



**SIDS
GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK**



Least Developed Countries
Landlocked Developing Countries
Small Island Developing States

United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

SIDS GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK FORUM

**“Ocean Partnerships towards resilience-building,
economic diversification and prosperity in SIDS”**

2022



**Co-hosted by the Republic of Palau
and UN-OHRLLS**

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I. Introduction

1. The SIDS Global Business Network Forum 2022 was convened by the UN Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) on 12 April in Koror, Palau.
2. The 2022 Forum was held in the margins of the Our Ocean Conference (OOC) which took place on 13-14 April under the theme “Our Ocean, Our People, Our Prosperity”.
3. With the focus on oceans, the 2022 Forum was focused on the theme “Ocean Partnerships towards resilience-building, economic diversification and prosperity in SIDS”.
4. Ninety (90) participants attended the 2022 Forum which brought together Small Island Developing States (SIDS) governments, private sector actors from SIDS as well as international private sector actors, the UN system and other institutional actors, youth, and academia.
5. The objective of the 2022 Forum was to renew the call for private sector partnerships for ocean-based sectors, to unlock new, sustainable economic opportunities that can foster diversification and resilience in SIDS. The right investment, however small, has the potential to meaningfully impact the livelihoods of many islanders. Strong private sectors in SIDS can foster economic activity in areas such as renewable energy, job creation, competitive exports, technology transfer, strengthened small and medium enterprises and improved standards of living.
6. The 2022 Forum was the fourth in a series of SIDS Private Sector Partnership Forums launched by UN-OHRLLS and partners. The SIDS-GBN was announced at the first Forum, which was held in conjunction with the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, in Apia, Samoa and was co-organized by OHRLLS, the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce. The second SIDS-GBN Forum was held from 22 – 24 March 2016 in Oranjestad, Aruba and was co-organized with the Government of Aruba with support from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The third SIDS-GBN Forum was held from 21 to 22 May 2018 in Balaclava, Mauritius.
7. The 2022 Forum was initially to take place in 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 Forum was funded by Denmark, Ireland, Australia and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

II. Background

8. The 'special case' for the development of SIDS was first recognized in Chapter 17 on oceans and coasts in Agenda 21 in 1992 which also called for the first global conference on SIDS which was convened in 1994 in Barbados. The Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) adopted in 1994, further complemented by The Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) of 2005 and MSI+5 Outcome document, and most recently the SAMOA Pathway adopted in 2014, recognized that although they are afflicted by economic difficulties and confronted by development imperatives similar to those of developing countries generally, small island developing States (SIDS) have their own peculiar vulnerabilities and characteristics.
9. The international community and SIDS recognize a role for the private sector in the implementation of the SIDS Programmes of Action which includes broad-based partnerships that ensure involvement and participation of all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector. Under its mandate on advocacy and resource mobilisation, OHRLLS has been working with a wide range of stakeholders to build partnerships towards the implementation of SAMOA Pathway in SIDS, including the launch of the SIDS-GBN to strengthen the engagement of the private sector in the sustainable development in SIDS.
10. The 2022 forum aligned with the seventh Our Ocean Conference theme of Our Ocean, Our People, Our Prosperity. Genuine and durable Ocean Partnerships, based on the principles of national ownership, mutual trust, transparency and accountability, provide a vehicle to achieve sustainable development of the blue economy and active engagement of both the public and private sectors to seek sustainable solutions to ocean issues.
11. Promoting genuine and effective partnerships is an invaluable means to achieve the objectives of the SAMOA Pathway and the Sustainable Development Goals in the SIDS. The SIDS Global Business Network Forum is an important platform to attract greater interest and investments in SIDS by the private sector, to increase their engagement in promoting sustainable development through durable partnerships.
12. Recognizing this, the objective of the 2022 Forum was to support SIDS in leveraging partnerships, particularly with the private sector, that can contribute towards achieving SDG 14 (conserve ocean and sustainable use of the ocean, seas and marine resources), its respective targets, the overall sustainable development priorities of SIDS, and that of the SAMOA Pathway.

