovation approach for a regional intervention spanning 19 countries.

There was also close cooperation with CDEMA following Hurricane Beryl in July 2024, involving the mobilisation of over 25 partners and the signing of an MoU to improve national, child-centred disaster risk management. UNICEF ECA has also partnered with the OECS to expand youth engagement through platforms such as U-Report, which registered 6,500 users, and FunDoo, which provided skills-building modules completed by over 4,000 young people in 2024.

Further collaboration could include the creation of a UN–CARICOM Joint Coordination Mechanism. This group could meet regularly to plan, review, and adjust joint efforts. Additional initiatives might involve the co-creation of a UN–CARICOM cooperation strategy aligned with the CARICOM Strategic Plan and the ABAS; aligning the UNSDCF with CARICOM’s sectoral priorities in areas such as climate resilience, food security, and health; and developing more joint programmes and multi-agency projects in priority sectors including disaster risk reduction, education, and digital transformation.

Greater impact could also be achieved by leveraging the UN’s technical expertise and CARICOM’s political legitimacy and regional networks; submitting coordinated funding proposals for region-wide initiatives; supporting regional knowledge platforms on key themes like climate, migration, and gender equality; and encouraging peer learning and South–South exchanges. There is also potential to align policy advice and advocacy positions to present a unified voice in key intergovernmental processes, as well as to support CARICOM’s engagement with global financial institutions in advocating for access to concessional finance and climate funds.

Timor-Leste

In Timor-Leste, the UN system has demonstrated a strong response to national needs during emergencies including the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 floods, and the 2023–2024 drought. These efforts have been appreciated by the Government and affirmed the UN’s role as a trusted partner. The UN Country Team facilitated international appeals and mobilised humanitarian resources for the most vulnerable populations. However, delays in delivery occurred, in part due to procurement constraints and in part due to national decisions that bypassed more effective delivery mechanisms.

To respond sustainably to both existing and emerging emergencies, long-term investment in institutional development is required. While the UN Cooperation Framework (CF) is intended to guide collective action, it often functions more as a reference than a strategic tool for programming alignment or transformative partnerships. Some fragmentation persists across UN agencies.

Sometime, this undermines coherent collective action and limits the operationalization of the "One UN" principle. Despite these challenges, the UNCT has made notable contributions to the six national strategic priorities, with several examples of effective piloting and integration of new practices into national systems. However, the tendency to rapidly scale projects without adequate piloting remains a concern

Capacity development efforts, though relevant, often lack tailoring to context-specific learning needs and institutional readiness. Significant progress has been achieved in supporting regulatory and institutional reforms, yet implementation continues to lag. Moreover, while the UN system has supported extensive data generation, these outputs are insufficiently systematized, limiting their utility for evidence-based decision-making.

In Timor-Leste, UNICEF has generally met funding expectations, enabling the delivery of key interventions in support of national priorities. While some delivery inefficiencies remain, there has been notable progress in improving operational effectiveness. Efforts to strengthen value-for-money are ongoing, with lessons emerging from diverse interventions that can help inform more consistent performance across the portfolio. The UN's strong reputation and trusted partnership with the Government provide a solid foundation for continued refinement and impact.

Governance arrangements around the Cooperation Framework (CF) present both challenges and opportunities. Coordination responsibilities have at times placed a considerable burden on the Resident Coordinator, and the limited staffing of coordination structures has affected overall efficiency. However, the recent establishment of a Programme Management Team presents a timely opportunity to rebalance responsibilities, enhance collaboration across agencies, and improve internal coherence.

Despite these structural constraints, the UN Country Team (UNCT) has made significant contributions to strengthening socio-economic resilience in Timor-Leste. Through targeted support to address structural vulnerabilities, the promotion of local coping mechanisms, and assistance to national institutions in building response and recovery systems, the UN's programming is laying a solid pathway for development acceleration.

As Timor-Leste's first-generation CF, the framework has played a critical role in articulating a shared strategic direction and building early momentum for joint action. Although it has largely served as a guiding reference rather than a binding implementation strategy, it has offered important insights to inform the next planning cycle. UNICEF, as a key member of the UNCT, has demonstrated agility in aligning with national priorities and adapting to emerging needs, contributing to a growing culture of responsiveness and innovation.

Looking ahead, strengthening system-wide coherence in an increasingly complex funding environment will require the adoption of a more integrated 'nexus' approach—one that aligns actions, actors, and areas of intervention. Institutionalising joint programming through a portfolio model, and piloting at least one collaborative initiative under each CF outcome, will be essential to translating strategic intent into sustained, transformative results. A deliberate commitment to iterative learning and disciplined scaling will be key to ensuring that the next generation of cooperation frameworks delivers maximum impact for the people of Timor-Leste.

