

AIS Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States

Session 6: Unlocking meaningful and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships to support implementation of sustainable development in the AIS region

25 July 2023, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM, Balaclava, Mauritius

Background note

Introduction

When Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to the sustainable development of small island developing states (SIDS) in the preamble of the SAMOA Pathway - the outcome document of the 2014 Third International Conference on SIDS - they stressed that this could only be achieved with a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society, and the private sector all working together.

The SAMOA Pathway further noted that empowered, genuine, and durable partnerships are based on mutual collaboration and ownership, trust, alignment, harmonization, respect, results orientation, accountability and transparency and that political will is required to undertake and implement long-term, predictable commitments. Partnerships in all their forms, regardless of size and economic value, should be utilized, enhanced and strengthened to ensure the meaningful engagement of various actors (including local authorities, civil society and non-governmental organizations, foundations, the private sector and international financial institutions) and should work to achieve the SIDS vision of self-reliance and to cooperate in the implementation of national policies that help fulfil the commitments made in the SAMOA Pathway.

The SAMOA Pathway called for recommendations to establish a partnership framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States. The SIDS Partnership Framework, formally established in December 2015 by General Assembly resolution 70/202, is designed to monitor progress of existing, and stimulate the launch of new, genuine, and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of SIDS. Guided by a member States driven Steering Committee, the framework has ensured that SIDS partnerships have remained high on the UN's agenda and provided a multi-stakeholder platform for reviewing progress made by SIDS partnerships, the launch of new partnerships, and for sharing of good practices and lessons learned among all stakeholders, on an annual basis.

Partnerships become much more effective when there is an enabling environment that can foster collaboration across all societal sectors, including policies to incentivize and support multi-stakeholder partnerships, capacity building efforts, financing to drive incentives for cross sectorial partnering, and platforms for brokering partnerships and engagement of all stakeholders.

The session will explore how we can nurture an enabling environment that is supportive of partnership building in the AIS region. The session will also explore how the SIDS Partnership Framework¹ can be strengthened to support meaningful and effective partnerships in AIS.

Challenges

Effective partnering is about leveraging and optimizing the combination of available resources to achieve mutually agreed objectives and goals. This is particularly challenging in SIDS, where a severely limited resource base and formidable pressures are the norm. Due in large measure to small landmass, geographic distances and small populations, SIDS face an extraordinary gap between available resources (natural, human, and financial) and the needs of their populations.

An analysis on partnerships conducted for the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway², identified several challenges around the development of partnerships in the AIS region, including lack of partnering capacity, limited sustainable financing, lack of monitoring and evaluation, digital infrastructure, and an inadequate enabling environment to support collaboration across stakeholders from societal sectors.

Recommendations for action

- Create policy frameworks that build an enabling environment to initiate and sustain partnerships, including through directives and circulars that guide and encourage collaboration with stakeholders, to ensure that such collaboration is institutionalized and consistently practiced.
- Establish platforms that convene stakeholders around sustainable development priority areas and foster dialogue, knowledge exchange, and support the creation and implementation of partnerships for AIS.
- Create inclusive mechanisms for multi-sector engagement through round tables, commissions, or expert panels to address specific challenges and to inform decision-making processes.
- Provide funding and financial instruments to support collaboration and partnership initiatives that incentivize collaboration and help stakeholders implement their ideas and projects.
- Foster collaboration through public-private partnerships, where government entities, multi-lateral development banks and private sector organizations work together to achieve common goals.
- Consistent capacity building efforts are required, especially within governments, to address turnover of staff and ensure continuous knowledge transfer.

¹ Member states have decided, through General Assembly resolution 77/245, that the 4th International Conference on SIDS will assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the SAMOA Pathway, including the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework.

² Partnerships for SIDS, UN DESA, 2019, https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/24591SIDS_Partnerships_May_2019_web.pdf

Guiding questions

- What are the enabling factors and policies that will help scale up collaborations in the AIS region?
- What capacity development efforts are needed to develop, implement, and sustain effective multi-stakeholder partnerships?
- How can we support the establishment of platforms that bring together stakeholders to foster the creation and implementation of multi-stakeholder partnerships?
- How can we support and sustain inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement to meaningfully inform decision making processes?
- How can we ensure sustained funding to build multi-stakeholder partnerships in the AIS region?