

# Outcome Document for the Interregional Preparatory Meeting of the 4th International Conference on SIDS

## Praia (Cabo Verde) Declaration

We, the Governments of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) including the Associate Members of the United Nations Regional Commissions, having met in Praia, Cabo Verde from 30 August to 1 September 2023, in preparation for the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, declare that:

### REAFFIRMING OUR CASE

1. We remain a special case for sustainable development, due to our unique, inherent and particular vulnerabilities, including our small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base, and exposure to exogenous economic, social and environmental shocks. Given the profound paradigm shifts and related uncertainty characterizing the global economy in this decade, and considering the disproportionate impact of multiple crises on us due to our structural vulnerabilities, we prioritize building resilience across all three pillars of sustainable development in SIDS over the next decade;
2. We renew our commitment to charting the course towards resilient prosperity for SIDS, which requires robust means of implementation and the fullest support of the international community, as well as the political will of our governments to pursue collective and cooperative action;
3. We commit to build on the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA), the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI), and the SAMOA Pathway and we are determined to take ownership of our own destiny and the pursuit of our sustainable development aspirations through a new Programme of Action for SIDS.
4. We reaffirm that these are stand-alone, comprehensive Programmes of Action that articulate the sustainable development priorities of SIDS and are consistent with 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, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

## WHERE DO WE FIND OURSELVES TODAY?

5. We note with great concern the adverse impacts of climate change continue to pose significant risk to us and our efforts to achieve sustainable development, while representing for many, the gravest of threats to our survival and viability. Our high exposure to the impacts of climate change and disasters have left us suffering from a range of hazards including hurricanes, cyclones, typhoons, drought, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and health crises, resulting in significant economic and infrastructure damage, loss of lives and displacement of people. SIDS are already experiencing loss and damage.
6. We acknowledge with concern that the frequency, intensity and scale of these disasters has negatively affected our debt to GDP ratios, slowing down the rate of implementation of our medium and long-term sustainable development plans, due to the reduction in government revenue and the necessary reallocation of resources to recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.
7. We acknowledge that the 2008-2009 global financial crisis has left us with persistently low growth, high indebtedness, widening inequality and high unemployment. Contractions in income and narrowed fiscal space compounded by heavy debt repayment obligations, sharply declining ODA and significantly reduced access to sources of financing have stymied the capacity of our governments to boost productivity, and to invest in sustainable development and resilience.
8. We also note with great concern that the emergence of multiple crises is further constraining our ability to address our challenges and making it more difficult for us to achieve our goals. Our small, open, undiversified economies have yet to recover from the numerous shocks experienced over the past decade and more. Further, we continue to be challenged by the loss of our skilled and semi - skilled labor and highly professional personnel.
9. We acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic triggered the most acute economic contraction across SIDS, exacerbating fragilities in institutional infrastructure and healthcare systems, revealing inequities in social welfare access and severely impacting social development efforts for SIDS, disrupting trade flows, economies, transport and trade, health and educations systems. The pandemic strained resources which have hindered recovery, increased debt levels, diverted attention and funding.
10. Our post COVID-19 recovery and return to growth has been constrained by multiple factors, including the increased pressure on food, energy and finance, high inflation, rising

global interest rates, tightened financial conditions, high indebtedness, disruptions in supply chains, and geopolitical tensions and global conflicts, together with the adverse impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and the digital divide.

11. We continue to encounter significant limitations in terms of financial resources and access to finance, posing challenges to our ability to effectively implement our sustainable development priorities including the SAMOA Pathway. Difficulties in accessing sufficient financial support including concessional finance have been further compounded by our restricted access to international financing mechanisms and the burden of high levels of debt. These factors limit our ability to allocate the necessary funds for crucial development activities. Additionally, the conventional reliance on GDP/GNI per capita as the sole measure of development has substantially restricted access to international finance sources, particularly affecting SIDS that have graduated from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) status.
12. We call for the adoption of the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) by the 78<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly and its operationalization and implementation by all stakeholders, including its use as a criterion for access to low-cost and long-term financing and debt relief for our countries based on this Index, and its future iterations.
13. We recognize the need for enhanced financing dedicated to resilience building in SIDS and *ex ante* disaster prevention and preparedness through the development of national Disaster Risk Reduction financing strategies and integrated national financing frameworks as well as the need for policy, legislation, and capacity support to ensure investments in all sectors reduce disaster risk and build resilience.
14. We have mainstreamed the SAMOA Pathway into our national policies, plans and strategies, however progress has been limited due to the inability to access to sufficient, quality and predictable means of implementation. Further effort has been made to develop a monitoring framework for the SAMOA Pathway aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental agreements, including the Sendai Framework and Paris Agreement.
15. Our national statistical institutions, where they exist, remain under resourced, both financially and technically. The resulting scarcity of data and weak frameworks for monitoring and evaluation constrain our capacity for effective national planning, implementation and monitoring. The absence of robust reliable data also constrains our advocacy to address the special circumstances we face.

