



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
United Nations Member States

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CONCEPT NOTE

SIDS BIODIVERSITY COALITION & SIDS 10-YEAR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
ROADMAP UNDER THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BIODIVERSITY CONVENTION (CBD)
AND THE S.A.M.O.A PATHWAY.

***ENHANCING TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO SIDS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE BIODIVERSITY CONVENTION***

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

SIDS & BIODIVERSITY: FROM CHALLENGES TO OPPORTUNITIES

1. In 2015, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have played a leading role in raising awareness of climate change issues on the international stage and advocating for strong climate action. They succeeded in building a common diplomatic discourse and secure their special circumstances as vulnerable countries. Most notably, Small Islands States, as a strategic group, demonstrated leadership in raising ambition to help secure an ambitious long-term temperature goal of limiting global warming to “well below 1.5 °C” through the historic Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Small Island States (i.e., Fiji and Palau) were also among the very first countries to ratify the Paris Agreement in 2016. The explicit acknowledgment of the unique vulnerability situation of Small Islands Developing States to climate change in the Paris Agreement has resulted in the prioritization of technical and financial assistance to Small Island States.
2. In 2021, another international landmark framework will be adopted with unique opportunities for Small Islands States. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), including all the Small Island States, is expected to adopt the new Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at its forthcoming 15th meeting (CBD COP 15). The framework will contain new goals and targets for biodiversity for the next 10 years (2021-2030) as a steppingstone towards the 2030 Agenda and the 2050 Vision of “Living in Harmony with Nature”.
3. The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is of paramount importance for Small Island States’ socio-economic development which highly depends on biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources. The outcome document of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, entitled “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway,” recognizes (paragraph 90) that “overall, small island developing States have extraordinary marine and terrestrial biodiversity that in many cases is fundamental to their livelihoods and identity.” However, island ecosystems being extremely vulnerable to changes due to their unique remoteness, isolation and high level of endemism would require strengthened support to protect biodiversity.

Indeed, island species populations tend to be small, localized, and highly specialized, and thus can easily be driven to extinction. Nature breakdown in SIDS reduces drastically the capacity for ecosystems to respond to additional stresses and to adapt to climate change by offering cost-effective nature-based solutions. SIDS are also stewards of large ocean areas that often far out-size their landmass. As such, the threats to biodiversity and the services they provide are keenly felt by SIDS. In fact, the Convention on Biological Diversity itself explicitly acknowledges these challenges, with the Preamble to the Convention giving note to "...the special conditions of the least developed countries and small island States".

4. The [CBD's Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 report](#) (2020) recently noted that none of the previously agreed biodiversity targets (Aichi Biodiversity Targets) were fully met by their 2020 deadline, globally. Notably, SIDS' national reports to the CBD and National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) indicate clearly some of the singular vulnerability and challenges faced by SIDS in the implementation of the Biodiversity Convention. Considering SIDS as priority countries, the [Global Environment Facility](#) (main funding instruments of the 3 Rio Conventions - Biodiversity, Desertification, Climate) states that many SIDS still lack the systems and the technical support they need. Also, the [2020 Independent Evaluation of the Relevance and Effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund's Investments in SIDS](#) highlights an interesting set of implementation barriers and provides valuable recommendations to support implementation. It is worth mentioning that GCF and GEF are among the largest contributors to SIDS. All the above confirms that SIDS remain "a special case for sustainable development" as acknowledged by the SAMOA Pathway. Biodiversity is at the heart of the SAMOA Pathway.

5. Moreover, in the frame of COVID-19, the scale of financial interventions by Governments in response to the pandemic will be relatively massive. Failing in mainstreaming environmental considerations and climate action into COVID-19 unprecedented recovery investments might substantially increase the risk for SIDS to cross environmental tipping points and lose priceless and irreplaceable nature-based assets.

6. Indeed, in SIDS with weak existing climate and biodiversity frameworks and policies, major investments run the risk to flow into sectors with high impacts on natural resources exacerbating climate change impacts, biodiversity loss and local pollution. Consequently, this would seriously trap SIDS in a negative spiral of expensive unsustainable development choices. The momentum created by the current crisis should therefore be used to promote and mainstream environmental sustainability into SIDS social and economic recovery efforts. Urgent decisions and bold investments by SIDS to address the pandemic need to be taken with an environmental lens.