III. Summary of Sessions

Session 1: Opening

13. His Excellency Surangel Whipps Jr., President of Palau, His Excellency John Kerry, Special Envoy on Climate Change, USA, and Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Acting High representative, UN-OHRLLS gave welcoming remarks at the opening of the 2022 Forum.
14. Speakers emphasized that private-sector partnerships are indispensable to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the SAMOA Pathway. It was also stated that development of the ocean economy is critical for SIDS, but that SDG 14 is by far the least funded, representing only 0.01% of all SDG funding, which illustrates a funding crisis that needs to be urgently addressed.
15. Mr. Peter Thomson, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Oceans, moderated a fireside chat with the following speakers:
 - a. H.E. Abdulla Shahid, President of the United Nations General Assembly, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maldives
 - b. H.E. Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa'olelei Luteru, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee for SIDS Partnerships
 - c. Ms. Irene Olkeriil, Founder & CEO, EmeraldDreams Services, Vice President, Palau Chamber of Commerce
 - d. Mr. Francesco La Camera, Director General of IRENA
 - e. Dr. Hide Sakaguchi, President, Ocean Policy Research Institute, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation
16. Speakers emphasized the importance of the ocean sector both globally and the particular significance of the ocean sector for small island developing states, with this the importance of partnerships in the ocean sector for SIDS as a key driver for economic growth. Well-constructed, context specific and long-term partnerships are the key to achieving this.
17. The private sector is the driver of innovation where technology can play a critical role in the sustainable development of the blue economy in SIDS and there is a need to assist countries to de-risk energy investment and aid this transition.
18. Ms. Irene Olkeriil highlighted the need to support the local entrepreneurs and the labour force to produce locally, thus making SIDS: less dependent on imported goods, protecting identity, and developing cultural heritage as an asset for businesses.
19. Dr. Hide Sakaguchi provided an example of a small project to connect supply and demand of fish in Japan through data so that fishermen catch the species and amounts needed by the local market through sensors on the fishing nets, which helps prevent overfishing, waste and transportation fuel, and can be applied to SIDS.

Session 2: OHRLLS Assessment of SIDS Partnerships in the Ocean Sector

20. Mr. Paul Holthus, Director, World Ocean Council presented an OHRLLS Assessment of SIDS Partnerships in the Ocean Sector.
21. Mr. Paul Holthus provided highlights of partnerships such as the Moana Taka partnership which coordinates the free shipment of recyclable waste from Pacific SIDS to centralized recycling facilities in developed countries on the Pacific Rim.
22. Mr. Paul Holthus also emphasized that access to funding was the highest ranked issue in a survey on challenges to private sector engagement in sustainable ocean development. This was highest ranked by each sector that participated in the survey, i.e. the private sector, governments, and civil society.
23. Based on the survey, Mr. Paul Holthus provided several recommendations for GBN activities, such as events on investment, mapping of investors, and local in-person workshops.

Session 3: Tourism and COVID-19 Recovery

24. The objective of the session was to provide opportunity to discuss together with a panel of experts and speakers, the experiences faced by SIDS in \ challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in their tourism sector, and any lessons learned on building resilience in the tourism and private sector for a sustainable COVID-19 recovery in SIDS.
25. His Excellency Conrod Hunte, Deputy Permanent Representative of Antigua & Barbuda to the United Nations and Her Excellency Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations delivered keynote addresses.
26. Speakers noted the importance of tourism for SIDS, noting that on average tourism makes up 30% of GDP for SIDS with a more pronounced impact in some SIDS. Tourism is a driver of sustainable development, particularly for women and youth, and an integral part of public finance, investment and debt service for SIDS. It was emphasized that as tourism slowly starts to recover, there is a need for equitable access to vaccines globally, since no-one is safe from this pandemic until everyone is. Further, the need to develop indicators for measurement of the sustainability of tourism was noted.
27. A video message was delivered by Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General UNWTO, which was followed by pre-recorded video presentations delivered by Ms. Megan Morikawa, Iberostar Global Sustainability Director and Mr. Glen Craig, Vanuatu Business Resilience Council, and Director at Kontiki Finance.
28. The presentations explained the heavy impact of COVID-19 on tourism sectors in SIDS and the opportunity to reinvent SIDS tourism sectors to make them more sustainable and resilient.

29. Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief of SIDS Unit, UN-DESA moderated a panel talk with the following speakers:
- a. The Honourable Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Tourism, Tonga
 - b. Mr. Christopher Cocker, CEO, Pacific Tourism Organization
 - c. Ms. Carolyn D. Ngiraidis, Sole Proprietor and Financial Consultant, books and business services, Palau
30. Speakers highlighted that while there are the green shoots of recovery in the tourism sector there remain many islands in the Pacific which are closed to tourism and are still suffering the worst effects of the pandemic and the tourism sector remains on its knees. In Tonga, this has been compounded by the recent volcanic eruption which has further created a humanitarian crisis and COVID-19 outbreak.
31. It was also stated that there remains a considerable challenge in rebuilding the tourism industry in the Pacific while opportunities for innovative solutions were highlighted, for example through digitalization.
32. Furthermore, the importance of meetings such as the Global Business Network Forum, and similar conferences of the United Nations, for SIDS in highlighting the issues of importance for SIDS was noted.
33. It was noted that even though borders were closed because of the pandemic, businesses and entrepreneurs took creative initiatives to survive. Partnerships were critical for the survival of business during the pandemic: between governments, business and people. Investment in people has shown itself to be critical for resilience building.

Session 4: Blue Economy

34. The objectives of the session were to explore opportunities for blue economy development in SIDS and to share best practices of ongoing partnerships. The session included discussion on sustainable fisheries and shipping, complimenting the blue economy elements from the other two thematic sessions.
35. Mr. Eyos Rudimch, Governor of Koror State, Palau and Mr. Masaru Sato, Cabinet Counsellor, National Ocean Policy Secretariat, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan delivered keynote addresses.
36. Speakers emphasized that blue economy development in Koror state and across SIDS is critical for the sustainable use of the ocean for economic development in the long term. Mr. Sato emphasized the priority areas and concrete support provided by the government of Japan for blue economy development in SIDS, including supporting sustainable fisheries and disaster risk reduction initiatives.
37. A pre-recorded video presentation was delivered by Ms. Piera Tortora, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and in-person presentations

- were delivered by Ms. Emilie McGlone, Director, Peace Boat US and Mr. Bo Cerup-Simonsen, CEO, Maersk McKinney Moeller Center on Zero Emission Shipping.
38. Ms. Piera Tortora, Coordinator of the Sustainable Ocean for All Initiative, which provides support for developing countries in their transition towards a more sustainable economy. The initiative also focuses on how development cooperation can contribute to blue economies.
 39. Ms. Emilie McGlone presented the work of Peace Boat to promote peace, human rights and sustainability through educational programmes like workshops and voyages which included youth ambassadors from SIDS. She also demonstrated the development of the future Peace Boat sustainable cruise ship, EcoShip.
 40. Mr. Bo Cerup-Simonsen presented the foundation's work to decarbonize the shipping industry, for example by setting up a network of green corridors for e-fuel in collaboration with governments, ports, shipping lines and other stakeholders.
 41. Mr. Paul Holthus, President, World Ocean Council moderated a panel talk with the following speakers:
 - a. Mr. Keith Mesebeluu, Fisherman and MAFE Bureau of Fisheries, Palau
 - b. Dr. Sandra Grant, Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
 - c. Ms. Axelle Bodwell, SIDS Youth AIMS Hub Seychelles (SYAH)
 - d. Mr. Jaap Van Hierden, UN Resident Coordinator for Micronesia
 42. Speakers highlighted that youth should play an important role in blue economy development. Including youth brings benefits to projects such as innovative ideas and ensuring long term sustainability and capacity development, but also benefits youth themselves by empowering them to make careers in the blue economy and to impact the future they want.
 43. It was also highlighted that partnerships between governments, business and essential workers are key to pave the way for financial support, private sector innovation, capacity building, and infrastructure. This should include engagement of youth, fishermen, fisherfolk organizations and other key stakeholders to ensure local ownership and to benefit from a broad knowledge base. Co-benefit and synergies of blue economies were also emphasized and it was said useful to promote good practice exchanges.