16. We recognize the need for fully functioning and effective regional coordination mechanisms to support successful implementation of our Programme of Action and to inform our policy, programme and project activities, especially in the AIS region where such mechanisms do not exist.

## **BUILDING A FUTURE AND PROSPEROUS RESILIENCE FOR SIDS**

17. We acknowledge that the 4th International Conference for SIDS takes place amid unprecedented global challenges including, inter-alia, the slower than expected recovery from the impacts of the pandemic, the food and energy crises and the dramatic increase in the cost of living caused by major geopolitical conflicts and the unabated global warming.
18. We reaffirm the importance of freedom, peace and security and recognize that there can be no sustainable development without peace, and call on the international community to uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter.
19. We call on the international community to recognize the vital role that we, Small Island Developing States play in the management of the ocean as a global public good with all its resources that are essential to food security, human and planetary health, and sustainable development and prosperity for all. We, Small Island Developing States, have under management 16.1 percent of the world's Exclusive Economic Zones and the resources they hold. That makes our island States anything but small and brings about a great sense of responsibility to our people to protect the ocean as a high value asset for our present and future.
20. We recognize that the next 10 years are critical to our existence, we pledge to undertake several major transformations that are vital to our continued growth and development towards achieving resilient prosperity by 2034 by enhancing our productive capacities, strengthening social contracts for the wellbeing of our people and our societies, and by accelerating climate action.
21. We therefore aim to prioritize jointly with our partners, key enablers for our resilient development including, effective governance (robust data and analytical tools, efficient resource management, technology adoption, viable strategic partnerships, and adequate institutional capacities), equitable access to development financing and strategic regional and global positioning and integration, without which our efforts cannot be successful in the years to come. We stress the utmost importance of the reform of the international financial architecture, the adoption of the MVI, sustainable debt management, and continued access to concessional financing to make our transformation journey a success.

22. Our combined framework of transformations and enablers will ensure we remain focused in our interventions and make best use of resources entrusted to us by our people and our partners.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

23. We believe that the unity achieved at this stage of the Inter Regional Meeting in Cabo Verde strengthens us in our determination to look forward, towards the Fourth Conference on the Small Island Developing States and beyond.

24. We stand united in our pursuit of sustainable development and resilient futures for our countries and peoples. Through transformative and cooperative efforts and collective action, we aim to attain a paradigm shift that forges a path that empowers and uplifts all, in harmony with our culture, leaving a positive impact on our environment, societies, and economies for present and future generations.

25. We recognize that our special circumstances as SIDS may make us different, but they do not take away our potential to partner as equals, collaboratively pursuing mutual gains for our countries and our people. It is only through mutual respect and shared opportunities that we can grow together and reap the benefits of our shared cooperation as partners. This is how SIDS aim to navigate the next ten years. This is a call for a mindset change and shift in projecting our future.

26. Our present Declaration represents our agreed priorities as identified in the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Seas (AIS), Caribbean and Pacific SIDS regional preparatory meetings, and serves as the basis of our common position for a new Programme of Action for SIDS to be adopted at the Fourth International Conference on SIDS to be held from 27 to 30 May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda, in accordance with the following pillars:

- a) Revitalizing our Economies: Strategies for Dynamic and Inclusive Growth**
- b) Transformative Actions to Enhance Environmental Resilience**
- c) Forging a Path to Empowerment, Equity, Inclusion, Peaceful Societies and Safe Communities**
- d) Strengthen Institutional and Statistical Capacity**
- e) Means of Implementation: From Vulnerability toward a more Resilient Future**

