



Small islands plan greater collaboration with private sector

Press Release

Aruba, 24 March 2016 - A high-level event supporting public-private partnerships in small island developing States (SIDS) has closed today in Aruba, highlighting the importance of strengthening national and international cooperation for the future sustainable development of small islands.

The three-day P3a event brought together 300 participants from SIDS and public-private partnership leaders to provide governments, private companies, financial institutions and knowledge centers with the opportunity to network and showcase partnerships in SIDS. A new global business network for small island developing states was launched at the P3a. The SIDS GBN network, an initiative of the UN Office for the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UNOHRLLS), will link up Small Islands by connecting the SIDS private sector, global business and other national and international stakeholders.

“We are pleased to see the sharing of experiences, lessons learned, and best practices, in public-private partnerships for small islands to contribute to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs” said Gyan Chandra Acharya, UN Under- Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States “My office is delighted to have launched the new online SIDS Global Business Network at this event, a tool that we hope will continue to facilitate such exchange of information between small islands and the private sector”

Oceans were highlighted at the event as a key area of importance for SIDS with great potential for partnerships. Panelists discussed new models for public-private partnerships utilizing technologies that encourage the uptake of renewable energy while also building the capacities of SIDS and allowing for employment opportunities. The vital role of Government in spurring the growth of renewable energy was raised in addition to the issue of sustainable agriculture, where potential for partnerships between world-class agricultural research institutions and SIDS institutions was identified.

The need for better analysis and new ways to attract youth involvement in sustainable agriculture were highlighted in addition to the great potential for sustainable tourism, which remains the biggest sector in small islands for income, job creation and growth.

The benefit that community-based tourism can bring to women and local communities in small islands was highlighted. Different approaches to ensure that the quality sustainable tourism industry remains is high on the agenda were shared.

For many SIDS, IT connection, particularly to reliable broadband through undersea cable remains a key need. Regional approaches were explored in addition to ways in which market

size can be expanded. Blended financing is a key component to ensuring that public-private partnership projects can be successful. The high cost associated with the preparation stage can be prohibitive for many SIDS.

For SIDS, public-private partnerships are essential for infrastructure plans to be turned into projects and become reality. However the event highlighted the challenges of implementation. Examples on experiences, successes, lessons learned on public-private partnerships in the infrastructure projects were also shared.

Organised by UN-OHRLLS, together with the Government of Aruba in collaboration with support from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the P3a provided a platform to mobilize efforts in the pursuit of achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

“Coming together as private and public sector, is something the UN has been encouraging over the last decades. But in reality, if we look at the development, we can see that recently, with all the global challenges, it has become more evident, also to the private sector, that they can not only focus on making gains for the shareholders, but it is also about the shared responsibility towards the future and the global challenges.”said Aruban Prime-Minister Mike Eman

Small Island Developing States are small in terms of population, and in most cases also in landmass. Due to their small size, small islands find it difficult to benefit from economies of scale. As many of them are remote and isolated from the world's major markets, transport costs to and from and within the SIDS are among the highest in the world. Therefore, many SIDS have geared their economic activities towards tourism, promotion of cultural and natural heritage, fishing and marine resources, financing, and information and communication technology.

www.sidsgbn.org, www.unohrlls.org, www.p3a.org

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