



General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 July 2023

Original: English

Seventy-eighth session

Item 19 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Sustainable development

Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/245](#). It covers the period from August 2022 to July 2023 and contains summaries of activities undertaken by reporting Member States and United Nations system organizations to implement the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. It also responds directly to the requests of the Assembly contained in paragraphs 43 and 44 of the resolution for an update on the Data Platform for the Small Island Developing States by the United Nations Development Programme and an update on the regional and interregional preparatory meetings, as well as the preparatory process for convening the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the final report of the High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index.

* [A/78/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in response to paragraph 44 of General Assembly resolution 77/245 and to the specific requests contained in paragraph 43 of the same resolution. In preparing the report, contributions were solicited from United Nations system organizations, the regional commissions, regional intergovernmental organizations of small island developing States, major groups and Member States. The Secretariat issued a questionnaire, for which a total of 36 responses¹ were received, 12 from Member States and 24 from United Nations system organizations and agencies. The report contains a summarized and very abbreviated version of the inputs. The full text of all responses and submissions received is available at <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/small-island-developing-states>.

2. The report is divided into three sections. Section II contains the summaries of activities submitted in response to the Secretariat's questionnaire. Section III contains an update on the Data Platform for the Small Island Developing States and on the work on the multidimensional vulnerability index, as well as a brief update on the preparation for the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

II. Implementation and monitoring of and follow-up to the SAMOA Pathway

A. Updates from Member States

3. Australia assists Pacific small island developing States in combating climate change and building resilience on their own terms. It provided Fiji (\$A 25.5 million) to rebuild schools using climate resilient infrastructure that incorporated renewable energy, following Tropical Cyclones Yasa and Ana in 2020 and 2021 and helped Kiribati (\$A 5.6 million) to strengthen coastal resilience through the Australia-Kiribati Climate Security Initiative.² In Papua New Guinea, Australia invested \$A 20 million to improve access to climate finance and increase engagement with carbon markets. Australia assisted Vanuatu with disaster response and recovery efforts following Tropical Cyclones Judy and Kevin in 2023. At the regional level, Australia provided an initial \$A 30 million to kick-start the Pacific-led Weather Ready

¹ Submissions were received from Australia, Austria, Belize, the Dominican Republic, France, Latvia, Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Seychelles, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the International Telecommunication Union, the International Trade Centre, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization.

² See Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Kiribati – Australia's commitment to strengthening climate and disaster resilience in the Pacific", available at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/kiribati-australias-commitment-to-strengthening-climate-and-disaster-resilience-in-the-pacific>.

Pacific initiative,³ to help communities better prepare for disasters through improved severe weather early warning systems. The Australia Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific⁴ is also investing in climate infrastructure in the Pacific through the Pacific Climate Infrastructure Financing Partnership.

4. Austrian Development Cooperation provides support for preventive strategies of small island developing States aimed at reducing exposure to external shocks and improving resilience, primarily through the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres platform,⁵ specifically, the regional centres Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, Central American Integration System (SICA) Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. Both the Caribbean Centre and the Pacific Centre are working on establishing project preparation support facilities that aim to support private and public sector project developers in achieving the bankability stage. The financial resources expended or planned in that respect are 900,000 euros (2022) and 1.4 million euros (2023).

5. Belize revised its National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Master Plan for the period 2021–2025⁶ to accommodate new scientific findings and projections, incorporating updated mitigation and adaptation measures and mainstreaming updated national and sectoral priorities into the revision of the nationally determined contributions. The National Meteorological Service of Belize implements the Energy Resilience for Climate Adaptation Project⁷ aimed at enhancing the resilience of Belize’s energy system to adverse weather and climate change impacts. The Inter-American Development Bank approved a \$15 million operation to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Belize. The project supports employment and promotes the economic recovery of such enterprises through access to production-oriented finance benefiting businesses in the agriculture, fisheries and tourism sectors.

6. The Dominican Republic reported that it had implemented various interventions and strategies over the decades addressing vulnerability reduction and resilience-building and collaborated with numerous institutions, including Habitat for Humanity International, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Caribbean Regional Strategic Programme for Climate Resilience, the Santo Domingo Institute of Technology and the World Bank. The Dominican Republic is also part of the Caribbean Climate-Smart Accelerator,⁸ a public-private partnership aimed at catalysing over \$8 billion in private and public investment for resilience-building projects in the Caribbean region. Other resilience-building interventions include the National Plan for Risk Management (2018–2030).