Papua New Guinea

As part of its own country programme priorities and within the framework of UNSDCF, UNICEF prioritises to strengthen the resilience and reduce the risks of children and families to disasters and crises. This involves a comprehensive risk analysis, covering a range of critical issues affecting children and the wider population in sectors such as WASH, education, health and child protection. In collaboration with the government and partners, a system strengthening approach to various hazards such as floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and health emergencies is being used to promote disaster/climate-friendly policies and practices. These efforts are in line with the UNSDCF objectives of supporting equitable and participatory access to climate-resilient services that improve livelihoods and protect natural resources.

Lessons learned from the UNSDCF include the importance of integrated programming and the need for strong coordination among UN agencies. Challenges involve aligning diverse agency priorities and managing resource limitations.

A dedicated and resourceful entity/unit may be effective to improve coordination, coherence and effectiveness of UN support for SIDS. Coordinating best practice/knowledge exchange among SIDS countries, joint planning/programming (on issues such as resilience building etc), resource sharing will enhance the coherence and effectiveness of UN support for SIDS.

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)

Inputs from UNICEF:

There is strong and growing consensus across the United Nations system that SIDS face a unique combination of structural vulnerabilities—extreme climate exposure, geographic isolation, limited institutional capacity, and constrained fiscal space—that necessitate a more coherent and tailored response. While numerous inter-agency mechanisms such as UN-Water, UN-Oceans, and UN-Energy have improved system-wide coordination in thematic areas, the absence of a dedicated coordination platform for SIDS leaves a critical institutional gap. Establishing a UN-SIDS mechanism would address this by promoting strategic coherence, enhancing visibility, and improving the delivery of support to SIDS in line with their multidimensional development needs.

Experiences from across the UN system underscore the rationale for such a mechanism. In **Timor-Leste**, although geographically situated in Southeast Asia, the country shares many of the challenges faced by Pacific SIDS. These include fragile service delivery, high climate vulnerability, and marginalisation from both ASEAN and Pacific coordination platforms. As a result, support remains fragmented, and global SIDS dialogues often overlook its specific circumstances. A UN-SIDS mechanism could bridge these gaps, facilitating inclusive participation, aligning global frameworks with regional priorities, and strengthening access to climate finance and technical cooperation.

In the **Eastern Caribbean**, the multi-country model employed by UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area Office demonstrates how a coordinated approach can serve diverse contexts while addressing shared vulnerabilities. Caribbean SIDS, while culturally and economically distinct, are collectively exposed to frequent climate shocks and face systemic risks that are both recurrent and escalating. A UN-SIDS platform could pool expertise, promote joint programming, and ensure that policy and financing efforts reflect the region's priorities. Importantly, it would also amplify advocacy for SIDS in global processes where their needs are often underrepresented, such as climate negotiations, trade discussions, and international financing dialogues.

From the **Pacific**, the case for specialised coordination is particularly compelling. The UNICEF-PIFS Memorandum of Understanding has enabled structured, regionally aligned engagement in areas including health, education, child protection, and resilience. This partnership—anchored in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent—demonstrates the value of SIDS-specific coordination that is embedded in regional governance. The outcomes of the SIDS4 Children and Youth Action Summit further highlight the cross-cutting nature of SIDS priorities, especially those of young people, which require inter-agency responses beyond individual mandates.

In **Papua New Guinea**, there is currently no single UN entity with dedicated responsibility for SIDS. Establishing a dedicated UN-SIDS coordination mechanism could serve as a central driver for promoting system-wide collaboration on SIDS-related issues. This would help ensure a more coherent and integrated response, streamline efforts, and reduce duplication across the UN system.

A future UN-SIDS mechanism should be designed to complement, not duplicate, existing structures. It could coordinate climate-responsive programming, standardise vulnerability assessments, support innovative financing solutions, facilitate youth engagement, and promote data-driven accountability across the system. By anchoring efforts in regional institutions and using multi-country frameworks, the mechanism would enhance delivery efficiency and reduce duplication.

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 Affairs (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 ECESA Plus be used to more effectively harness UN agency contributions and to amplify systemic synergies?)

Inputs from UNICEF:

ECESA Plus provides a critical platform for aligning and leveraging the strengths of the UN system in a coherent and coordinated manner, particularly in the follow-up to politically agreed frameworks such as ABAS.