7. Under these perspectives, the adoption of the Post-2020 Framework will not only carry new responsibilities for Parties but will also **catalyze new investments to support implementation of the Biodiversity Convention and protect biodiversity**. Thus, it is important that the challenges and priorities of SIDS are addressed in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework itself, and therefore, there is a need for strong coordination among SIDS, at both the technical and political levels, in the ongoing deliberations to develop the Post-2020 Framework.

8. To conclude, considered as a possible "*Paris Agreement for Biodiversity*" due to its foreseen historic importance, the upcoming Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework offers a unique window of opportunity for SIDS to advocate for their unique conditions, demonstrate their leading role in nature-based solutions for sustainable development and prioritize their specific biodiversity-related concerns and needs under the new Global 10-year Framework.

THE SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD:

VISION, OBJECTIVE & EXPECTED RESULTS

9. Through this note and in line with the SAMOA Pathway, PSIDS are requesting UNDESA's support as follows (for discussion):

A long-term vision

10. The suggested support has a 10-year vision: SIDS biodiversity-related needs and priorities are addressed by 2030 through enhanced structural frameworks, capacity building initiatives and sustainable financial support (means of implementation) to SIDS for the implementation of the Biodiversity Convention.

This vision is fully in line with **paragraph 90 (c) of the SAMOA Pathway**: *We strongly support the efforts of small island developing States to access financial and technical resources for the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity.*

2021 Objective

11. The objective of the support for 2021 is twofold: To have the upcoming CBD COP 15: (i) Officially recognizing the unique and specific SIDS challenges, needs and opportunities for biodiversity and (ii) Officially requesting the development of a 10-year SIDS capacity development roadmap under the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework to enhance technical and financial support (means of implementation) to SIDS for the implementation of the Biodiversity Convention and the SAMOA Pathway. The SIDS Roadmap could then be developed and adopted at COP 16 (2023), accordingly.

12. The rationale behind this specific but strategic objective is that COP 15 (2021¹) would officially request the formulation of a 10-year SIDS capacity development roadmap, and after the mandated development of the SIDS Roadmap during 2022, COP 16 (2023) will then formally adopt the SIDS Roadmap that will institutionally trigger dedicated financial and technical support for SIDS. In line with the SAMOA Pathway, UNDESA will remain available to support SIDS all the way and beyond 2021.

2021 Expected Results

13. To achieve the above-stated vision (for 2030) and objective (for 2021), this concept note suggests to provide technical assistance for the delivery of 3 key outputs that need to take place as soon as possible in 2021. Those are critical steps to be undertaken to be in line with this year CBD-related processes.

Result 1: Establishment of a SIDS Biodiversity Coalition to actively participate in the 2021 CBD process as a single, unified body to amplify the voices of SIDS within the ongoing and subsequent biodiversity related negotiations - before, during and after CBD COP 15 in 2021. As AOSIS² is focusing on UNFCCC related climate change negotiations, this Biodiversity Coalition is proposed to focus on CBD biodiversity negotiations, particularly related to this landmark 10-year framework. The Coalition will play a key role in facilitating coordination among SIDS Parties, during the CBD pre-COP as well as the formal sessions of CBD COP 15 on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and other relevant agenda items.

¹ Exact timeline and COP 15 final date confirmation will depend on COVID-19 situation

² Synergies between the SIDS Biodiversity Coalition and AOSIS on climate change will be sought to the extent possible, considering the close connection between those two issues.

The CBD pre-COP events and processes to be targeted are:

1. [3rd meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)
 - a. Continuation of deliberations on the entire Post-2020 Framework
2. [24th meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice \(SBSTTA\)](#)
 - a. Providing advice and input to the working group (noted above) on monitoring frameworks and indicators for the Post-2020 Framework, as well as scientific and technical advice on the Framework overall
3. [3rd meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Implementation \(SBI\)](#)
 - a. Providing advice and input to the working group on resource mobilization and other aspects of implementation for the framework

Also, the Coalition will build and maintain a close relationship with non-SIDS countries who are friends of SIDS and which would also be strategic to get a broader buy-in of Parties to the Biodiversity Convention. DESA's central location in New York, with regular contact with Country Missions to the UN would be an advantage.