7. The French Agence française de développement launched several initiatives, including AdaptAction⁹ to support countries seeking technical assistance for the institutional, methodological and operational implementation of their commitments

³ ReliefWeb, “Australia Pledges AUD 30 Million Support For Weather Ready Pacific”, available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/australia-pledges-aud-30-million-support-weather-ready-pacific#:~:text=It%20was%20endorsed%20by%20the,million%20to%20kickstart%20the%20initiative>.

⁴ See <https://www.aifp.gov.au/>.

⁵ See <https://www.gn-sec.net/>.

⁶ Belize Ministry of Climate Change, “National Policies and Plans where Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Indicators are required”, available at https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/presentations/belize-workshop-2_1-ministry-sustainable-national-policies-plans.pdf.

⁷ World Bank, “Belize Energy Resilience for Climate Adaptation”, available at <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P149522>.

⁸ See <https://www.caribbeanaccelerator.org/>.

⁹ See <https://www.afd.fr/en/adaptaction>.

to adaptation to climate change. AdaptAction has leveraged over 580 million euros in support of 15 countries, focusing on climate-vulnerable countries, including small island developing States. The second phase of the programme (2022–2025, 15 million euros) was launched at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. France also leads and supports multi-donors' initiatives such as the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative¹⁰ and the joint Pacific Initiative on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Resilience (KIWA Initiative).¹¹

8. Latvia reported that it had made a voluntary national contribution of 20,000 euros to the International Programme for the Development of Communication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2022 to support small island developing States in engaging in projects that promote the development of free media.

9. During its presidency of the Security Council (2023–2024), Malta advocated and promoted the interests of small island developing States by organizing a high-level open debate on the theme “Sea-level rise: Implications for international peace and security”. In 2022, Malta launched a foreign policy strategy specifically aimed at promoting and advocating for the interests of small States and small island developing States in international forums. In that connection, Malta donated 20,000 euros to the United Nations trust fund to support developing States, in particular small island developing States, in the preparation of their submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, 3,000 euros to facilitate the participation of small island developing State representatives in the first Meeting of States parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and 10,000 euros for the participation of small island developing States in negotiations on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

10. Mauritius adopted three core strategies, namely, on recovery, revival and resilience,¹² in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and other external shocks, including the impact of the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation as well as the negative effects of climate change. This led to a growth of 4 per cent in 2021 and 9.7 per cent in 2022. To reinforce international connectivity and accommodate digital solutions, Mauritius is laying its fourth submarine cable, which is expected to be operational by the end of 2023. As part of the Green Mauritius strategy, an annual amount of 2 billion Mauritian rupees is earmarked under the National Environment and Climate Change Fund to support sectors such as flood management, coastal zone protection and disaster risk reduction.

11. New Zealand's overall goal during and in the aftermath of the pandemic was to support Pacific small island developing States in preparing for, responding to and adapting to living with COVID-19 in a way that minimized the social and economic impacts of the pandemic and building long-term resilience, including economic and fiscal resilience, climate change and disaster resilience, governance resilience, social resilience and intergenerational and cultural resilience. In the 2021–22 financial year, New Zealand disbursed a \$NZ 162-million emergency budget to support and enable Pacific Governments to meet critical spending needs to maintain law and order, provide basic public services, prepare health systems and fund social protection

¹⁰ Initiative of the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

¹¹ See <https://kiwainitiative.org/en>.

¹² See budget speech 2021–2022, available at https://www.mauritiusbudget.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2021_22budgetspeech_english.pdf.

mechanisms. In May 2023, New Zealand and Maldives were elected co-chairs of the Preparatory Committee of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

12. Approximately 33 per cent of Portugal's bilateral official development assistance (ODA) goes towards small island developing States, prioritizing national capacity-building through innovative approaches and new technologies; climate and risk reduction; facilitating access to global climate funds; and reducing dependence on concessional finance. Portugal supported activities to strengthen institutional capacities in Cabo Verde and Sao Tome and Principe and supported local market producers in Timor-Leste during the reporting period. It also offered financial support for the work of Climate Promise of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)¹³ on small island developing States and to the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Portugal is working with Tuvalu in the context of its project on trade and integrated private sector development, which is aimed at achieving the goals of *Te Kete*,¹⁴ Tuvalu's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2021–2030. Portugal is presently the co-chair, with Samoa, of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for Small Island Developing States.