Session 5: Ocean Energy

44. The objectives of the session on Ocean Energy including Offshore Renewables were to provide best practises of programmes in the development of the ocean energy sector and facilitate networking and knowledge sharing among ocean energy stakeholders in SIDS. The session covered ocean energy and offshore renewable technologies, improving access to financing, the importance of partnerships, as well as challenges associated with ocean energy development in SIDS.
45. Her Excellency Aminath Shauna, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Maldives, and His Excellency Kristian Jensen, Special Representative of

Denmark delivered keynote addresses.

46. Speakers emphasized that while there is a significant potential for renewable energies in SIDS, for example because solar energy now is cheaper than diesel, as well as political will to employ renewable energy, there is also a need to unlock investments and build alliances.
47. Pre-recorded video presentations were delivered by Ms. Alache Fisho, Legal Adviser at the Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat as well as Ms. Rebecca Williams, Global Head of Offshore Wind, Global Wind Energy Council.
48. The first presentations showcased a business toolkit to attract investment for the uptake of renewable energies in SIDS, developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat, a data-driven resource that supports the development of the business case for the clean energy sector in SIDS.
49. The second presentation showed an example of a global wind alliance between states, the private sector, and other stakeholders to develop policies that are aligned with the need of the private sector, facilitated by the Global Wind Energy Council. It also provided an outlook for wind energy in SIDS, predicting that offshore wind energy, particularly floating offshore wind, will accelerate with decreasing costs and open the doors for SIDS in the 2030's, but that it needs planning and coordination.
50. Mr. Amjad Abdulla, Head of Partnerships, Country Engagement and Partnerships Division, IRENA moderated a panel talk with the following speakers:
 - a. Mr. Robert Wright, CEO, New Leaf Power, Jamaica
 - b. Mr. John Bowleg, OTEC Project Leader, Bahamas
 - c. Mr. Tutii Chilton, Micronesian Program Manager for Island Conservation, Palau
 - d. Mr. Henk Rogers, Founder, Blue Planet Alliance
51. Speakers highlighted that besides funding and alliances there is a need for policy commitments as well as an importance of local participation to get the mandate to develop renewable energies. They also argued that funding can be gained through partnerships as well as funding diversification, targeting the entire ecosystem of funding in innovative ways such as crowdfunding, local ownership, pension funds, or bankable projects.
52. It was explained that existing technologies can be paired with local resources as alternative ways to develop renewable energies in contexts where the environment makes it challenging to implement typical forms of ocean and wind energy, such as the Bahamas. For example, by using OTEC as a land-based project by tapping into groundwater. It was also suggested that in the future it may be possible for a household to provide its own water, energy and air conditioning by using inland cool water as an energy source, tapping into the water-energy nexus.

53. It was also highlighted that small islands face unique challenges in human capacity and infrastructure, which makes it necessary to gain support on such issues for a comprehensive, holistic approach.

Session 6: Way Forward

54. Mr. David Johnson summarized key messages from each session and highlighted some of the partnerships that were showcased throughout the Forum. This is available in the annex.
55. Mr. Christopher Cocker, CEO of the Pacific Tourism Organization, announced the creation of the 'Tourism Working Group', a partnership between regional tourism organisations and United Nations entities.

Session 7: Closing

56. His Excellency Kaleb Udui, Minister for Finance, Palau, Mr. John Gilroy, Government of Ireland, and Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Acting High Representative, UN-OHRLLS delivered closing remarks to end the 2022 Forum.
57. Speakers emphasized the important role of the private sector in the progress of achieving sustainable development in SIDS. It was stated that while there is an urgent need to recover economies of SIDS, it needs to be done sustainably and that recovery from COVID-19 can transform the economies of SIDS to become greener, more inclusive, more innovative, and more resilient. This must be supported by coming together at a global level to find the way forward and identify new reforms that can only be found through partnerships. While SIDS are geographically isolated, they are not isolated from the international community.
58. It was stressed that the outcomes of the 2022 forum will be brought to the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon in June 2022, and to the preparations for the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2024.

