



## Concept Note

# Virtual Meeting of National Focal Points (NFPs) of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) Region

**Tuesday, 04 August 2020 8:00am – 10:00am (New York Time)**

*(Virtual Platform)*

## **“Enhancing coherence - A focus on the COVID-19 response”**

The SIDS National Focal Points Network (NFP), established and inaugurated in 2018, facilitates the strengthening of coherence and coordination at the national, regional and global levels on SIDS-related issues and fosters peer-learning and exchange of best practices on the implementation and follow up of the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global frameworks.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a significant health and economic risks to small island developing states. SIDS, who already face challenges pertaining to their limited fiscal space, dependence on trade, tourism, remittances, and high vulnerabilities to external shocks and climate change, bear a disproportionate impact. COVID-19 is generating a further liquidity crisis, with huge negative socioeconomic impacts. SIDS revenue sources including remittances and tourism are badly hit – a devastation to SIDS economies whose “tourism sector accounts for almost 30 per cent of their GDP”. Due to sharp falls in tourism revenues and remittances flows, SIDS are likely to experience a pronounced contraction in 2020, further exacerbating their vulnerability to economic and climatic shocks.

Disproportionately high debt-servicing burdens of many SIDS will weaken their external balance, potentially increasing the likelihood of debt defaults. As food importers, SIDS also face an immense challenge to ensuring food security and nutrition, a juggling feat that requires balancing precarious supply chains in many fronts including health supplies as SIDS respond to COVID-19.

As the COVID-19 response will continue to constrain the fiscal space of SIDS and exacerbate their vulnerabilities to natural disasters brought about by climate change, international support is critical. This also requires a concerted effort to promote coherence and coordination at the national, regional and global levels of the COVID-19 response, in line with the objectives of the SIDS national focal point network.

Against this backdrop, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) will convene virtual regional meetings to provide an opportunity for NFPs:

(i) to share experiences and best practices on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the national, regional and global levels; and

(ii) to continue to share experiences and best practices on mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs into national development processes as well their implementation and follow up, in the context of COVID-19, in line with the principle to “**build back better**”.

#### DRAFT AGENDA

- Welcome remarks
- Response to COVID-19 and emerging priorities – Global
- Response to COVID-19 and emerging priorities – Regional
- Country experiences in response to COVID-19
- Interactive discussion
- Conclusion