13. Small island developing States are among the Russian Federation's long-standing international partners in the joint pursuit for sustainable development. Russian bilateral and multilateral projects promoting social and economic progress in small island developing States have been under way for decades, including provisions for emergency humanitarian assistance (foodstuffs, mobile power plants, tents, Russian airmobile hospital, etc.) to Cabo Verde, Comoros, Dominica, Haiti, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Vanuatu. Through UNDP, a Russian-funded project worth \$7.5 million to build disaster resilience was carried out for the Pacific small island developing States.

14. The Seychelles Meteorological Authority is embarking on a five-year regional project on building regional resilience through strengthened meteorological, hydrological and climate services in the Indian Ocean Commission member countries (Hydromet Project). The project seeks to deliver climate services to enhance risk prevention and preparedness as well as emergency response and adaptation planning. Seychelles has also received support for projects geared towards reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience, including activities in the areas of sustainable energy transition, disaster risk reduction, blue economy development, regional collaboration and human development.

B. Updates from the United Nations system

15. In 2022 and 2023, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs released two small island developing States thematic gap assessment reports on (a) means of implementing biodiversity objectives, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; and (b) means of implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Department initiated and supported the establishment and launch of the "SIDS Coalition for Nature" at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, with a call for action highlighting three gap-bridging partnerships for small island developing States to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. In addition, the Department developed and coordinated the Small Island

¹³ See <https://climatepromise.undp.org/>.

¹⁴ Available at <https://australiaawardsfijiandtuvalu.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Te-Kete-2021-2030-National-Development-Strategy.pdf>.

Developing States Restoration Drive flagship (under the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration) in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in support of three small island developing States (Comoros, Saint Lucia and Vanuatu). The small island developing State flagship was awarded as one of the first global restoration initiatives during World Environment Day in 2022. Lastly, considering the critical financing and data gaps faced by small island developing States, the Department developed, leveraging in-house expertise, two programmes tailored for small island developing States, “Financing for Small Island Developing States” and “Data for Small Island Developing States”. While the programmes both have a strong national-level component, they are also aimed at harnessing regional and global small island developing State-to-small island developing State peer-learning and cooperation potential on financing solutions and data solutions for small island developing States, respectively.

16. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the Indian Ocean Commission, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Climate Change Competence Centre of Morocco, produced the “Beau Vallon Road Map” in Seychelles in 2023, establishing a governance structure and financial mechanisms to assist the nine member countries of the African Island State Climate Commission in accessing sustainable finance through innovative instruments such as the Great Blue Wall initiative¹⁵ to scale up projects that reduce vulnerability and boost resilience against external shocks and climate and disaster impacts, including through investments in marine-protected areas. Sao Tome and Principe generated carbon credits through the harmonized protocol and regional registry established with the support of ECA.¹⁶ ECA assisted Seychelles in adopting the ECA blue economy valuation toolkit and assisted Comoros in formulating its national African Continental Free Trade Area strategy, resulting in the ratification of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

17. At the regional level, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is also the secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee and of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement). In 2022, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean adopted its resolution 109 (XXIX)¹⁷ entitled “Towards the establishment of a Caribbean Resilience Fund”, seeking to address the challenges confronting Caribbean small island developing States by leveraging long-term, low-cost development financing to counter regional challenges, including environmental vulnerabilities, low economic growth, high debt and limited access to financing. Other regional activities supported by the Economic Commission include the project on building back better in the tourism-dependent Caribbean economies, for which it facilitated national consultations with stakeholders in the public and private sector and civil society of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement was held in Buenos Aires in April 2023 and concluded with the Buenos Aires Declaration. Belize and Grenada joined 11 other Caribbean States as parties to the regional agreement.¹⁸

¹⁵ See <https://www.greatbluewall.org/>.

¹⁶ See <https://repository.uneca.org/handle/10855/49405>.

¹⁷ See Sheldon McLean and Justin Ram, *Proposal to establish a Caribbean Resilience Fund: A segregated portfolio trust fund* (Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2022).

¹⁸ See <https://www.cepal.org/en/escazuagreement>.