08:30-09:00

Registration / Breakfast Buffet

09:00-10:20

Session 1: Opening

Welcoming Remarks

Moderator: Ms. Tishka Francis, Head of the SIDS Sub-Programme, UN-OHRLLS

- H.E. Surangel Whipps Jr., President of the Republic of Palau
- H.E. John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy on Climate Change, United States of America
- Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Acting High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UN-OHRLLS

Fireside Chat on Ocean Partnerships

Moderator: Mr. Peter Thomson, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean

- H.E. Abdulla Shahid, President of the United Nations General Assembly
- H.E. Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa'olelei Luteru, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee for SIDS Partnerships
- Ms. Irene Olkeriil, Founder & CEO, Emerald Dreams Services, Vice President, Palau Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Francesco La Camera, Director General of IRENA
- Dr. Hide Sakaguchi, President, Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation



10:20-10:35

Session 2: Presentation of UN-OHRLLS Assessment on SIDS Partnerships in the Ocean Sector

- Mr. Paul Holthus, President and CEO, World Ocean Council

10:35-10:45

Coffee Break

10:45-12:00

Session 3: Tourism and COVID-19 Recovery

Moderator: Mr. Sai Navoti, Chief of SIDS Unit, UN-DESA

Keynote Addresses

- H.E. Conrod Hunte, Deputy Permanent Representative of Antigua & Barbuda to the United Nations
- H.E. Vanessa Frazier, Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations

Scene Setting

Message from Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General UNWTO and Presentation by Ms Zoritsa Urosevic, Executive Director UNWTO (by video)

Partnership Presentations

- Ms. Megan Morikawa, Iberostar Global Sustainability Director (by video)
- Mr. Glen Craig, Vanuatu Business Resilience Council, and Director at Kontiki Finance (by video)





**Session 3
Continued**

Interactive Dialogue

- H.E. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing, and Community Development, Fiji
- H.E. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Tourism, Kingdom of Tonga
- Mr. Christopher Cocker, CEO, Pacific Tourism Organization
- Ms. Carolyn D. Ngiraidis, Sole Proprietor and Financial Consultant, books and business services, Palau

Q&A from the floor

12:00-13:30

Lunch

13:30-14:50

Session 4: Blue Economy

Moderator: Mr. Paul Holthus, President and CEO, World Ocean Council

Keynote Addresses

- Mr. Eyos Rudimch, Governor of Koror State, Palau
- Mr. Masaru Sato, Cabinet Counsellor, National Ocean Policy Secretariat, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

Partnership Presentations

- Ms. Piera Tortora, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (by video)
- Ms. Emilie McGlone, Director, Peace Boat US
- Mr. Bo Cerup-Simonsen, CEO, Maersk McKinney Moeller Center on Zero Emission Shipping



Session 4 Continued

Interactive Dialogue

- Mr. Keith Mesebeluu, Fisherman and MAFE Bureau of Fisheries, Palau
- Dr. Sandra Grant, Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism
- Ms. Axelle Bodwell, SIDS Youth AIMS Hub Seychelles (SYAH)
- Mr. Jaap Van Hierden, UN Resident Coordinator for Micronesia

Q&A from the floor

14:50-15:00

Coffee Break

15:00-16:10

Session 5: Ocean Energy

Moderator: Mr. Amjad Abdulla, Head of Partnerships, Country Engagement and Partnerships Division, IRENA

Keynote Addresses

- H.E. Aminath Shauna, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Maldives (by video)
- H.E. Mr. Kristian Jensen, Special Representative of Denmark

Partnership Presentations

- Ms. Alache Fisho, Legal Adviser at the Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat (by video)
- Ms. Rebecca Williams, Global Head of Offshore Wind, Global Wind Energy Council (by video)



**Session 5
Continued**

Interactive Dialogue

- Mr. Robert Wright, CEO, New Leaf Power, Jamaica
- Mr. John Bowleg, OTEC Project Leader, Bahamas
- Mr. Tutii Chilton, Micronesian Program Manager for Island Conservation, Palau
- Mr. Henk Rogers, Founder, Blue Planet Alliance

Q&A from the floor

16.10-16.20

Coffee Break

16.20-16.50

Session 7: Way Forward

Moderator: Ms. Tishka Francis, Head of the SIDS Sub-Programme UN-OHRLLS

- Overall outcomes
- Announcements of partnerships and initiatives

16.50-17.05

Session 8: Closing

Closing Remarks

- H.E. Kaleb Udoi, Minister for Finance, Republic of Palau
- Mr. John Gilroy, Government of Ireland
- Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Acting High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States UN-OHRLLS





2022 SIDS Global Business Network Forum in Palau
Session 6: Way Forward
Outcomes
Ngarachamayong Cultural Center, Koror, Palau

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Members of the SIDS Global Business Network, dear Friends of SIDS and of the Ocean,
Good afternoon.