The Coalition can start small and the membership can increase over the year(s). To the extent possible, it is encouraged that this Coalition is:

- a. Represented by at least 1-2 SIDS from each of the 3 SIDS regions (Pacific, Caribbean and AIS)
- b. Composed of political leaders
- c. Supported by a technical task force (composed of national biodiversity experts³ designated by the Coalition members)

If requested, DESA can support the establishment of the SIDS Biodiversity Coalition in the frame of the SAMOA Pathway and can provide secretariat/coordination support as well as meeting/workshop/webinar assistance to the Coalition and the technical task force.

Result 2: Formulation of a common SIDS position paper (policy brief) to accompany the SIDS Biodiversity Coalition and particularly: (i) Support common messaging in advocacy efforts by the Coalition; (ii) Facilitate technical consensus on joint SIDS inputs provisions during the pre-COP and COP negotiations; and (iii) Support the rationale behind the need for a SIDS capacity development roadmap.

About the suggested Policy Brief:

The title of the Policy Brief could be, for example: The Call for a 10-year SIDS Roadmap for Capacity Development under the global post-2020 Biodiversity Framework. The policy brief could be used by SIDS as a common position paper during the COP negotiation and advocacy events (see output 3)

The content of such a policy brief could be:

- a. *SIDS as biodiversity hotspots and guardians of the oceans*
- b. *Role of biodiversity in SIDS's socio-economic development*
- c. *Best practices of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use by SIDS*
- d. *Fragility of island ecosystems and threats to SIDS biodiversity*
- e. *Reported SIDS capacity gaps during the last decade of CBD implementation*

³ The national biodiversity experts could, for example, be the existing National CBD Focal points.

f. Conclusion: A 10-year SIDS Roadmap for Capacity Development under the CBD

In terms of methodology, the information contained in this policy brief could be rapidly drawn from existing literature review of CBD National Reports, National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) and from consultations/surveys with CBD National Biodiversity Focal points and Technical regional partners ([SPREP](#), [CEP](#), [Nairobi Convention](#), etc.)

Result 3: Mainstreaming of the key common messages of the Policy Brief and organization of advocacy events in order to ensure that (i) SIDS needs and priorities are reflected in the language of the negotiations and that (ii) SIDS related momentum is gained in the frame of COP 15. In practical terms, the policy brief will be designed to support SIDS negotiators in pre-COP (as listed above) and COP 15 negotiations. Also, dissemination support will be provided for the policy brief and its content could be presented through various forms in various events⁴ in 2021 for SIDS momentum building. An infographic, a story map or a PowerPoint version of the Policy Brief could also be supported to facilitate communication of key messages.

14. One of the key advocacy events that can be organized and supported is a **“Towards a SIDS Biodiversity Roadmap” side event** at COP 15th. During that SIDS event the Policy Brief could be presented, the priorities and issues of SIDS discussed and the need for a Roadmap will again be put forward in front of a broad audience of policy makers, donors and friends of SIDS to support the momentum.

SUSTAINABILITY & PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

15. UNDESA works in close coordination with the CBD. In that context, the support provided by UNDESA will of course be provided in close synergies with the CBD Secretariat and associated processes. If everything goes as planned, **COP 15 (2021) will officially request the development of a 10-year SIDS capacity development roadmap, and after development and formulation mainly in 2022, COP 16 (2023) will then formally adopt the SIDS Capacity Development Roadmap.**

16. The proposed outputs mentioned in this document will be achieved in close partnerships with CBD National Focal Points as well as with Regional Frameworks and Technical partners already supporting SIDS in biodiversity-related matters at regional levels, including negotiations processes ([SPREP](#), [CEP](#), [Nairobi Convention](#), etc). To the extent relevant, the intended SIDS Biodiversity Coalition will also seek synergies with other strategic International Coalitions (e.g. Global Ocean Alliance, High Ambition Coalition). Also, synergies between this Coalition on Biodiversity and AOSIS working on climate change will be sought to the extent possible. Climate change and biodiversity erosion are two complex threats that require integrated solutions.

17. Once the SIDS Roadmap is adopted, the mobilization for targeted support for post-2020 global biodiversity framework implementation by SIDS will be greatly strengthened, and the involvement of partners and island networks will be facilitated and guided by the Roadmap.

18. The development of the Roadmap can also be informed and align with other relevant areas of work under the CBD, including (but not limited to) work to support Parties’ in strengthening marine elements of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Regional Biodiversity Frameworks and Partners ([SPREP](#),

⁴ The key events are CBD related but not only: Climate COP, Desertification COP, UN Ocean Conference, Sustainable Transport Conference, High-Level Dialogue on Energy, Food Systems Summit.

