

Work with Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Although small in land size, small island developing States (SIDS) encompass much of the world's ocean space. An issue of major concern to SIDS is the threat of climate change and the associated sea level rise. The significant vulnerability of the natural environment, economy, and social structure of SIDS has been well established. Even though similar problems are present in most developing countries, because of the inherent characteristics of SIDS, they are felt more acutely by these countries. While most SIDS are keenly aware of the importance of the marine environment and its resources to their sustainable development and economic stability, many SIDS lack specific institutions or administrative processes to implement cross-cutting approaches to planning and management of oceans and coasts. Among the 44 SIDS, most SIDS have not delimited their outer limits of the continental shelf, only eight SIDS have dedicated coastal management institutions; and only three (7%) have enacted coastal legislation.



The Global Ocean Forum has worked with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) since 2001, when SIDS and ocean interests became particularly active in advancing the SIDS, oceans, and coasts agenda at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Global Ocean Forum participated in, and provided analytical input to, the 2005 Mauritius International Meeting to review the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and has worked with SIDS representatives in assessing and responding to capacity development needs in ocean and coastal management.

Global Ocean Forum Towards Mauritius 2005 Paper Series

The Global Ocean Forum contributed to advancing the oceans agenda at the 2005 Mauritius International Meeting to review the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States by preparing a series of policy analyses on ocean and coastal management issues in SIDS. The reports of the policy analyses were presented at the Mauritius International Meeting. This work was sponsored by the UNEP/GPA.

The Reports include:

Voluntary Partnership Initiatives from the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and Small Island Developing States Toward Mauritius 2005 Paper Series No. 2003-1

Iniciativas de Asociación Voluntarias Derivadas de la Cumbre Mundial 2002 sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible y los Pequeños Estados Insulares en Desarrollo Toward Mauritius 2005 Paper Series No. 2004-1

Global Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Small Island Developing States Toward Mauritius 2005 Paper Series No. 2004-2

Small Islands, Large Ocean States: A Review of Ocean and Coastal Management in Small Island Developing States since the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Toward Mauritius 2005 Paper Series No. 2005-1

Island Bellwether: Climate Change and Energy Policy Strategy for Small Island Developing States Toward Mauritius 2005 Paper Series No. 2005-2

The Global Ocean Forum also devoted a conference panel and discussion groups to SIDS during the 2nd Global Conference in Paris in November 2003 in preparation for the Mauritius International Meeting. At the Meeting, a side event was also organized by the Global Forum, focusing on SIDS ocean and coastal management issues highlighted in the policy analyses.

Working Group on SIDS on the Implementation of the Mauritius International Strategy

A Working Group composed of SIDS ocean experts from the Pacific, Caribbean, and AIMS (Indian Ocean, Atlantic, Mediterranean, and South China Sea) has been formed to work with AOSIS, UNDESA, and others on the rapid implementation of the decisions made at the Mauritius International Meeting, and to address issues related to



capacity development in SIDS.

The Working Group met in Lisbon, Portugal, during the TOPS 2005 The Ocean Policy Summit, to discuss the implementation of ocean and coastal issues specified within

the Mauritius Implementation Strategy and the Barbados Programme of Action and to examine the issues of capacity building. Panels and dialogue sessions on SIDS issues were featured at the 2006 Third Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, with experts from the three SIDS regions deliberating on how to go forward in the development of implementation strategies for the Mauritius International Strategy. A major obstacle emphasized at the Global Conference was insufficient institutional support for systematic follow-up to the Mauritius Strategy--including the absence of a mechanism for assessing implementation at national and regional levels; the need to integrate the Mauritius Strategy into the work programs of the UN agencies; establishing indicators for implementation success; and strengthening the capacity of AOSIS to assess progress and eliminate obstacles to implementation.

Thank you to the Global Ocean Forum for capturing the issues that are facing small island developing States. These issues were well covered in both in the Third Global Conference and in the reports coming out of the conference.

-- Ambassador Enele Sopoaga, former UN Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the United Nations and Vice-Chair, Alliance of Small Island States, January 27, 2006, Paris



Oceans Strategy Workshop for SIDS TOPS 2005 – The Ocean Policy Summit

October 14, 2005

The Global Ocean Forum organized the Oceans Strategy Workshop, which was attended by 60 participants, including 22 SIDS participants and 21 lecturers and resource persons. The workshop covered the areas of integrated ocean governance, with a focus on upstream (land-based sources) and down-stream governance (continental shelf and Exclusive Economic Zone governance), and the importance of linking initiatives at both ends of the governance spectrum. The workshop aimed to increase awareness among participants on Exclusive Economic Zone and continental shelf delimitation and management; multilateral environmental agreements negotiations; and implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the

Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, and to provide an opportunity for discussion of issues and opportunities related to the workshop topics.