## Recommendations for the New Programme of Action for SIDS

### A. Revitalizing our Economies: Strategies for Dynamic and Inclusive Growth

1. We recognize that improving SIDS' access to finance is critical for economic recovery, building resilience and sustainable development. We call for the establishment of a dedicated debt treatment mechanism for SIDS to enable sound debt management. This mechanism will aim to foster all state-contingent instruments, debt financing, reprofiling, debt relief including cancellation, restructuring and swaps, as well as utilizing blue and green bonds.
2. We call on all creditors to mainstream state-contingent debt instruments such as disaster clauses that allow for payment standstills or maturity extensions in response to the volatility of income, liquidity pressures and debt distress arising from exogenous shocks, as well as ex-ante financing to enable the systemic reduction of disaster risk and resilience building, including the disclosure of disaster risk as these instruments are crucial to our economic recovery, through providing much needed fiscal support and to avoid exacerbating debt distress .
3. We are resolved to build back better in post crisis recovery, and this will depend on our efforts at climate resilient economic restructuring and diversification. This includes upgrading of existing sectors, as well as diversification into new sectors, through investing in skills, digital infrastructure and other technologies and innovation to produce more sophisticated, high value-added competitive products and services.
4. We commit to consistently design and implement policies and strategies that will promote public investments and incentives to foster such economic diversification, while harnessing the potential of the blue, green, circular and digital economies
5. We commit to strengthening coherent, evidence based national policies that are based on reliable data and statistics, and we call on our development partners to continue to improve aid effectiveness, development cooperation and donor coordination in line with our national and regional priorities.
6. We shall improve access to capital and credit, particularly development financing and grants for local financial institutes to support MSMEs, especially for women and youth, to stimulate the growth of entrepreneurship and domestic markets and incentivize the private sector, advance the role of Fintech facilitated by appropriate legislation, regulatory instruments and infrastructure.
7. We recognize tourism remains an important driver of our sustainable economic growth and decent job creation and income-earning opportunities, we commit to develop and implement policies that promote resilient and sustainable tourism, improve tourism and de-risk infrastructure investments, and modernize and diversify the sector and related services.
8. We will continue investing in the digital economy, including through building the enabling environment to boost digital transformation. We will develop digital solutions to expand commerce to overcome the adverse impact of our remoteness and other structural constraints. In this regard,

we call on the international community to take actions to support bridging the digital divides by spreading the benefits of digitalization to SIDS, improving digital literacy and skills, enhancing our digital infrastructure and connectivity, building our capacities and access to new and emerging technological innovations to transform our economies and ensure people, especially the most vulnerable, have access to services and economic opportunities.

9. We recognize that Culture has proven to be a strategic sector to foster our economic diversification, creative economies and to promote livelihoods and decent work for all. We, therefore commit to improving the benefits of the cultural sector through education and training in cultural and heritage management and preservation and in specific domains of the creative industries, as well as promote the resilience of cultural heritage, assets and infrastructure.
10. We reaffirm our commitment to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, including by transitioning to sustainable economic and business models. We call on the international community to support the efforts of SIDS to advance sustainable consumption and production, including by strengthening our scientific, technological and innovation capacity and digital skills to address issues related to waste, chemicals, food, energy, sustainable lifestyles and land management in an integrated manner.
11. Notwithstanding our efforts to improve national, regional and international transportation, this remains a challenge for many of us, including for inter-island connectivity. We call on the international community in consultation with national and regional institutions and other relevant partners to support us in the scaling up of the use and deployment of quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure and energy efficient land, marine and air transportation systems.
12. Despite our advancements in economic development and domestic resource mobilization, we remain highly dependent on external trade and Official Development Assistance due to structural constraints such as limited economies of scale and small domestic markets and fiscal bases. We are resolved to buttress our economies through expanded trade and economic linkages, including with nontraditional partners, to support further integration into the global economy. We call on the international community, in particular the WTO, to ensure we have preferential access to markets, and develop trade rules to be sensitive to our priorities by taking into account our special circumstances.
13. We shall strengthen the institutional, regulatory and domestic policy environment and trade facilitation bodies to promote climate-smart trade, enabling business environments for private sector investment, and entrepreneurship and enterprise development, especially for women and youth. To achieve this, we call for capacity building for resource mobilization and trade related support to strengthen our own investment promotion agencies in order to attract FDI and other private capital flows, in accordance with national circumstances, priorities and legislation.
14. We call on the international community to reduce obstacles to the flow of and access to remittances, including lowering transaction costs, and improving policies and access to correspondent banking relationships and services. We will explore how we make these flows, including from diaspora, more structured and predictable; and harness the potential of these resources for productive investments and to boost trade systems.

