



**SUPPORTING COUNTRIES
IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS**

Supporting Small Island Developing States on their paths to resilient prosperity

UN DESA helped deliver the landmark Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS – A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity (ABAS) at the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4). The ABAS outcome – adopted by consensus at the Conference and for which UN DESA supported the intergovernmental negotiations – sets out the sustainable development aspirations of SIDS over the next ten years and the support required from the international community to achieve them. The conference itself assessed SIDS’ progress towards their sustainable development objectives and was a forum for practical and impactful solutions and partnerships to address SIDS’ most pressing challenges.

As secretariat of the conference, UN DESA coordinated substantive and logistical preparations, in collaboration with the host country and other UN entities. Under the theme “Charting the course towards resilient prosperity”, it brought more than 3,000 representatives from 121 countries, the UN system and other stakeholders to Antigua and Barbuda in 2024. Plenary sessions, five interactive dialogues, over 200 side events, and five informal special events convened by the Host – in collaboration with UN entities – galvanized support among stakeholders, including Member States, the private sector, and civil society for a sustainable future for SIDS. UN DESA, together with UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service/DGC, coordinated the special accreditation process that granted 105 civil society organizations and other stakeholder organizations special accreditation to attend the SIDS4 Conference, and supported the registration of 1,030 stakeholders,

537 of whom attended the Conference in person. Webinars, social media and newsletters were key channels employed by UN DESA to promote the SIDS4 Conference and avenues for stakeholder participation. The Secretary-General also convened a high-level meeting on mobilizing resources to implement the new SIDS agenda.

To support sound intergovernmental decision-making on the ABAS outcome, UN DESA convened two global stakeholder consultations in 2023 to bring substantive inputs from stakeholders. The first global online consultation was held between June/July 2023 and generated 170 responses. UN DESA prepared a global report and three regional snapshots (AIS, Caribbean and Pacific) summarizing the inputs received and outlining several policy recommendations that can assist SIDS in achieving their sustainable development priorities. The second global online consultation was held between December 23 and January 24 to solicit informal inputs from stakeholders related to the themes of the five interactive dialogues for SIDS4. The consultation generated 64 responses from stakeholders from different sectors and regions of the world which were captured in a summary report highlighting key messages and takeaways from the consultation.

Calling for collective action to address structural vulnerabilities of countries

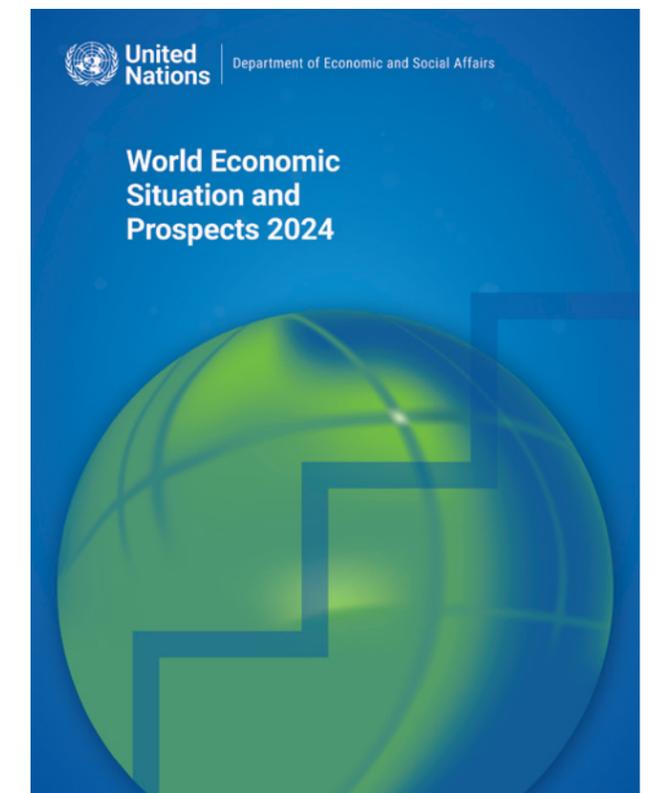
UN DESA’s normative and analytical work has shed light on critical global challenges to eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development. Produced in partnership with United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the five United Nations Regional Commissions, the flagship *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024* report raised concerns about soaring debt costs hindering investment in education, health, and social protection systems in countries in vulnerable and special situations, including least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Against this backdrop, the report called for stronger and more effective global cooperation to reinvigorate the multilateral trading system, reform development finance, address debt challenges, and scale up climate financing.