Regional Assessments on Capacity Building in 4 SIDS Regions

Under the framework of the Global Ocean Forum GEF-MSP on Fostering a Global Dialogue on Oceans, Coasts, and SIDS, and on Freshwater-Coastal-Marine Interlinkages, the Global Ocean Forum has organized four regional capacity assessments on the specific steps that can be taken to rapidly implement the Mauritius Strategy (2005) in four SIDS regions: Caribbean; Pacific Islands; Indian Ocean, and Atlantic SIDS, with leadership from regional SIDS experts, as follows:

Implementing the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy: A Rapid Assessment on the Status of Ocean and Coastal Management in the Pacific Islands Region with Recommendations for Immediate Priority Actions

Cristelle Pratt and Mary Power, Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), and Alf Simpson, Independent Consultant (2006)

Strategies for Implementing Coastal and Ocean Management in the Wider Caribbean Region

Peter Edwards (Jamaica), University of Delaware, and Franklin McDonald, United Nations Environment Programme/Caribbean Environment Programme (2007)

Implementation Strategy for Advancing Ocean and Coastal Management in the Atlantic SIDS

Marina Pereira Silva, Independent Consultant (Cape Verde), and Isabel Torres de Noronha, Community of Portuguese-Speaking Nations (CPLP) Oceans Strategy Advisor (2006)

Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and the South China Sea (AIMS) SIDS Rapid Assessment: Policy Analysis on Strategies for Implementation of Ocean and Coastal Management Priorities

Nirmal Jivan Shah, Nature Seychelles, Peter Edwards (Jamaica), LaVerne Walker (St. Lucia), Lindsey Williams (US) (2006)

SIDS at the 2008 Global Oceans Conference

April 3-6, 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam

Issues related to small-island developing States (SIDS) took a prominent role at the 4th Global Oceans Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam, and was discussed by an Oceans Strategy Workshop as well as high-level plenary panel.

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Oceans Strategy Workshop was convened at the 4th Global Oceans Conference to continue discussion on furthering the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The workshop provided a venue for SIDS government officials and regional leaders to discuss and consider information, approaches, and tools for addressing ocean governance and achieving sustainable development of ocean resources including the implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy and other SIDS regional initiatives at the national level, specifically looking at potential appropriate institutional structures and processes for integrated ocean and coastal management in the SIDS regional context, and in the context of global climate change. The workshop also addressed the salient problem of formally delimiting the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf boundaries in SIDS nations as a prerequisite for effective EEZ management by establishing the legal boundaries for management interventions.

SIDS issues were also addressed by a number of high-level representatives and global experts in a plenary panel session during the conference. Panelists, including Rolph Payet, adviser to the President of Seychelles, and Noah Idechong, a congressman from Palau, discussed topics such as domestic actions to address climate change impacts, including coral recovery efforts, and the growing sense of anxiety within SIDS communities facing climate change impacts. Panelists also emphasized the importance of sustainable natural resources management and ecosystem-based approaches to marine and coastal management, including in climate adaptation efforts, capacity building for SIDS at the community level through partnerships, and the need to facilitate SIDS delineation of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).



President James Alix Michel of Seychelles

In a video keynote address, James Alix Michel, President of Seychelles, called for clear leadership from developed nations, adequate resources to reverse climate change and ecological damage, improved deployment of technologies and financing for mitigation and adaptation, and strengthened institutions.

The SIDS plenary panel was also fortunate to have the participation

of three former chairs of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Excerpts from their remarks are as follows:

AOSIS is an organization of small island states that was born out of the climate change discussions back in the 1990s and my colleague Amb. Slade was among the first ones who tried to put together the idea for the small islands to come together to promote and protect the interests of small islands especially with respect to climate change issues. I took over the chairmanship [of AOSIS] in 2003 just at the time when we were preparing for the 10-year review of the BPOA adopted in 1994, which is still considered the blueprint for sustainable development of small islands. We held many preparatory meetings in all regions of SIDS (Pacific, Caribbean, AIMS). And after all of these regional meetings we had a meeting of all AOSIS in Bahamas in 2004. After that we negotiated with partners for what is now known as the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of BPOA, which was not implemented to the full satisfaction of SIDS. Some of the responsibility lie on the small islands themselves but a major part of the responsibility lies on the international community that did not give enough resources to the small islands for them to be able to implement that program. The Mauritius Strategy tried to reinforce the mobilization of resources and tried to get the islands themselves to put together a program



that they could sell to the donors and what we are now trying to do is to ensure that the Mauritius Strategy does get implemented fully so that the small islands can pursue their programs of sustainable development.

Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul,
Former Chair of AOSIS (2002-2005)

AOSIS has been in the forefront of the climate change issue, the call for international attention to this problem that we have. In addition to that, I think it is fair to say that AOSIS has been the conscience of the international community on this very important issue, which has now come to the top of the international agenda. Right now, within AOSIS we are focusing on going forward on two levels: firstly, on the mitigation side, which is to reduce the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by working with the international community on the negotiations on what we call the Bali Road Map and we're doing that fairly successfully; in addition to that, in terms of adaptation, we're looking for ways in what's been called as the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. One of the key requirements is, of course, is that of financing so much of our energy at the moment is into this whole area of financing and how we can command and mobilize some of the finances promised in Mauritius. ... Here in Hanoi we're looking at the importance of the oceans, the resources that we have and clearly the financing that will allow us to harness those resources is going to be extremely important going forward and I'm very proud to be following the footsteps of

Ambassador Slade and the previous Ambassador of Mauritius to the UN who have done some excellent work in this area. We're very optimistic about the future going forward. We see that partner countries are coming forward to offer help but the



critical thing is for us to work hard as the Alliance of Small Island States to bring those partners in so that we can actually implement a number of things that we promised ourselves to do.

Ambassador Angus Friday,
Former Chair of AOSIS (2006-2009)

I am here attending the Global Ocean Forum on Oceans in support of the position of small island developing States with respect to the oceans. Small island states are an integral part of the oceans system of the world. ... I am part of a team of people from the island communities around the world who are concerned about this particularly the effects of climate change impacts on coastal communities like our own. Our communities are recognized by the scientific IPCC as amongst the most vulnerable group to the effects of climate change so that is why we're here. The resources in our marine areas are being badly degraded and depleted not by us who need the resources but often by foreign users and foreign fishing vessels. And we're here to try to articulate the concerns and the positions of our countries. On the health of the oceans generally and in connection with the impacts of climate change but



more generally about a fair regime, equitable regimes for the exploitation of what is on the seabed and what is in the water column of oceans.

Ambassador Tuiloma Neroni Slade,
Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum,
Former Chair of AOSIS (1997-2002)

SIDS at the 5th Global Oceans Conference

May 3-7, 2010, UNESCO, Paris, France

As a major focal area of the Global Forum's work, SIDS also took a prominent role at the 5th Global Oceans Conference in Paris, France, which was an especially urgent topic in light of the ongoing international climate negotiations at the UNFCCC. A number of sessions of the Policy, Science, and Technical Symposium discussed issues related to small island states, as well as various plenary panels during the high-level policy Conference. As well, a number of participants in the Special Roundtables (The High-Level National Officials Roundtable; The Ocean

Parliamentarians Roundtable; and The Network of Local and Regional Authorities Roundtable) were from SIDS.

In a special address, President Anote Tong from Kiribati delivered an impassioned speech on the dire implications of climate change for SIDS.

I have said at forum after forum that, for low lying island countries like Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands and other similarly vulnerable countries, climate change is a matter of security and of survival... In spite of our continuous appeals for appropriate collective international action, the response so far has been well short of expectations. We applaud the unilateral action taken by some countries to reduce their emissions, demonstrating true leadership at



this critical moment in the history of the planet. These countries are willing to make the necessary sacrifices so that others may exercise the right to survive.

President Anote Tong
of Kiribati

A number of other panelists and speakers addressed the implications of impacts such as sea-level rise on SIDS and outlined national and local efforts to address these impacts. Tresna Dermawan Kunaefi, Ambassador to UNESCO for Indonesia, stressed the impacts of climate change on coastal communities in Indonesia, such as sea level rise, and discussed the importance of altered construction practices in adaptation. Mr. Ahmed Aslam, Minister of Housing, Transport and Environment from the Maldives, whose nation is one of the most threatened by sea-level rise, stressed the importance of raising global awareness about climate change. Panelists also outlined the importance of international cooperation in addressing impacts in SIDS. Ambassador David Doyle, Permanent Delegate of St. Kitts and Nevis to UNESCO, emphasized the role of UNESCO in assisting SIDS in addressing climate change, and recommended: adopting a more focused top-down and bottom-up approach for policy; prioritizing links among relevant Mauritius Strategy chapters and UNESCO; and emphasizing local capacity building.