## B. Transformative Actions to Enhance Environmental Resilience

15. We call for assistance in developing the environmental statistics frameworks in our national statistical systems, including Natural Capital Accounting Framework, which can be used to assess the contribution of natural ecosystems to our economies.
16. We are committed to bold climate action and look forward to the advisory opinions from ITLOS and ICJ to ensure that all States uphold the rule of international law and prevent further climate harm to our environment and people of present and future generations.
17. We call on the international community, especially the major emitters, to urgently accelerate climate mitigation measures aimed at reducing global greenhouse gas emissions to the trajectory aligned with the 1.5 degree Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.
18. We recognize the global goal on adaptation should drive collective action, acknowledging adaptation as a transboundary, cascading challenge that requires swift solutions and financial support for transformative actions.
19. We underscore that human capacity development is also essential in addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse impacts of climate change. We will require support for our efforts to recruit, remunerate and upskill technical expertise to support our loss and damage response plans and actions. Key capacities include risk assessment, loss modelling, including the programmatic planning, governance, management, disbursement, monitoring/evaluating and reporting on loss and damage solutions and impacts.
20. We reiterate our urgent call to the international community to accelerate the global transition away from fossil fuels by scaling-up investments in renewable energy technologies and their integration into the power system and reduce the cost of capital for renewables in SIDS. We recognize the intricacies posed by structural barriers that hinder a just and equitable energy transition and call for provision of resources to developing countries to enable this.
21. We urge the international community to increase technology, finance and capacity building support to enable increased mitigation ambition and adaptation actions for SIDS.
22. We acknowledge the work of SIDS-DOCK in promoting investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, biodiversity, technology utilization to minimize costs and capacity building and we call on development partners to support the work of SIDS-DOCK in furthering the implementation of SDG7.
23. We commit to incorporating local and traditional knowledge and practice of our local communities in adaptation measures, including biodiversity and nature-based solutions.

24. We value the ocean as fundamental to our sustainable development based on the ecosystem services it provides, including as a source of climate solutions. We commit to pursuing the opportunities in the context of the blue economy, including in relation to fisheries, aquaculture, energy and mineral resources, blue finance and high-integrity blue carbon markets, trade of premium blue carbon credits in regional and global exchange markets, and employment generation. We call for public-private sector partnerships and appropriate capital market instruments, and technical assistance from development partners to enhance bankability and feasibility of sustainable blue economy projects.
25. We recognize that an integrated marine ecosystem approach to ocean-related activities is critical to optimize opportunities. It should be based on the best available science, give due regard to conservation efforts and precautionary approaches and ensure coherence and balance among the three dimensions of sustainable development
26. We take note of ongoing challenges such as biodiversity loss; maritime security; overfishing; Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, coral reef bleaching, ocean acidification eutrophication and coastal erosion, including through measures such as satellite monitoring and the establishment of Marine Protected Areas and Integrated Coastal Zone Management. We call for improved access to financial and technical resources to support our efforts in addressing these challenges for the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources.
27. We welcome the adoption of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, as an instrument to strengthen our technological and financial capacity to utilize and commercially benefit from the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction. We call for international support to build our capacity to ratify and implement the provisions of BBNJ agreement, including conservation biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
28. We promote the adoption and implementation of initiatives such as the Jurisdictional and Nested REDD+ Frameworks in SIDS with High Forest Low Deforestation (HFLD), that have maintained forest cover, over decades of utilization, with high-carbon ecosystems, such as mangroves, seagrass, peatlands, old-growth forests and marshes, to access climate finance, foster information exchange, expertise sharing and collective problem-solving, fostering a united effort in addressing climate mitigation and adaptation goals at the regional level.
29. We note with concern that plastic pollution is an escalating problem in SIDS and is linked closely to the unsustainable and inadequate management of plastic waste posing an increasing risk of disaster. We recognize the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution on land and in the ocean and the impacts this has on the environment, as well as on our livelihoods, health, and the economies. We call for Partnerships with regional and international partners to control this source of pollution, to support investment in modern integrated solid waste management systems, as well as the development of country specific strategies to reduce the risk of disasters. We reiterate our commitment to actively participate in the intergovernmental negotiations on the development of a new legally binding global agreement on plastic pollution by 2024.

30. We recognize the value of nature-based solutions, and ecosystems-based approaches to disaster risk reduction, and call for greater harnessing of these synergies in our disaster risk management, as well as climate change adaptation and sustainable development activities.
31. We call for deepening collaboration, and resource mobilization by the international community to support capacity building mechanisms to strengthen research and development, find and implement solutions to bolster sargassum seaweed management, including the exploration of economic opportunities at the national and regional levels.
32. We reaffirm our commitment in the 2021 AOSIS Leaders' Declaration that there is no obligation under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to keep baselines and outer limits of maritime zones under review nor to update charts or lists of geographical coordinates once deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and that such maritime zones and the rights and entitlements that flow from them shall continue to apply without reduction, notwithstanding any physical changes connected to climate change-related sea-level rise.

