

FOURTH IN-PERSON SIDS NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS MEETING

Praia, Cabo Verde

30 August 2023



UN-OHRLLS

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Background

The fourth in-person meeting of the SIDS National Focal Points Network took place on 30 August 2023 in Praia, Cabo Verde.

The NFP meeting focused on:

1. Synthesizing national and regional priorities and lessons learned from across the three SIDS regions - based on outcomes of the three regional preparatory meetings for the 4th International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4).
2. Addressing steps to strengthen the Network including identifying capacity building needs of NFPs;
3. Outlining specific recommendations on NFP support for the implementation of the next programme of action for SIDS.

The NFP meeting preceded the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting for SIDS4 from 30 August – 1 September 2023.

Launched in 2018, the [SIDS National Focal Points \(NFP\) network](#) was established by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) to strengthen coherence and coordination of SIDS-related sustainable development issues at the national, regional and global levels.

The network fosters peer-learning and exchange of best practices on the implementation and follow up of the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global frameworks.

The network convenes in-person annually.

Opening Session

- UNOHRRLLS emphasized the critical role of the National Focal Points Network in SIDS for ensuring the implementation of sustainable development and aligning Programmes of Action with national plans. UNOHRRLLS will work to strengthen the NFP Network to provide tailored support to the next Programme of Action for SIDS including through the development of an engagement strategy to guide UN system support for NFPs and to support NFPs in their efforts to align the next Programme of Action with national development plans.
- AOSIS, stressed the need for SIDS to come together, emphasizing the necessity of an ambitious new Programme of Action, the development of homegrown solutions, a shift in mindset among SIDS and their partners, and the importance of more regular consultations to address common challenges effectively.
- Cabo Verde highlighted the significant threat that climate change and debt pose to SIDS, and that SIDS are struggling with high levels of indebtedness. It was also stressed that there is a need for strong advocacy for the finalization and adoption of the MVI (Multilateral Vulnerability Index) and addressing the data gap for measuring vulnerability and tracking resilience in SIDS.



Session: Overview of the Preparatory Process for the 4th SIDS Conference

Purpose: This session aimed to synthesize national and regional priorities and lessons learned from across the three SIDS regions and how they will be addressed in the context of ensuring coherence between national, regional and global processes.

Discussions

Tonga

- Identified challenges such as the need to strengthen coordination, improve data availability, enhance access to high-speed technology, and maximize trade opportunities.
- Emphasized the importance of different levels of engagement and aligning the United Nations (UN) system with country national plans to successfully integrate the SAMOA Pathway.
- Stressed that monitoring and evaluation should align with mainstreaming processes to assess their robustness. This readiness process is ongoing, involving corporate plans and budget activities.
- Informed that Tonga's Department of National Development Planning serves as the Secretariat, simplifying coordination due to multiple task forces and limited staff. This approach is efficient and aligns with national development planning.

Cabo Verde

- Emphasized the need to align frameworks like the Paris Agreement with national plans and discussed intentions to set up a SIDS Secretariat to coordinate efforts and strengthen cooperation.

Samoa

- Called for strengthening the SIDS Partnerships Framework, particularly at the national level, and reaffirmed the role of National Focal Points (NFPs) in partnerships.

Jamaica, Maldives, and Bahamas

- Shared their similar approaches of aligning the SAMOA Pathway with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and having focal points within their ministries.

Singapore

- Singapore noted that they have an interagency process for the purposes of aligning the SAMOA Pathway with national plans.

Key Takeaways

In summary, the key takeaways include the importance of the next Programme of Action taking into consideration the role of NFPs in ensuring national monitoring and implementation, and ensuring coherence with ongoing international commitments including SDGs, Paris Agreement, Addis Ababa Action Agenda etc.

The next Programme of Action will require a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to effectively measure progress of implementation. This will greatly support the work of NFPs on monitoring national implementation at the national level.

As has been the case for the SAMOA Pathway, partnerships will continue to play a crucial role in the next Programme of Action. Strengthening the NFP Network will contribute to bolstering the role of partnerships on the ground.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to mainstreaming the SIDS Programme of Action into national development plans. With different models being utilized nationally by NFPs to integrate the SAMOA Pathway into national development plans, SIDS should be empowered to share lessons learned and best practices on the different strategies being employed.



Session: Strengthening the SIDS NFP Network

Purpose: This session reflected on challenges and solutions for NFPs in localizing and ensuring coherence in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway.