18. The approach by FAO to preventing and addressing food crises incorporates immediate humanitarian response alongside medium- to longer-term investments in resilience-building and sustainable development to address the systemic causes of poverty and reduce chronic vulnerability and risk. FAO has invested more than \$10 million to support Caribbean, Pacific and Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea small island developing States, not only for agrifood systems recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, but also for the enhancement of the resilience of those systems to shocks and disasters. During the reporting period, several small island developing States faced additional disasters that disrupted agriculture production, for example, the volcanic eruption in Tonga and the double cyclones in Vanuatu. FAO supported these countries, in particular the smallholder farmers and fisherfolk, to ensure minimum impact on the livelihoods, food security and nutrition of the affected communities.

19. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has a dedicated global programme to support the special shipping needs of small island developing States, with an average annual fund allocation of \$200,000 from its Technical Cooperation Fund. The IMO Sustainable Maritime Transport Training Programme (GHG SMART) funded by the Republic of Korea (2020–2025, \$2.5 million) is aimed at building capacity in small island developing States through training courses and the development of individual trainee structured training plans. Antigua and Barbuda, the Marshall Islands, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Tonga attended the 2023 training programme. The IMO Global MTCC Network project (2016–2022, approximately \$11 million) established the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre–Pacific in Fiji, co-hosted by Pacific Community and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, with a view to supporting small island developing States across the Pacific region by improving the energy efficiency of domestic class vessels, ports and the updating of national policy and regulation.

20. Resilience is an important outcome of the engagement of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with small island developing States. In the Caribbean, IOM is building capacities to enhance coordination and improve timely response, including through stock prepositioning and improved national mechanisms for planned relocation in Cuba and the Dominican Republic and the integration of human mobility in public policies in Trinidad and Tobago. In the Pacific, IOM launched new projects in the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Palau. In the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea region, IOM works with partners to strengthen border management in Maldives and promote the economic recovery of migrant workers, especially migrant women, in Cabo Verde.

21. The International Trade Centre builds resilience in the agriculture sector of small island developing States through its Alliances for Action, transforming food systems, and advances the Sustainable Development Goals through producer partnerships that cultivate ethical, climate-smart and sustainable agricultural value chains.¹⁹ In collaboration with the secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, UNIDO and the International Finance Corporation, the International Trade Centre presently has projects in the Dominican Republic and Jamaica (cocoa and associated crops), Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu (coconut and kava) and Fiji (regional approach with Pacific Community).

22. During the reporting period, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) assisted Fiji and Kiribati in improving their emergency telecommunication planning and assisted Tonga and Vanuatu in re-establishing communication following disasters. Similar assistance was rendered to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Cybersecurity assistance was

¹⁹ See <https://intracen.org/>.

delivered in the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Kiribati and Maldives. The beneficiaries of the ITU Smart Seas Toolkit for Disaster Resilience project²⁰ are Barbados, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. In the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea region, Cabo Verde, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe and Seychelles also benefited from ITU support.

23. OHCHR integrates a human rights-based approach in addressing climate change impacts in country analysis, programmes and strategies. In the Pacific, it is working through the joint Pacific Climate Change, Migration and Human Security Programme²¹ with IOM, the International Labour Organization and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to develop a regional climate mobility framework. In the Caribbean, OHCHR is working with States and civil society to promote the ratification and implementation of the Escazú Agreement. Through the Surge Initiative,²² OHCHR provides seeding change funds for projects on human rights-based socioeconomic responses and is presently implementing projects in Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste.

24. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity submitted a comprehensive report on its activities and initiatives in small island developing States, including its Sustainable Ocean and Bio-Bridge Initiatives. It also submitted information relating to its programme of work on islands, marine and coastal biodiversity, relevant guidance of the Convention on Biological Diversity and information on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. At the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the parties adopted decision 15/8 on capacity-building and development and technical and scientific cooperation, which included a request to the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources, to facilitate the development of an island biodiversity capacity-building and development action plan.

25. The support of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to small island developing States focuses largely on building capacity to manage and understand disaster risk. National training programmes on disaster loss databases and on monitoring, reporting and risk assessment relating to the Sendai Framework were held in Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. Support was given to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to strengthen its national disaster risk reduction strategy. The Office supported Tonga in increasing the resilience of critical infrastructure and updating the Pacific regional loss and damage platform.²³ The Office co-organized training on comprehensive risk management with the University of the West Indies, in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, targeting six Caribbean countries, namely, the Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

26. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, developed the Automated System for Relief Consignments,²⁴ a tool to facilitate and expedite the processing of international relief during humanitarian crises, disasters and complex emergencies. Funded by the Australian Government Governance for Growth

²⁰ See <https://ctu.int/smart-seas-project/>.