### C. Forging a path to Empowerment, Equity, Inclusion, peaceful societies and safe communities

33. We recognize our precious human and social capital and aim to leverage this to further progress towards social resilience and sustainable development whilst ensuring full enjoyment of their rights. Social development is one of the three dimensions of sustainable development and is crucial to ensure our development progress. To strengthen the resilience of our social and human capital and the ability of our population to cope with increased social, environmental and economic shocks, we will continue to strengthen social protection systems, to develop more adaptive risk governance, to reduce poverty and to address inequalities.
34. We are committed to an approach to development that is focused on the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, which should ensure that people, particularly those living in poverty, have equal access to education, health, food, water and sanitation and other public and social services and access to productive resources, including credit, land, training, knowledge, information, and know-how.
35. We acknowledge the need to develop a shared, long-term vision of the future of our societies, promoting resilient prosperity and engaging all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, the academia, and youth. Such collaboration facilitates partnerships and investments for socio-economic transformation and collective foresight on future needs in terms of investments, skills, equipment and infrastructure.
36. We commit to leave no one behind, by consistently investing in our human capital, women and youth empowerment, ensuring inclusion of the people in vulnerable situations, including persons living in extreme poverty, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and women, children and youth, older persons, especially in the context of our ageing population, through specific, targeted, well-funded policies and programs.

37. We further commit to promote and protect the full realization of the human rights of women and girls and to increase women's leadership, participation and representation in decision-making, addressing discrimination, eliminating violence against women and girls, and increasing women's access to economic opportunities, education and health-care.
38. We recognize the role that youth play in sustainable development and commit to their full, effective and meaningful participation in society.
39. We resolve to develop policies and strategies aimed at reducing unemployment and underemployment, by promoting skills development and productivity, technology transfer and experience-sharing that respond to evolving job markets and reducing barriers to employment, especially for youth. We also commit to finding viable, sustainable solutions to address the challenges posed by the loss of our semi-skilled and skilled labour and highly professional personnel through migration and labour mobility.
40. We reaffirm our determination to address public health, including mental health, safety, social problems resulting from substance abuse and commit to safeguard our communities, especially children and youth. We commit to implement effective and practical primary prevention measures and provide accurate information about the risks associated therewith.
41. We commit to ensuring universal access to quality primary health-care, while improving health preparedness to better cope with future epidemics including the mental health epidemic, pandemics and non-communicable diseases by promoting healthy lifestyles and preventive care, as well as improved coordination and integration between disaster and health risk management systems to strengthen prevention and response.
42. We recognize the extremely high prevalence of non-communicable diseases in some of our countries, in particular cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases, and the increasing deaths attributable to non-communicable diseases. We call for the implementation of preventive measures to reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases.
43. We reaffirm the Bridgetown Declaration on NCDs and mental health and call on the international community to provide financial and capacity building assistance to SIDS to address the impact of NCDs and mental health in SIDS, including addressing the environment-nutrition nexus.
44. We reiterate that addressing food security and nutrition remains a challenge of increasing urgency. In this regard, we emphasize the importance of increasing agricultural productivity, to improve overall food security and nutrition and reducing food import dependency. We call on the international community to remove barriers to technology access and build knowledge of new technologies. We also reaffirm the need to develop and implement adaptation strategies that consider the food-water-energy nexus, such as integrating climate-resilient infrastructure and promoting climate-smart agricultural practices.
45. We recognize that many of us are experiencing worsening freshwater scarcity as a result of various anthropogenic pressures and the effects of climate change, which will have far-reaching consequences for our sustainable development. We emphasize the need to: develop institutional

and human capacities for the effective, inclusive and sustainable implementation of the integrated management of water resources; provide appropriate facilities and infrastructure for safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management systems; facilitate the expansion of wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse in the context of the sustainable and efficient use of water resources; and improve water-use efficiency, protection of watersheds and work towards eliminating over-extraction.

46. Our high level of dependence on imported fossil fuel for energy is a critical indicator of our economic and environmental vulnerability. Roadmaps to advance the energy transition to renewable sources of energy is therefore inherently linked to our long-term economic viability and our commitment to climate change mitigation.
47. We note many of us are still struggling to access affordable, reliable, sustainable, modern and renewable energy and require the international community to urgently upscale investments in renewable energy and to further develop SIDS-specific technologies for renewable energy deployment.
48. We support the application of the Principles for Resilient Infrastructure to create risk-informed policy, investment decisions and systems in sectors including transportation, energy, communications, water, health and education, with a view to nurturing a culture of maintenance for resilient societies.
49. We also call on countries and partners to support the implementation of key national energy sector priorities and goals as expressed in national energy policies, development policies, and NDC commitments.
50. We note that health issues are a threat to sustainable development and economic productivity. We call on the international community and development partners to support our efforts in further understanding and integrating the climate-health nexus into policy-making, strengthening national and regional health systems and promoting healthy lifestyles by assisting in capacity building, upgrading infrastructure and equipment.
51. We acknowledge that access to quality education, technical and vocational training, and lifelong learning is critical to our new Programme of Action. We commit to increase investment in the quality of education, re-skilling and life-learning opportunities especially for youth, women, people living with disabilities and other people in vulnerable situations.
52. We recognize the critical need to invest in and improve literacy and numeracy for Early Childhood Development, especially in the first one thousand days of a child's development and call on the international community for dedicated support to our programmes that are providing early education opportunities that support better learning and improved life chances in adulthood.
53. We welcome the focus on harnessing the power of the digital revolution to ensure quality education including under the Transforming Education Summit process, the Global Rewired Declaration on Connectivity for Education, and the International Commission on the Futures of Education. To this end, we commit to building the capacity of our teaching professionals to harness the power of