Discussions

Trinidad and Tobago

- Recommended holding two NFP meetings per year (both virtual and in-person) to improve NFP networking.
- Recommended establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for NFPs to provide clear guidance.
- Acknowledged the challenge of having an ambitious program of work with limited staff and resources.
- Stressed that NFP roles are voluntary and can be influenced by national priorities.
- Encouraged creating a robust environment for NFPs, streamlining their work, and considering monetary incentives.
- Mentioned the need for technical support to implement national projects aligned with the program of action.
- Called for realistic expectations and sufficient time for NFPs to understand the new Programme of Action.
- Proposed clear, actionable targets in the NFP Work Plan, discussed during NFP meetings
- Emphasized the potential of the NFP network to leverage resources for lobbying.

UN RC Cabo Verde

- Discussed how the UN Country Teams (UNCT) can support NFPs in implementing the new Programme of Action.
- Highlighted the relevance of recent UNDS reforms in aligning development agendas and avoiding duplication of work.
- Emphasized the importance of integrating the new Programme of Action into national development policies and mentioned the UN Sustainable Development Framework as a tool for this integration.
- Noted that RCs and UNCT can bridge policy processes at the national level.
- Shared UN agencies' expertise in capacity building and their potential collaboration with NFPs.
- Mentioned the role of RCs as brokers to leverage resources for Programme of Action implementation.
- Discussed the UN system's role in pooled funding and joint SDG funding to strengthen resilience for SIDS.

- Expressed interest in exploring how the Development Coordination System can support NFPs.

UNECLAC

- Provided insights into the work of NFPs in the SIDS region.
- Highlighted the "Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee" of ECLAC as a platform to address sustainable development priorities in the Caribbean and Latin America.
- Informed of ECLAC's support for technical capacity building, focusing on areas relevant to Member States' priorities.
- Informed that data collection and support, as well as regional and global mandates (e.g., Agenda 2030, FFD, Paris Agreement), are areas where ECLAC can assist NFPs.
- Highlighted that a number of frameworks exist which can support NFPs' work.
- Noted that ECLAC works closely with other intergovernmental bodies such as University of West Indies.

UNESCAP

- Presented on ESCAP's work with SIDS, particularly in the Asia-Pacific and encouraged NFPs to join the Asia-Pacific regional and Pacific subregional SDG Forum.
- Shared knowledge products tailored to Member States' needs.
- Emphasized capacity building and South-South cooperation in providing data and statistics for NFPs.
- Suggested that SIDS Engagement in NFP Network should find entry points in regional engagements of commissions and the RC system.

Interventions

- Barbados highlighted the importance of the SIDS-SIDS Knowledge Hub platform for NFPs.
- Cuba emphasized the role of the UN system and agencies in resource mobilization, especially after disasters.
- British Virgin Islands (BVI) stressed the need for UN system support for Associate Members and the removal of budget constraints. BVI called for opportunities for NFPs to engage with each other and for these considerations to be included in the new Programme of Action.

UNOHRLLS – Presentation on Key Takeaways from NFP survey

Efforts to Integrate SAMOA Pathway:

- SIDS Governments have made significant efforts to integrate the SAMOA Pathway into their national development plans.

Opportunity for Collaboration and Sharing Lessons

- Implementing the SAMOA Pathway has provided an opportunity for SIDS to connect and share lessons with each other. The National Focal Points Network has played an important role in facilitating this collaboration.

Importance of Regional Cooperation

- Regional cooperation among SIDS is important, and there is room for expansion in this regard.

Challenges in Tracking Progress

- Tracking progress in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway remains a significant challenge, with a lack of specific metrics leading to more qualitative rather than quantitative reporting.

Challenges Faced by NFPs

- NFPs identified several challenges, including coordination with government ministries, the need to improve connections with other SIDS regions, lack of clarity on UN agency roles, and the need for a work program for the NFP Network.

Focus Areas for Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting

- NFPs intended to contribute to the meeting by focusing on connectivity, climate action, financing for development, adoption of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), and specific initiatives like the Pacific Resilience Partnership and the SIDS Coalition for Nature.

Ways to Support the Next Programme of Action for SIDS

- NFPs emphasized the importance of aligning the next Programme of Action with national and regional development strategies, sensitizing key stakeholders, promoting the Programme of Action at regional and international levels, fostering inter-ministerial coordination, and involving NFPs in the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews for the High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

Level of Collaboration within NFP Network

- The majority of NFPs indicated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the current level of collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the NFP Network, suggesting room for improvement.

Improving Engagement with Stakeholders

- NFPs shared approaches to improve engagement, including leveraging national mechanisms, creating dedicated national platforms, incorporating local knowledge and traditional practices, and developing a communication strategy.

Recommendations for Engagement Strategy

- Concrete recommendations for the engagement strategy included addressing data-related issues, focusing on gaps in SAMOA Pathway implementation, fostering partnerships, and enhancing capacity building.