Promoting integrated planning & decision-making capacities of policymakers and stakeholders in Caribbean SIDS

UN DESA continued to build national capacities for integrated planning and mainstreaming sustainable and green growth opportunities in the Caribbean. A regional workshop entitled “Accelerating Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the Caribbean Region: Sustainable and Green Transition Opportunities” was organized in November 2023 in cooperation with ECLAC and the RCO/UNCT. The workshop benefited policymakers, civil society, academia, private sector and relevant stakeholders from Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, and Jamaica. Participants addressed their sustainable recovery post-COVID-19, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, identifying green growth opportunities to achieve sustainability and resilience.



UN DESA Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, Prime Minister Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda, and High Representative for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS Rabab Fatima at the closing session of SIDS4 in Antigua and Barbuda in May 2024. | UN PHOTO



UN DESA also supported the independent experts of the Committee for Development Policy to undertake the triennial review of the list of LDCs, which highlighted the mixed progress made amidst challenging global conditions, as this group of deeply deprived countries strive to graduate from the LDC classification.

The meeting underscored the urgency to deploy the Multinational Security Support Mission to assist the Haitian National Police in securing the country and boosting economic activity, as well as a need for funding for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts. UN DESA will continue to contribute to efforts to stabilize Haiti and promote sustainable development in the country.

Spotlighting the crisis in Haiti and need for scaled-up international support

UN DESA's commitment to addressing complex crises and supporting the people whose lives and livelihoods they threaten is evident in its support to the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (AHAGH). This group has been actively monitoring the situation, engaging stakeholders, and advocating for a holistic approach to address the multifaceted crisis in Haiti. In June 2024, the Department supported the AHAGH meeting in its efforts to address the latest developments concerning the implementation of the UN Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development for Haiti (2023–2027).

Advancing Integrated National Financing Frameworks in Small Island Developing States

UN DESA supported SIDS to advance integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs), strengthening their capacity to align and mobilize financing with their national development priorities and the SDGs. The Financing for SIDS (FINS) initiative was launched by UN DESA in January 2023, with initial funding from Italy and further supported by Denmark. FINS places financing advisors within the relevant Ministry to assist with INFF implementation, and is currently being implemented in

Dominican Republic, Fiji, and Seychelles. In Dominican Republic, an embedded financing advisor is providing support for assessments and diagnostics, financing strategies and governance mechanisms, along with capacity-building workshops to ensure knowledge transfer. In Seychelles and Fiji, support will be provided in preparing a financing strategy for their respective national development plans, as well as technical advice on institutional arrangements and governance mechanisms to advance the INFF process.

Spotlighting population trends for countries in special situations

UN DESA delivered its first ever in-depth examination of population trends and outlook for countries in special situations. The report *Population Prospects of Countries in Special Situations*, launched in January 2024, compares population dynamics in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and related implications for sustainable development.



Speakers at the UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue on "The Demographic Prospects of SIDS" at SIDS4 discuss ways to address ageing, migration and changing demographics in small islands. | UN DESA

Diverse trends – with youthful populations in LDCs and LLDCs for decades to come, compared to rapid population ageing in most SIDS and some Asian LDCs and LLDCs – will influence policy policies. Country case studies in the report help identify critical policy responses