digital resources and to improving public digital learning platforms that are free and accessible for all in line with UNESCO's Recommendation on Open Educational Resources.

54. We call for revitalization of the University Consortium for Small Island Developing States to address our unique challenges and opportunities we face as vulnerable nations and to pool our expertise, research capabilities and resources. We further encourage the mobility of scholars among our universities and mutual recognition of certificates.
55. We reaffirm the urgency of implementing the Sendai Framework as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and acknowledge that financing for disaster risk reduction, including early warning systems, and de-risking investment presents a considerable challenge to the implementation of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies. We note the political declaration of the Mid-Term Review of the Sendai Framework.
56. We resolve to strengthen our disaster preparedness systems and our capacity to take early action and respond post-disaster needs assessments, and welcome ongoing initiatives that support this, including the Early Warning for All Initiative.
57. We note the need for more robust multi-hazard risk governance, including through the development of national legislative frameworks for disaster risk reduction, strengthened local authorities and community-based disaster risk management approaches through the provision of financial assistance, technical support and capacity building.
58. We call for new and strengthened partnerships to support investments in disaster risk data, risk assessment and analytics, impact-based forecasting, surveillance and monitoring, integrated multi-hazard early warning systems, digital technology and geospatial information systems, sharing of best practices for risk assessment and risk mapping, and investment in human and institutional capacity development.
59. We call for support in increasing capacity, particularly amongst key national agencies, to improve coordination with international, regional and humanitarian partners and donor governments as appropriate in response to intensifying disaster events in our countries.
60. We commit to adopt risk informed approaches to development, aligned with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, and seeking a comprehensive approach to sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
61. We underline the importance of comprehensive disaster risk governance across all relevant policy areas and are determined to build economies and societies that are resilient to existing and emerging risks by integrating disaster risk reduction into legal and regulatory frameworks.
62. We call on the international community to support the development of national DRR financing strategies supported by integrated national financing frameworks and to provide policy, legislative and capacity support for financing instruments, national and regional insurance mechanisms, risk reduction and prevention bonds, blended catastrophe bonds, thematic bonds, financing and pooled funds.

63. We shall explore and implement creative arrangements and risk reduction mechanisms that allow us to access low and concessional financing rates, including government guarantees, and insurance schemes.

## D. Strengthening Institutional and Statistical Capacity

64. We note with concern that we face significant challenges in data collection and analysis, in terms of access to data and knowledge, technological and institutional capacity, which hinders evidence-based policy making and development financing.
65. We call on the international community to take science-based and innovative actions on an urgent basis to foster better data understanding, use and generation through, inter alia, the exchange of best practices and expertise, technology transfer, educational and training programmes for climate change and disaster risk reduction, inclusive economic growth, conservations and sustainable use of ocean resources and development of blue economy, and digital transformation in support of SIDS development.
66. We express concern regarding the gaps in the collection of disaster loss and risk data, including data disaggregated by income, sex, age and disability and highlight the need to increase financing in this area.
67. We aim to assure that we have the capacity to integrate population data into development planning and inform national development policies. We will continue to strengthen and modernize national population data ecosystems including censuses, and implement innovative approaches for the collection, analysis, disaggregation, dissemination and use of demographic data including use of geo-spatial data.
68. We call on international partners and the UN system to support our efforts in the modernization of national statistical systems, to consolidate and coordinate various data platforms and data-related initiatives and to establish a mechanism to address our data challenges.
69. We welcome the proposal by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to establish a global SIDS data hub at the 4th SIDS Conference. We take note of the need for further elaboration of the data hub and call on the international partners to consolidate and coordinate various data platforms and data related initiatives in order to facilitate ease of use and access. We further take note of the proposal to establish a center of excellence.
70. We note that the responsible use of artificial intelligence and other technological developments present opportunities to fill critical data gaps. We recognize that artificial intelligence models must be trained on adequate amounts of SIDS-specific data to produce credible and reliable statistics.
71. We recognize the need to share best practices and data in order to facilitate SIDS peer-to-peer learning, and better monitoring and evaluation of implementation.

