

## **Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**

1. What specific activities or programmes, if any, has your government, organisation or agency implemented or introduced, specifically targeting the vulnerabilities of SIDS? Please cite examples of solutions seeking vulnerability reduction.

During this reporting period, the Commonwealth implemented a few programmes specifically targeting the vulnerabilities of SIDS as follows:

1. The Commonwealth has embarked on a study that will seek to review the feasibility of using vulnerability as a criterion for accessing concessional financing. Given general acknowledgement of small states vulnerability by IFIs, this study will outline how vulnerability indices can be applied as complementary criterion for access to concessional finance. In this study, both the UN and Commonwealth Economic Vulnerability Indices will be used to draw up a common set of 'high vulnerable' and 'low vulnerable' countries. The analysis will identify and analyze highly vulnerable countries, majority of which are small states, that have access to concessional finance as well as those that do not have access to IDA concessional finance or the Small Islands Exception (SIE). Finally, this study will present different options of using vulnerability, both on its own and as a compliment of income levels, as a criterion for access to concessional finance. The study will also present the impact of these scenarios to the allocation of funds.
2. In pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development for its small member states, the Commonwealth is drawing on over four decades' worth of experience to propose national and international policy responses to enable small states to build their resilience against their unique vulnerabilities, including achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Commonwealth aims to combine research and advocacy to continue this work at a regional level through its strategic foresight 2050 project.

The strategic foresight project was piloted in the Caribbean region in 2015 and culminated in the release of the report titled "*Achieving a Resilient Future for Small States: Caribbean 2050*", which was launched at the 4<sup>th</sup> Global Biennial Conference on Small States, which was held in Seychelles in May 2016. This project, which is currently being replicated in the Pacific region, examines whether current development strategies set the region on a path to achieve its sustainable development goals and what will happen if it continues on its current policy path. It also seeks to examine how the countries of the Pacific region can best position themselves to capitalize on their resources and

opportunities in the next 35 years. Titled: "A Sustainable Future for Small States: Pacific 2050", this project brings together empirical studies on several key development priorities and identifies both the current trajectory and the likely scenarios by 2050 if the current trend is continued. It also offers recommendations and an action plan to address the challenges the region is facing. The findings of this research-based initiative seeks to encourage different thinking and a fresh approach to eradicating the persisting challenge of sluggish growth. This study will be launched by June 2017.

3. The Commonwealth rolled the resilience profiling project known as "Building the Resilience of Small States" to Africa and Seychelles was the first country to be profiled. Through the lens of Governance, the resilience profiling exercise aims to identify and address the manifestation and symptoms of vulnerability within the broader country policy framework and strengthen the understanding of resilience in small states. Ultimately, the country profile helps to define areas for policy intervention and technical support for resilience building at the country level. In Seychelles, the profiling exercise enabled the assessment of the availability of appropriate institutions, including their interaction and the environment they operate in the broad areas of economic, social, environmental governance and, as a result, clarified the overall governance status of the country. Results for Seychelles profiling are expected in June 2017.

The "Building the Resilience of Small States" project was piloted in the Caribbean (Barbados, Saint Lucia, Grenada, and Jamaica) and the Pacific (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tonga) in 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively.

4. In September 2016, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Malta signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoA) to establish the Commonwealth Small States Centre of Excellence (SSCoE) which will impart targeted capacity-building programmes and interventions to small states. The Centre will serve as a focal point for sharing best practices and facilitate targeted capacity-building programmes in areas that benefit small states including: public debt management, natural disaster management and mitigation, connectivity, diplomacy, women and enterprise, and ocean governance. With predominantly internet-based capacity-building programmes, the Centre will: serve as a focal point for sharing of best practices; and maintain links with development agencies, academia and other relevant organisations to further the interest of the Centre and the development of small states.

2. To what extent has your Government mainstreamed the SAMOA Pathway and/or the SDGs into national development plans and/or programmes? Please indicate any challenges and/or opportunities.

3. To what extent has your Organisation, integrated the Samoa Pathway and or the SDGs into co-operation frameworks, programmes and activities, to ensure effective follow-up and implementation at regional and national level?

The Commonwealth Heads of Government in 2015 urged the Secretariat to ensure the alignment of its strategic planning to the SDGs. The new Strategic Plan 2017/18 - 2020/21 targets results that are aligned to the achievement of 12 of the 17 Goals. The Strategic Results Framework also incorporates Tier I and II indicators where appropriate to track countries' status and progress on intermediate and strategic outcomes of the Strategic Plan. In delivering the strategic plan, the Secretariat will ensure that programmes and the provision of technical assistance strengthen members own national plans to achieve their SDG priorities through more evidence-based and participatory planning, monitoring and evaluations. The Secretariat's strategic delivery plan also targets greater national and regional programming coherence, partnerships and networks that will leverage resources, knowledge and learning to the benefit our members.

4. Indicate the extent to which the issues and concerns of SIDS are given due consideration in conferences and processes organized or supported by your organization.

Thirty (30) of the fifty-four (54) members of the Commonwealth are small states. As such, the organization has a good grasp of the challenges and priorities of these countries. The Commonwealth has a dedicated work programme on small states in the broad areas of resilience building, policy research, capacity building and global advocacy. For over four decades, the organisation has consistently engaged in a programme of research and advocacy to draw international attention to small states' challenges. Some key initiatives included the development of vulnerability indices and resilience profiling and governability assessment frameworks.

The Commonwealth also hosts the Global Biennial Conference on Small States where key stakeholders from the Commonwealth and beyond share good practices and discuss small states priorities and plan of action. The organisation has small states offices in Geneva and New York which provide support, guidance and back-up on international trade matters and co-ordinate the Commonwealth's trade-related technical assistance to small states delegations at the office. These efforts have contributed to the growing recognition of small states challenges in the international arena and some progress towards increased levels of support has been registered.

5. In relation to the implementation of the commitments and partnerships announced at the Samoa Conference: <http://www.sids2014.org/partnerships/>

- (i) indicate actions undertaken to date and their outcome(s);
- (ii) indicate what partnerships have been contemplated or have been initiated; and,

- (iii) indicate whether additional partnerships have been registered on the SIDS partnership Platform.