

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

Input of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU):

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

In targeting the vulnerabilities of SIDS, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs) implemented a number of projects and programmes to increase ICT access and use in SIDS to ensure that they are able to benefit from the opportunities offered by ICTs. By helping to bridge the digital divide that separates many SIDS from other developing and developed countries, ITU is facilitating the ongoing efforts towards achieving the post 2030 sustainable development agenda across all the development pillars identified in the Samoa Pathway.

ITU's assistance for SIDS is focused on achieving universal access to telecommunication services, to improve emergency telecommunications, to help SIDS adapt to climate change, develop ICT policies, and to provide guidance in terms of ICT regulations and legislation, particularly in the liberalization of the telecommunication sector and broadband development. Specific activities include the following:

A project to develop satellite communications capacity and emergency communications solutions and a project on climate change adaptation are underway for the Pacific Islands in Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Increased satellite capacity will help these SIDS to increase the communication infrastructure. Through this project ITU also helps these SIDS to mitigate and adapt to climate change challenges, preparedness to better respond to natural disasters, and to set up early warning systems to mitigate the effects of the increasing disasters.

Implementing the Climate Change Adaptation Component of the Satellite Communications, Capacity, and Emergency Communications Solutions Project for the Small Island Developing States of the Pacific in Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu are ongoing activities until 2018. ITU developed a national Computer Incident Response Team (CIRTs) in Barbados and Jamaica. It has also developed and implemented the master Plan for Wireless Broadband Access in Guinea-Bissau.

ITU NBTC Training Program 2015:

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, Thailand supported a capacity building project to enhance the skills of its staff and the telecommunication/ICT stakeholders in different areas of telecommunication/ICT and broadcasting development. This project of capacity building was implemented in Fiji, Kiribati, Lao, Maldives, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

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.

ITU has mainstreamed the needs of SIDS in various activities for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway in promoting equitable and affordable access to ICTs for all with emphasis to rural telecommunication development, development of appropriate infrastructure and introduction of new technologies and services, human resource development, and broadband development and training.

Challenges include the need for SIDS to create an enabling environment and be an early adopter of ICT in order to deliver effectively.

ITU is working to bridge the digital divide by assisting the SIDS through connectivity projects that provide access to ICT facilities, help in reforming their telecommunication sector to introduce new structures, forging partnerships for faster telecommunication development. As a result, SIDS can now use the Internet for development purposes, for example to promote investment and tourism as well as using electronic financial management information systems, national health information systems and biometrics during general elections.

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?

ITU works with governments at national level, with regional, international bodies and the private sector to provide assistance to the SIDS, taking into account their particular vulnerabilities. ITU has integrated the SAMOA Pathway into its programmes and activities that include emergency telecommunications, integrating ICTs in disaster prediction, detection and alerting to ensure the timely flow of vital information during emergencies among stakeholders. The development of National Emergency Telecommunication Plans, Regulatory Frameworks and Standard Operating Procedures to facilitate the incorporation of ICTs in their priorities for sustainable development. Most of ITU's projects and programmes are implemented through the ITU regional offices.

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.

In line with several resolutions, ITU is supporting the SIDS in many areas such as the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, December 2012) which adopted a new resolution on connectivity for SIDS. The resolution called on all SIDS to optimize the power of ICTs as a pillar for sustainable development. The resolution also underlines the need for continued discussions, sharing of knowledge and best practices, and the identification of new connectivity paradigms that could be driven by effective, genuine and durable partnerships. ITU/BDT World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-2014) Action Plan, and in line with Resolution 30 (Rev.Guadalajara Plenipotentiary Conference 2010) of the International Telecommunication Union, ITU will be supporting SIDS by:

- Developing broadband infrastructure in SIDS which is also supported by the agreements signed during the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States 2014 in Apia, Samoa -. For instance, Samoa is about to adopt a broadband plan and recently adopted a Cybercrime Law supported by the ITU-EC funded project
- Supporting SIDS to mitigate and adapt to climate change challenges and to prepare as well as respond better to natural disasters.

- Developing ICT policies, regulations and legislation to advance the development of ICTs in SIDS.
- Fostering and strengthening effective and durable partnerships with member states, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders to implement activities over the next decade based on the outcome document adopted in Apia, Samoa for SIDS.

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 partnership Platform?

ITU continues working with partners and other stakeholders to implement activities with linkage with the Samoa Pathway, the post 2030 development agenda and other international agreed documents to overcome the challenges SIDS face in regard to ICT/broadband/telecommunication services. ITU is determined to work with partners to deliver smarter and low-cost technologies that will fast-track SIDS into the information and knowledge society; as the organization was also very active during the Mauritius International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS.

Paragraph 58 of the Mauritius Strategy adopted in 2005 recognizes science and technology as an enabler and cross-cutting issue for all sectors of SIDS sustainable development, social, economic and environmental sustainability. It calls upon the ITU along with other relevant organizations to support activities on transport and communication in a coordinated manner, in relation to the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The outcome of the Barbados interregional preparatory meeting for the Third International Conference on SIDS held in Bridgetown, Barbados from 26 to 28 August 2013 puts special emphasis on Information communication technologies(ICTs) as crucial in a globalized and interdependent world, in which active involvement in the knowledge economy and greater use of information and communication technologies provide clear opportunities for more efficient and improved provision of services in small island developing states.

It calls for scaled-up efforts by the international community to assist the efforts of SIDS to increase connectivity and the use of information and communication technologies in SIDS, including through greater cooperation and skills training, establishing means and strategies, that entail cyber security strategies and national legislations. Since then, in line with the above ITU has reinforced its actions through different projects and programmes to help the SIDS.

ITU concluded a connectivity agreement with all the eleven Pacific Islands and with industry partners on the development of satellite communications capacity and emergency communications solutions for the Pacific to make broadband accessible and affordable to all the citizens in the Pacific Islands; the project is currently being implemented. The aim is to improve connectivity in remote islands and rural areas of these countries so people living in these areas have access to broadband and faster Internet to foster electronic applications for education, health, agriculture, tourism and all other development issues.

A similar project is being prepared for the Caribbean Islands with the aim of assisting the Caribbean region in the development of satellite communications capacity and emergency communications solutions.

ITU has also signed agreements with the International Telecommunication Satellite Organization (ITSO), Intelsat, Immarast, and Kacific on the development of satellite communications capacity and emergency communications solutions for the Pacific. These partnership projects are being implemented to improve connectivity in the SIDS, in particular in the case of disasters.

ITU has also concluded partnership with Inmarsat, Iridium and Thuraya for the deployment of satellite mobile phones and terminals to any SIDS when they request assistance in the aftermath of a disaster.