72. We acknowledge the need for fully functioning and effective regional coordination mechanisms to support successful implementation of our Programme of Action. Such mechanisms are crucial to promoting dialogue and maintaining the prominence of our unique issues and challenges pertinent to our countries on the international agenda. We take note of the recommendation of the AIS region for the holding of a high-level meeting of the region to discuss the modalities for an AIS regional coordination mechanism.
73. We call for the early development of a monitoring and evaluation framework, with clear targets and indicators integrated into relevant UN development frameworks, building upon existing reporting mechanisms for the Programme of Action of the 4th International SIDS Conference to be developed no later than 2025.

## E. Means of Implementation: From Vulnerability to a more resilient Future

74. We reaffirm that improving access and the mobilization of climate finance and sustainable private finance is a key priority for us, including through building the necessary capacity to build project pipelines at scale. We call on developed country parties to the Paris Agreement to meet their commitments on the provision of climate finance to developing countries, including through targeted support for SIDS in the delivery of climate finance, increased pledges to the existing climate Funds, including the Green Climate Fund and by developing simplified access procedures for SIDS. We also call on developed country Parties to make good on the COP26 commitment of doubling adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025. We further call for the establishment of a new collective quantified goal on climate finance taking into account the needs and priorities of SIDS.
75. We call for the swift operationalization and capitalization of the Loss and Damage Fund, and the creation of dedicated windows for SIDS under climate financing mechanisms.
76. We recognize that development financing, innovative and low-cost financing remain critical for us. We call on regional and national financial institutions to support economic, social, and environmental advancements.
77. We emphasize the need to streamline and simplify application requirements from donor countries, MDBs, IFIs, and other financial institutions that support our sustainable development. We call for pilot SIDS windows and/or SIDS-specific special financing vehicles that allow for reduced requirements, given small financing project sizes, and high current barriers to access.
78. We acknowledge the need of the Associate Members of the Regional Commissions for international support to achieve our SIDS sustainable development agenda, and to build resilience against external shocks. We therefore call for international measures and support to be extended to them.
79. We underline the importance of the reform of the international financial architecture for our economic sustainability and our development. We will work with the UN system and the international financial institutions in this reform to restore justice in access to resources and address our vital priorities over the next 10 years.

80. We call for the urgent operationalization of the Bridgetown Initiative to address the gaps and shortfalls of the current international financial architecture, with a view to strengthening support for us. We welcome the MDB's announcement to explore eligibility to concessional finance for the most vulnerable countries with a multidimensional approach to vulnerability, encompassing economic, environmental and social dimensions and that to facilitate cooperation, MDBs could explore a common definition of vulnerability, taking into account the United Nations workstream in that regard, and could develop common guidelines for the targeted use of concessional finance to address vulnerabilities.
81. We call for the early adoption of the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) by the UN General Assembly, and the establishment of an interim secretariat that will support its operationalization and implementation by all stakeholders, including as a criterion for access to low-cost and long-term financing for our countries based on this Index.
82. We call for the MVI to continue to reflect the best available indicator data across all dimensions, we therefore call on the international community including the UN system to provide greater support for better data collection, especially in SIDS, to allow for its continuous improvement and refinement in future iterations.
83. We reiterate the call for the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue to use his convening powers with the United Nations system, international and regional financial institutions and other multilateral development partners to continue to work on devising solutions for small island developing States in relation to debt vulnerability in the immediate term and debt sustainability in the long term and to the full implementation of the multidimensional vulnerability index. In this regard, we recall the invitation to the Secretary-General to convene a high-level meeting during the fourth International Conference on SIDS, with international financial institutions, development banks and major donors, with a view to ensuring the full mobilization of resources for small island developing States.
84. We call for the representation and participation of SIDS in the current and future governance and decision making of the international financial architecture, including in the G20, and commit to working with all relevant actors in improving access to and quality of development and climate financing.
85. We continue to recognize that science, technology and innovation are essential enablers and drivers for sustainable development of. We will spur innovation to design our own solutions, tailored to our own problems, and to harness the power of science and technology to improve social services, economic opportunities, and environmental protection, and to advance digital transformation and encourage context specific research and analysis for a strong science-policy interface.
86. We note the ongoing work to elaborate a global digital compact and call on the international community to take action to support bridging the digital divides and spread the benefits of digitalization to SIDS by improving digital skills that support productive use of technologies, enhancing our digital infrastructure connectivity, building our capacities and access to new and

emerging technological innovations, including the responsible use of artificial intelligence, to transform our economies.

