

**Expert Group Meeting on
Furthering the agenda of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to meet the SAMOA
Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

29 March 2019

World Bank Group (WBG) Headquarters

Objective

The objective of the meeting was to discuss in greater detail the WBG's existing work in support of the SIDS agenda and potential areas where the SIDS could be further supported. The discussion focused on the following themes: (i) vulnerability; (ii) the oceans and the blue economy; (iii) financing for climate; (iv) and meeting the ambition and promise of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Meeting Summary

1. During the opening session, it was noted that 2019 was an important year for SIDS, with the convening of the Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway during the high-level week of the General Assembly in September, along with the Climate Summit, SDG Summit and other meetings of critical importance to these countries. Participants also highlighted the bottom-up approach to the political declaration and will be guided by outcomes of the regional preparatory meetings which underscored the need for increased investment, access to development finance and SIDS eligibility and concessional finance among others. Participants underscored the importance of coordinated and coherent support to SIDS from the WBG and the UN system, in preparation for these meetings and, more generally, in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.
2. Participants highlighted the priority areas of the AOSIS Group over the next two years: including climate change; sustainable development; and the conservation and sustainable use of oceans. They noted key areas for support in this regard, including increasing investments and partnerships, enhancing access to concessional financing, and developing innovative solutions to challenges like domestic resource mobilization, debt sustainability, and mobilizing the private sector and greater engagement of the multi-lateral institutions on these issues. Participants noted that often the role on multilateral development banks (MDBs) in terms of concessional and non-concessional finance are skewed towards addressing further noting that severe austerity is detrimental to economic growth. Participants also noted that while SIDS share common challenges, there is a need to build awareness around and tailor solutions to specific country circumstances.
3. Participants noted with appreciation the increasing support of the WBG to small states, including the increase in resources to small states, and the re-skilling of the Bank, particularly around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was agreed that continued

work was needed to build awareness around the tools and solutions that the Bank could offer to SIDS, as well as to sensitize other lending countries and agencies around the particular needs of SIDS. Participants underscored with economic progress, the project value also increases and SIDS are increasingly looking to borrow including for larger infrastructure projects at a lending rate that is available to other developing countries.

4. Participants noted recent developments in relation to the WBGs engagement with small states, including the increase in development financing to small states, through IDA, IRBD and CIFs; policy advice and capacity building; as well as disaster and risk financing mechanism like the CAT-DDO. In particular, it was noted that access to Small States doubled during IDA-18, and that the Board had approved entry and exit criteria for the Small States Exception. It was also noted that there has been greater awareness around the needs of small states in the WBG' work on its five thematic priority areas: Climate Change; Fragility, Conflict & Violence; Gender; Infrastructure, PPPs & Guarantees; and Knowledge Management.
5. Participants called for continued and enhanced socialization of SIDS issues in the context of the WBG including through incorporating information on SIDS in major WB publications, like the Global Economic Prospects. This would also include creating awareness around initiatives being developed by other agencies, including regional agencies, that are focused on solutions for the challenges that SIDS face, like the ECLAC's debt-swap initiative.
6. Participants noted the boosting of adaptation finance, including through the diversification of financial instruments like blue and green bonds, as well as disaster-risk financing and insurance programmes. Participants further noted the emphasis on prevention and the support to systematic risk management, with tools and analytics to integrate climate risk management across sectors. The Climate Vulnerability Assessment prepared for Fiji was used as an example of a tool that SIDS could use in this regard. The Small Island States Resilience Initiative (SISRI) was also highlighted as an important platform for the provision of operation and technical support to SIDS.
7. Participants also discussed the WBG managed NDC Support Facility, designed to facilitate the implementation of NDCs under the Paris Agreement. Together with the NDC Partnership, the NDC Support Facility could provide for increased mobilization of financial and technical support to some SIDS in the implementation of their NDCs.
8. Participants noted the WBG approach to the Blue Economy, including the Blue Economy Action Plan, which centered around Knowledge Management and Innovation; creating an Enable Environment, as it relates to Governance, Fiscal and Financial Regimes; and Public and Private Investment, including the ProBlue initiative. Participants stressed the need to address the risks to the Blue Economy, including climate change, over-exploitation of fisheries and marine pollution; as well as the need to increase the benefits of the Blue Economy to SIDS.

Way Forward

The outcomes of these discussions will feed both into the expert group meeting on “*on mainstreaming the Samoa Pathway and issues relating to small island developing States in the work of the United Nations system and enhancing the coherence of issues relating to small island developing States in United Nations processes*”, which will be held during the second semester of 2019; the Small States Forum; as well as preparations of the Samoa Pathway Midterm Review taking place during the UNGA high-level week on September 27, 2019.

List of Experts

- Ms Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize
- Mr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of Maldives
- Mr. Odo Tevi, Permanent Representative of Vanuatu
- Ms Sheila Carey, Permanent Representative of Bahamas
- Mr Courtenay Rattray, Permanent Representative of Jamaica
- Mr Micheal Tierney, Counselor, Ireland

Meeting Agenda

11:30am – 12:00pm	High-level opening and welcome Mr Marco Scruciati, Adviser, 2030 Agenda, UN Relations and Partnerships Ms Fekita ‘Utoikamanu, USG, OHRLLS Ms Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize
12:15pm – 1:15pm	SDGs and the 2030 Agenda Mr Marco Scruciati, Adviser, 2030 Agenda, UN Relations and Partnerships
1:15pm – 2:15pm	Strengthening engagement with small states Ms Manuela Ferro, Vice President, OPCS Mr Johannes Zutt, Director for Strategy, Risk and Results
2:30pm – 3:30pm	Climate Change, Resilience, and Vulnerability Ms Bernice Van Bronkhorst, Director, Climate Change
3:45pm – 4:45pm	Oceans and the blue economy Mr Benoit Blarel, Manager, Global Engagement, Environment
4:45pm – 5:15pm	IDA and access to finance Ms Clara de Sousa, Manager of IDA Strategy and Operations, Development Finance
5:00pm – 5:30pm	Closing session Mr Mahmoud Mohieldin, Senior Vice President Ms Fekita ‘Utoikamanu, USG, OHRLLS