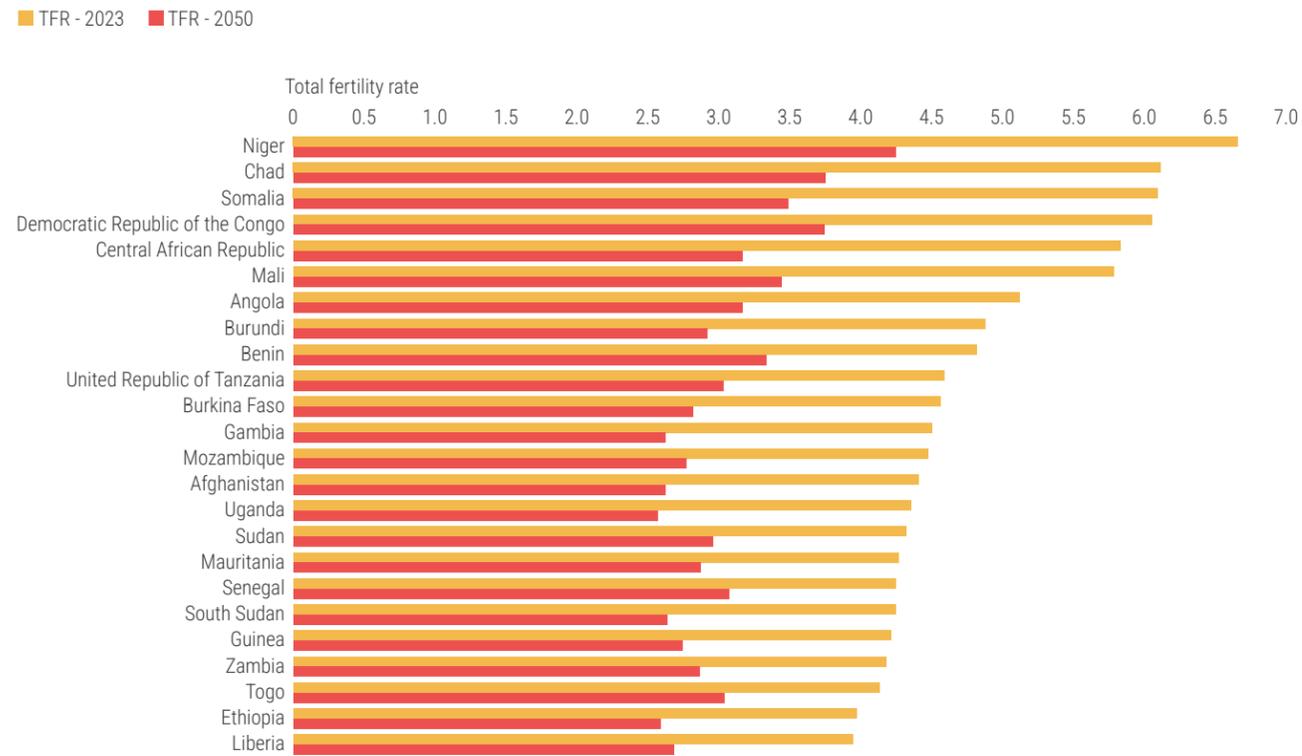


A woman walks by a fire in the rubble-filled streets of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. | UN PHOTO/MARCO DORMINO



Young girl at the beach, Solomon Islands. | WORLD BANK/ALETA MORIARTY

Total fertility rates of countries at the early stage of the demographic transition, 2023 and 2050



Source: World Population Ageing 2023: Challenges and opportunities of population ageing in the least developed countries.

to population issues, while gaps in data availability add uncertainty in population estimates and projections. The report notes that international migration adds complexity to the demographic realities faced by countries and stresses that advancing gender equality improves the lives of women and increases opportunities for sustained economic growth.

Drawing on the report, UN DESA also hosted a dynamic Global Policy Dialogue on the demographic outlook for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), on the last day of the fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4) in Antigua and Barbuda and online. The dialogue took stock of the challenges and opportunities posed to these island nations by demographic shifts, including ageing populations, youth migration, and changing family structures. Experts from UN DESA and other SIDS stakeholders drew inspiration from the new Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) agreed by the international community at the Conference and explored the complex demographic picture for SIDS.

Maximizing the demographic dividend to better prepare for population ageing in LDCs

UN DESA noted the progressive population ageing that has begun in LDCs and shared key recommendations for addressing the shift. While most LDCs are still in the early stages of the demographic transition, an accelerated pace of change is expected beyond mid-century according to the *World Population Ageing 2023: Challenges and opportunities of population ageing in the least developed countries* report, released in December 2023. Most LDCs still have an opportunity to experience a multi-decade period with a rising share of working-age population, which can boost the rate of economic growth on a per capita basis. However, to harness the demographic dividend, LDCs need to put in place enabling policies in education, health, employment, economic reform and good governance, and thereby develop economically before their populations

become much older. Three case studies (Angola, Bangladesh and Rwanda) in the report provide insights into the challenges and opportunities that arise at various stages of the demographic transition.

Developing national recovery and sustainable development strategies for SIDS

UN DESA supported several Small Island Developing States to plan and implement national sustainable development strategies and build resilience in response to crises, developing longer-term approaches to sustainable development and mobilizing climate finance. The project empowered government officials and national stakeholders in Mauritius, Seychelles, Guinea-Bissau, and Jamaica to conduct integrated policy and strategy assessments,



Capacity building workshop in Mauritius. | UN DESA

including the valuation of ecosystem services for national planning and pandemic recovery. It aims to improve evidence-based decision-making by presenting scenarios and pathways for sustainable development.