



## Concept Note

# **Virtual Meeting of National Focal Points (NFPs) of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** **Pacific, Caribbean and Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS) SIDS** **Date, time: 22 & 24 November** ***(Virtual Platform)***

**Enhancing coherence in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and SDGs: Focus on COVID-19 recovery and building back better in SIDS – lessons from the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).**

## **Background**

Enhancing coherence in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other <sup>1</sup>global frameworks is essential to respond to the multifaceted challenges facing SIDS. This is particularly relevant in the context of COVID-19 and recovery efforts, as SIDS suffer the most from COVID-19 impacts. The disproportionate impacts on the sustainable development of SIDS include the far-reaching and enduring adverse consequences for poverty eradication, employment, tourism, economic growth and social welfare. With some SIDS projected to experience unprecedented double-digit declines in real GDP, SIDS face a steep recovery slope partly due to their heavy dependence on tourism.

Promoting coherence is a lynchpin for effective implementation. This requires sustained opportunities for coordination, sharing of experiences and mutual learning on SIDS-related issues at the national, regional and global levels. In this context, Voluntary National reviews (VNRs), which play a pivotal role in the follow up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, can also be instrumental to advance broader coherence in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and other global frameworks.

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<sup>1</sup> SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement

Several <sup>2</sup>SIDS have prepared and presented their VNRs to date, a process that does not only identify some key issues in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, but also highlights diverse practices of countries to promote mutual experience sharing and learning across SIDS. In 2021, six SIDS presented their VNRs ([Antigua and Barbuda](#), [Bahamas](#), [Cabo Verde](#), [Cuba](#), [Dominican Republic](#) & [Marshall Islands](#)), while Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Suriname and Tuvalu will present their VNRs in 2022. For the first time, SIDS also prepared, jointly, a section of their VNR's dedicated to their common vulnerabilities and developmental obstacles.

The 2021 reviews were also influenced by the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted plans for recovery and building back better. This provides an important avenue for the sharing of experiences and learning from national experiences within the COVID-19 era. These six SIDS were able to present VNRs that not only brought to the fore some of the impacts of COVID-19 on SIDS, but also the emerging priorities in recovery efforts. <sup>3</sup>Major issues for SIDS regarding implementation of SDGs and SAMOA Pathway in COVID-19 era and beyond cut across issues related to effective COVID-19 response, Climate Change - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation and Resilience Building, Land and Marine Life protection, Human Wellbeing, Employment and Economic Growth, Education/Gender Equality.

Critical issues of finance also permeate the VNRs, as well as global and regional discussions in the wake of COVID-19. SIDS are unequivocal on what they want. On climate finance, for example, they are calling for providers to simplify and harmonize their procedures for efficient access. On debt they are calling multilateral development banks and international financial institutions, to adopt more progressive approaches that provide expanded debt relief to SIDS, through the existing and new financial instruments, including through, inter alia, cancellation, suspensions, rescheduling and restructuring, debt swaps as well as other support measures. The strides in the establishment of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) recognizes the significant challenges that SIDS face in accessing sufficient affordable financing for sustainable development, mainly due to their income categorization which fails to sufficiently recognize many are extremely vulnerable to environmental and economic shocks and are highly dependent on external markets.

Given the central focus on finance in SIDS, OHRLLS will prepare a report on trends in financing for development in SIDS as well as challenges and opportunities for financing the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. The preliminary discussions on finance in the virtual meeting will help inform parts of the report. The full report will be presented at the next in-person meeting of the NFPs.

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<sup>2</sup> 2016: [Samoa](#)

2017: [Belize](#) & [Maldives](#)

2018: [Bahamas](#), [Bahrain](#), [Cabo Verde](#), [Dominican Republic](#), [Kiribati](#) & [Singapore](#)

2019: [Fiji](#), [Mauritius](#), [Nauru](#), [Palau](#), [Saint Lucia](#), [Timor-Leste](#), [Tonga](#) & [Vanuatu](#)

2020: [Barbados](#), [Comoros](#), [Micronesia](#), [Papua New Guinea](#), [Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#), [Samoa](#), [Seychelles](#) & [Trinidad and Tobago](#)

2021: [Antigua and Barbuda](#), [Bahamas](#), [Cabo Verde](#), [Cuba](#), [Dominican Republic](#) & [Marshall Islands](#)

## **The SIDS National Focal Points Network (NFP)**

The SIDS National Focal Points Network (NFP), established and inaugurated in 2018, is an important platform to discuss SIDS related issues and to advance coherence in implementation. The network 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. While the VNRs contain already many interesting examples for mutual learning and sharing, they also identify a need for more attention to these issues and more explicit discussions on strategies for their implementation. These issues and recommended actions to address are invaluable to share and discuss amongst the relevant stakeholders, including the SIDS national focal points.

### **Objectives**

It is in this context that 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 avenue for SIDS NFPs:

(i) to share experiences and best practices, drawing from 2021 VNRs - which contain already many interesting examples for mutual learning and sharing - on the implementation SAMOA Pathway and SDGs.

(ii) to continue to share experiences and draw best practices on mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs into national development processes, as well as their implementation and follow up, in the context of COVID-19 recovery efforts, in keeping with *building back better*.

### **Format**

- Online / Virtual

### **Duration**

- 2: 00 Hrs

### **Language**

- **Pacific and Caribbean meeting:** English with interpretation to French and Spanish
- **AIS region:** English with interpretation to French and Portuguese