Conclusion and Key Takeaways

The main takeaways from the NFP meeting in Cabo Verde is the recognition of the need for strategic improvements to support NFPs in their roles on the ground.

Strengths and Weaknesses: NFPs play a crucial role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the SAMOA Pathway in their respective countries. However, challenges include limited resources, unrealistic expectations, and the voluntary nature of the role.

Networking and Collaboration: There is a need for enhanced networking among NFPs, with suggestions for regular virtual and in-person meetings to facilitate collaboration. The NFP network can also be leveraged to lobby for resources and support.

Clear Guidance and Realistic Expectations: Establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and clear, actionable targets in NFP Work Plans can provide NFPs with clearer guidelines. Realistic expectations and sufficient time to understand the new Programme of Action are essential.

UN Support: The United Nations can play a wider role in supporting NFPs. This includes aligning the next Programme of Action with national development policies, providing technical capacity building, and leveraging UN agencies' expertise in capacity building and resource mobilization.

Regional and Global Collaboration: Existing frameworks, such as intergovernmental committees and knowledge hubs, offer avenues for NFPs to collaborate and address sustainable development priorities at both regional and global levels.

Advocacy and Resource Mobilization: NFPs can collaborate with UN agencies to advocate for resources, particularly in the aftermath of disasters. This collaboration can help overcome budget constraints.

Next Steps: UN-OHRLLS will develop an Engagement Strategy to strengthen support for NFPs in the context of the next Programme of Action. The strategy will aim to define clear objectives including enhancing coordination, knowledge sharing and advocacy for the NFP network. The strategy will be developed over the Fall of 2023 and will include a round of online discussions with NFPs on the draft strategy. UN-OHRLLS aims to present the strategy at the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States in May 2024.



Annex: Meeting Programme

09:00 AM -09:30 AM

Opening Remarks

Moderator: Ms. Isabel Monteiro, Counselor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and the Regional Integration, Cabo Verde

- Ms. Tishka Francis on behalf of Ms. Rabab Fatima, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
- H.E. Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Pa'olelei Luteru, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States
- H.E. Miryan Vieira, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Cabo Verde.

09:30 AM -11:00 AM

Overview of the Preparatory Process for the 4th SIDS Conference

This session will synthesize national and regional priorities and lessons learned from across the three SIDS regions whereby the lessons learned will be addressed in the context of ensuring coherence between national, regional and global processes. It will also include discussions on the SIDS Partnerships Framework, SIDS Global Business Network and presentations by NFPs from Tonga, Mauritius and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (host countries of the regional preparatory meetings).

Moderator: Ms. Isabel Monteiro, Counselor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and the Regional Integration, Cabo Verde

- Mr. Tarunjai Reetoo, Acting Head of Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regional Integration, and International Trade, Mauritius.

11:00 – 11:15 AM

11:15 AM -12:30 PM

- Ms. Ma'u Leha, Deputy Secretary for National Planning Division, Prime Minister's Office of the Kingdom of Tonga.
- Ms. Peseta Noumea Simi, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Samoa.

Lead Discussant:

- Mr. Victor Alegria, Director, Sustainable Development Unit, Ministry of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, Belize

Break

Strengthening the SIDS NFP Network

This session will reflect on challenges and solutions for NFPs in localizing and ensuring coherence in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. The session will propose solutions, including capacity building opportunities for NFPs to strengthen their ability to support implementation of the new programme of action. The session will also be an opportunity to address results from a pre-meeting survey (see meeting objective 3.).

- Moderator: Ms. Tishka Francis, Head, SIDS Sub Programme, OHRLLS
- Ms. Kennethia Douglas, SIDS NFP Trinidad and Tobago
- Mr. Sergio Vieira, Economist, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Cabo Verde
- Mr. Sudip Ranjan Basu, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UN ESCAP
- Ms. Artie Dubrie, Coordinator, Sustainable Development and Disaster Unit, UN ECLAC

12:30PM - 1:30PM

1:30 PM - 2:50 PM

2:50 – 3:00 PM

Lunch Break

Strengthening the SIDS NFP Network (Cont.)

Recognising that this NFP meeting is happening before the SIDS Conference in 2024, this second part of the session will explore the outlines of NFP role in supporting the next programme of action for SIDS.

- Tishka Francis, Head of SIDS Sub-Programme, UN-OHRLLS

Presentation on the results of the NFP Survey

- Mr. Damien Sass, Programme Management Officer, UN-OHRLLS

Closing

- Closing remarks by Ms. Tishka Francis, Head of SIDS Sub-Programme, UN-OHRLLS