To harness agency contributions more effectively and strengthen systemic synergies, UNICEF identifies several opportunities within the ECESA Plus mechanism:

- **Clarifying roles and responsibilities:** The UN Implementation Matrix developed by ECESA Plus is a valuable tool for mapping agency contributions. UNICEF supports further refinement of this tool to clearly delineate which agencies are leading, supporting, or contributing to specific deliverables. Greater clarity will enable a more efficient division of labour, prevent duplication, and help identify operational gaps at an early stage.
- **Promoting inter-agency collaboration on cross-cutting issues:** Many ABAS priorities—such as resilience-building, climate action, and youth empowerment—require integrated, multi-sectoral approaches. ECESA Plus can be further utilised to convene **dedicated thematic working groups or clusters** that draw on the comparative strengths of different UN entities. These clusters could focus on core SIDS priorities including climate resilience, the blue/green economy, development financing, disaster risk reduction, and digital transformation in education, supporting joint planning and implementation aligned with both global and regional frameworks.
- **Using ECESA Plus as a learning platform:** Regular meetings under ECESA Plus offer a space for field-based learning and peer exchange, including for UN Country Teams. UNICEF encourages the inclusion of **structured knowledge-sharing sessions** during these meetings to disseminate good practices and innovations across SIDS regions. This would help scale successful models and promote adaptability across different contexts.
- **Establishing a dedicated SIDS reporting mechanism:** To enhance transparency and accountability, ECESA Plus could introduce a focused mechanism to systematically track agency contributions and outcomes. This would support evidence-based decision-making and provide a clearer picture of progress made under the ABAS Implementation Matrix.
- **Strengthening country-level coherence:** ECESA Plus deliberations should be meaningfully linked to Resident Coordinator-led processes. Country teams need targeted support to interpret and implement ECESA Plus guidance in a way that translates global commitments into coherent, context-sensitive programming at the national and subnational levels.
- **Fostering alignment with regional and subregional bodies:** ECESA Plus could strengthen engagement with regional organisations such as **CARICOM and the OECS**, ensuring that UN system efforts are well aligned with regional strategies. Collaboration with these entities would support coherence, avoid duplication, and enhance regional ownership.
- **Engaging external partners and mobilising resources:** ECESA Plus can also play a key role in enhancing partnerships with international financial institutions, bilateral donors, and

the private sector. These relationships are essential for scaling up resource mobilisation and leveraging technical expertise in support of SIDS priorities.

- **Supporting system-wide advocacy:** ECESA Plus could serve as a platform to champion predictable and sustainable financing for SIDS and raise their visibility in global forums. Coordinated **cross-agency advocacy campaigns** could spotlight the unique challenges and development innovations emerging from SIDS, helping to build political momentum and public support.
- **Enhancing resource efficiency and joint delivery:** By using the Implementation Matrix to identify overlapping mandates, ECESA Plus can encourage **pooled funding mechanisms and shared delivery platforms**, helping to reduce fragmentation and increase the impact of UN support.
- **Integrating child rights and equity:** UNICEF urges ECESA Plus to adopt a consistent equity lens across all follow-up actions. The rights of children and other marginalised groups must be fully reflected in programme design and implementation. The Secretary-General's **Guidance Note on Child Rights Mainstreaming** should be operationalised across the Matrix, with UNICEF ready to provide technical support in this regard.

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)

Inputs from UNICEF:

The HLPF session on SIDS should be structured to showcase concrete, country-led results, promote integrated solutions, and reinforce collective accountability.

From UNICEF's perspective, the session could open with a segment that centres the perspectives, strategies and ideas of children and young people. This approach proved highly effective during the UNICEF Board Meeting in September 2024, when a 17-year-old youth activist from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines spoke movingly about the personal and societal impacts of Hurricane Beryl. Starting with these voices sets a compelling tone, grounding the session in lived realities and underscoring the urgency of action.

Following this opening, the session should include a focused political segment featuring SIDS leaders and key partners to reaffirm high-level commitments and signal continued momentum. A data-driven “progress spotlight” could then highlight implementation in key ABAS priority areas—resilience-building, climate adaptation, and human capital development—while also providing space for civil society, children and youth voices. A system-wide review should draw on the ABAS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, aligned with SDG indicators but responsive to SIDS-specific contexts. This would provide a structured assessment of UN system support and help identify where further action is needed. A participatory dialogue segment should follow, bringing together a wide range of

stakeholders to share solutions tailored to the unique vulnerabilities and strengths of SIDS. A forward-looking dialogue should then outline practical next steps, including policy shifts, financing strategies, and opportunities for collaboration that can accelerate implementation.

Throughout, the session should maintain a children and youth-centred approach. Building on the outcomes of the SIDS4 Children and Youth Action Summit, their participation should be institutionalised through dedicated panels and mechanisms.

Finally, the climate-development nexus must be embedded in the overall approach. For SIDS, climate resilience underpins all aspects of sustainable development. The session should therefore integrate climate indicators with economic and social metrics, reflecting the interconnected nature of these challenges and helping to shape more responsive and resilient policy pathways.