Thank you all for participating in this Forum today and I thank the Government of Palau and the excellent Palauan civil servants whom we have worked with us closely in the organization of this forum.

My name is David Johnson and, with my UNOHRLLS colleagues, I serve as the secretariat for the SIDS Global Business Network and rapporteur of the key outcome messages for this forum.

As the President of the General Assembly said earlier today, small islands can have a strong voice. It is important, as we reflect on today's presentations and discussions, to consider how this forum can add to and assist this voice. We are in a year of the Ocean, tomorrow we will continue discussions on many of these issues at the Our Ocean Conference, and, as UN Special Envoy for the Oceans Ambassador Peter Thomson referred to, we will further these issues at the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon in June.

Looking forward to these events it is our intention to summarize the key outcome messages of this forum so that what we have concluded today can be heard at and influence these conferences and provide the language for the island voice.

We have heard that the private sector involvement is indispensable to the health and sustainable development of the ocean and can be the engine of creative solutions and innovations. That development of the ocean economy, or Blue Economic Security as President Whipps eloquently put it, is critical for SIDS. SDG 14 is the SIDS SDG, and that of all the SDGs, SDG 14 is by far the least funded representing only 0.01% of all SDG funding. This is a funding crisis that needs to be urgently addressed.

We have heard the results of the survey and research conducted by Mr. Paul Holtus of the World Ocean Council giving guidance for successful ocean partnerships in SIDS and to improve the global business network.

Partnerships across countries and sectors can allow all of us to overcome knowledge and capacity gaps, like the Palau fishermen learning about finance and business management, or youth bringing in innovative ideas while simultaneously learning from the experience of established ocean experts. Fisherfolk across SIDS have a lot to learn from each other to innovate and diversify ocean industries to strengthen resilience.

Partnership with the private sector can also spur innovation to overcome daunting tasks such as sea level rise in Micronesia or achieving zero emission shipping. The global community should enable these partnerships including through bringing people together across SIDS, like in our Forum today but also through financing initiatives like the Global Fund for Coral Reefs.

We have heard reflections on the recovery of tourism sector presenting an opportunity to rethink and transform the industry to maximize its contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. UN-WTO demonstrated the economic life line that tourism is for SIDS, it is a driver of economic growth and as H.E Conrod Hunte of Antigua & Barbuda noted a driver of sustainable development. Tourism in SIDS is critical for employment and inclusion of women and youth as noted by H.E Vanessa Frazier of Malta. Globally up to 40% of the current blue economic is tourism related and supports considerable local employment.

While we are seeing a global recovery in tourism and a nascent recovery in tourism in some SIDS, this recovery is not broad based and there remain significant difficulties, particularly in the Pacific where many islands have remained closed. Investment in resilience has been important for the survival of the private sector. Investment in people is needed, investment in people is investment in resilience.

Partnerships have been and continue to be important in many sectors, we heard of the importance of public private partnerships here in Palau in protecting people and businesses from the worst effects of COVID. We have learned the Palauan term Klechibelau for the culture of public private partnerships.

We have heard of many initiatives, too many to list now, to name but a few the sustainable tourism initiatives of Iberostar, Maersk's Green Corridor Initiative and the Global Offshore Wind Alliance. We will hear further initiatives in this session including on tourism.

We have spoken about partnerships many times during this meeting and I would like to draw the forum's attention to the recently launched United Nations SIDS Partnerships Awards, which aims to recognize and remark the most noteworthy partnerships in SIDS and I urge fellow forum participants to visit the UN website for further information.

I thank you for your participation in the forum and hand back to Tishka.



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