87. We call on the international community and the UN system to support us in leveraging emerging science and technology, including artificial intelligence, biotech, nanotech and key integrated technology systems, for our national sustainable development.
88. We recognize the need to take urgent action to reduce the price of information and communications technologies and broadband connectivity to SIDS in order to capture the benefits of digital technologies for inclusive, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for SIDS.
89. We should focus on creating an inclusive digital society, and the need for us to implement initiatives at all levels for the preparation of human resources in science and technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM) and to promote the interest of young people, especially girls, in these fields by modernizing school curricula.
90. We call for the establishment of a platform that will provide learning opportunities, exchange experiences, and support innovation, so as to enhance capacity building and narrow the digital divide affecting SIDS and call upon existing technology platforms and networks in the UN system, such as in the context of the Climate Technology Centre and Network, the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, to partner with and fully support the new platform.
91. We welcome the establishment of SIDS-SIDS Green-Blue Economy Knowledge Transfer Hub at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus in Barbados and its role in providing support towards SIDS-SIDS Cooperation, capacity building and knowledge exchange on green, sustainable ocean/blue economy and circular economy development in SIDS.
92. We will strengthen and foster investment in Research and Development for environmentally sound technologies and to promote the involvement of the business and financial sectors in the development of those technologies and invite the international community to support those efforts. We call for investments in research and infrastructure that support economic and social development in our countries.
93. We call on the international community and the United Nations system to assist us in developing national roadmaps for science, technology and innovation (STI) and to support us to build up our national capacities for developing and utilizing the state-of-the-art technologies, including renewable energy technologies, marine technologies for the Blue Economy and other areas of priority significance to the sustainable development SIDS.
94. We call on UN agencies, funds and programs, within their respective mandates, to enhance tailored support to SIDS, in line with our national priorities and circumstances.
95. We acknowledge the SIDS Partnership Framework in monitoring the progress of existing partnerships and encouraging the launch of new, genuine, and durable partnerships. We welcome the SIDS Partnerships Awards, which recognizes and rewards the most noteworthy SIDS

partnerships. We call for this Framework to be strengthened to continue its impact on communities, on human resource, capacity building, the environment and enhanced knowledge sharing, including information, data and improved coordination.

96. We recognize that multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical in building resilience, reducing disaster risk, and achieving sustainable development and climate change adaptation at the local level. We call for the establishment of the biennial regional multi-stakeholder SIDS partnership dialogue with a view of facilitating means of implementation, inter alia, financing, investment, trade, technology transfer, capacity building and creation of new Partnerships, and look forward to the scaling up and development of durable and transformational partnerships at all levels.
97. We acknowledge the SIDS National Focal Points network in fostering peer-learning and exchange of best practices on strengthening coherence and coordination of SIDS-related sustainable development issues at the national, regional and global levels. We call for the strengthening of this network to enhance effectiveness and coherence.
98. We also call for the SIDS Global Business Network and the SIDS Global Business Network Forum to be strengthened, as a key part of the SIDS Partnership Framework, toward increased public-private partnerships that contribute to our sustainable development and the more strategic promotion of our countries as potential market opportunities.
99. We aim to align the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its goals and targets, with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action plans. The identification of financing and capacity gaps, and development of national finance plans or other similar instruments to advance implementation will be critical. We also acknowledge the SIDS Coalition for Nature, which particularly focuses on bridging gaps in means of implementing biodiversity-related objectives. We encourage partners to support the implementation of the partnerships proposals formulated within the Coalition's frame in order to bridge our priority gaps, such as finance, knowledge - data, science, technology, and biodiversity mainstreaming.
100. Boosting strategic partnerships both among us and leveraging North-South and South-South and triangular partnerships, including SIDS to SIDS, is essential to access to technical and technology transfers, advance trade and investment relationships and accelerate inclusive economic growth. We aim to deepen these relations to more effectively mobilize human, financial, technical, and technological resources, emphasizing that south-south cooperation is a complement to and not a substitute for north-south cooperation.
101. We call for greater fostering collaboration through public-private partnerships, where government entities, multilateral development banks and private sector organizations including philanthropic organizations to work together to achieve common goals, including fostering the innovation and digital transformation.
102. We call on the UN General Assembly to designate 2024 as the International Year of SIDS.

103. We call for the strengthening of the UN Secretariat's capacity to coordinate the effective implementation of the Programme of Action of the 4th International SIDS Conference, in particular through the dedicated SIDS units.
104. We call for additional resources for capacity building designed to address the special needs of SIDS and also request the Secretary-General to strengthen the respective roles of the SIDS Units within DESA and UN-OHRLLS.