[CEP](#), [Nairobi Convention](#), etc), Sustainable Ocean Initiative capacity development activities, work to describe ecologically or biologically significant marine (EBSAs), and others such as the Ocean Conference. Considering the 10-year timeframe, cross-fertilization with the UN Decade for Ocean Science and the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration will be sought as well.

CROSS-FERTILIZATION WITH OTHER PROCESSES AND FRAMEWORKS

19. As articulated by the 2021 UNEP report ([Making Peace with Nature](#)), climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are the 3 planetary crises that are driving each other and put the well-being of current and future generations at unacceptable risk. SIDS are on the frontline of those risks. Determined and harmonized action by governments, the private sector and civil society can halt biodiversity erosion and reverse environmental degradation by rapidly transforming key systems including energy, water and food so that the use of the land and oceans becomes sustainable. Transforming social and economic systems means putting biodiversity at the heart of decision-making.

20. This proposed 10-year initiative for SIDS focusing on biodiversity will then be critical for the whole 2030 Agenda. Indeed, the importance of biodiversity is embedded across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway. Ecosystem services, boosted by biodiversity, are directly related to the achievement of the 17 SDGs. As mandated by [GA resolution 70/299](#), the UN, through UNDESA, acts as the Secretariat for SDGs, focusing on providing substantive support and capacity building to the 17 Goals and their interlinkages, with a particular attention to SIDS through the SAMOA Pathway.

21. While **SDGs 13, 14** and **15** are directly and respectively related to climate change, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, it is important to note that the 2030 Agenda (i) integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental - across all the 17 Goals, and (ii) fully recognizes that different goals and targets are closely interlinked. Without the consideration of ecosystems, none of the 17 SDGs or the SAMOA Pathway related priorities can be sustainably achieved and vice versa.

22. The achievement of food security and improved nutrition (**SDG 2**) depend on biodiversity and a broad range of ecosystem services that support agricultural productivity (through pollination, pest control, soil fertility, etc). Healthy ecosystems also underpin delivery of water supplies and water quality (**SDG 6**), and guard against water-related hazards and disasters. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity may therefore be regarded as foundational to the whole 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway.

23. Under these perspectives, this initiative, primarily connected to CBD processes, will also seek strong synergies for greater ambitions, impacts and economies of scale in/for SIDS with other internationally important processes, frameworks covering the above-mentioned SDGs. The SIDS Coalition approach will help SIDS in having more weight in those processes and frameworks which are mentioned below and clustered by themes:

Ecosystems:

- [UN Ocean Conference](#) (organized by UNDESA) and related outcomes/commitments (upcoming).
- [UN Forum on Forest](#) (coordinated by UNDESA) and [Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network](#).
- [UN Ecosystem Restoration Decade](#) (coordinated by FAO & UNEP).
- [UN Ocean Science Decade for Sustainable Development](#) (coordinated by UNESCO).

Food and Water:

- [UN Water Action Decade](#) (coordinated by [UN-Water](#)).
- [Food Systems Summit](#) (Chaired by UNDSG) and related outcomes/commitments.

RIO Conventions (in addition to Biodiversity Convention):

- **Climate:** Supporting [AOSIS](#)'s strategic involvement in [UNFCCC](#) processes, including Climate COPs through a biodiversity lens, as well as strengthening nature-based solutions for SIDS in other Paris Agreement-related events and platforms such as [Paris Committee on Capacity Building Network](#), [Capacity-Building Knowledge to Action Days](#), the [Regional Climate Weeks](#).
- **Land degradation:** [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification](#) (UNCCD), associated COPs and [UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework](#).

24. Finally, as an overarching theme, partnership development is another key aspect of **SDG 17** that this proposal will be directly contributing to. Strategic partnerships for integrated approaches are more than ever necessary to support SIDS in achieving the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway. COVID-19 has amplified the need for an unprecedented collaboration for building back better, greener and bluer. The development of sustainable and genuine partnerships with effective investment and coordination is the driving force behind the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda as well as behind the Biodiversity Convention. In that context, DESA-supported [SAMOA Pathway SIDS Partnership Framework](#) would be instrumental.

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