²¹ See <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/projects/joint-programme-pacific-climate-change-migration-and-human-security-pccmhs-programme>.

²² See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/sdgs/seeding-change-economy-enhances-human-rights-surge-initiative#:~:text=About%20the%20Surge%20Initiative%20and%20Human%20Rights&text=The%20aim%20of%20the%20initiative,between%20human%20rights%20and%20economics>.

²³ See <https://pacific-data.sprep.org/dataset/pacific-damage-and-loss-pdalo-factsheet>.

²⁴ See <https://www.asyrec.asycuda.org/about>.

Programme,²⁵ the automated system was officially launched in Vanuatu in May 2022 to help the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office and other humanitarian relief actors to effectively coordinate, facilitate and monitor the import and distribution of humanitarian supplies during emergencies. Several publications produced by UNCTAD in 2022 are dedicated to issues of post-pandemic recovery in small island developing States. The compendium of research on building resilience in small island developing States provides analysis and policy recommendations for alternative economic development strategies in small island developing States, intersectoral linkages in tourism, debt sustainability and water policies. Also in 2022, the “Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies” project by UNCTAD and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea supported Barbados and Belize in assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

27. With projects all over the world, UNEP promotes a wide range of solutions, including nature-based solutions, national adaptation plans, early-warning climate services and climate-resilient livelihoods. A total of 10 projects²⁶ in small island developing States on climate change adaptation, covering the water, land management, infrastructure and planning sectors, are being implemented in Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Comoros, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Maldives, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu.

28. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change submitted, inter alia, that national adaptation plans are a central vehicle for adaptation planning and implementation. With funding support from the Green Climate Fund and other operating entities of the financial mechanism of the Framework Convention, national adaptation plans provide clear indications of the goals and aspirations of countries, making it feasible to assess adaptation outcomes. Of the eight small island developing States that are least developed countries (Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu), three have submitted their national adaptation plans (Kiribati, Haiti and Timor-Leste). A total of 11 small island developing States have submitted a national adaptation plan, namely, Cabo Verde, Fiji, Grenada, Haiti, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Timor-Leste and Tonga.

29. The tailored interventions by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are geared towards accelerating progress by advancing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Samoa was supported through family planning in-service training, the supportive supervision toolkit, adolescent- and youth- friendly services guidelines, national antenatal care guidelines for standard management of pregnancy and childbirth, and the midwifery curriculum revision. In Tonga, UNFPA emergency assistance focused on delivery of sexual and reproductive health-care services and on maternal health and psychosocial support. A total of 3,618 women and girls received essential hygiene supplies. The Joint Office of UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) together with the World Food Programme (WFP) provided support to Cabo Verde, Comoros and Guinea-Bissau during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNFPA is currently supporting Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago in developing their respective national health sector emergency plans. Training of health and emergency personnel is a key component of this initiative.

30. UNICEF accelerates support towards mitigation and adaptation measures by ensuring that infrastructure, social services, communities and individuals are climate-responsive and resilient to crises, such as pandemics and disasters. In the Pacific, a

²⁵ See <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/governance-growth-program-design.pdf>.

²⁶ For more information, see <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/climate-action/what-we-do/climate-adaptation>.

five-year budget (\$63 million) supports the development of climate-resilient, affordable and safe water and sanitation service delivery models in small and remote communities and informal urban settlements. During COVID-19, the Joint Office of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF reduced acute vulnerabilities and strengthened resilience in Cabo Verde and Maldives by supporting and updating the single social registry and distributing urgent cash support to 30,000 vulnerable families. In the Eastern Caribbean, UNICEF collaborates with Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and Saint Kitts and Nevis on the Child Climate Risk Index-Disaster Risk Model risk assessment.

31. UNIDO promotes innovative renewable energy and energy efficiency business models and approaches through the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres in Barbados, Cabo Verde and Tonga. A \$1.8-million energy-water nexus project is being implemented in Cabo Verde. In Sao Tome and Principe, UNIDO supported the development of the national renewable energy and energy efficiency action plans and co-financed the installation of the first grid-connected solar photovoltaic project worth \$2.5 million, in partnership with UNDP and the African Development Bank. UNIDO has also been entrusted to implement a 15-million-euro share by 2025, targeting capacity-building actions (such as support for investment promotion agencies) in eight national-level interventions, including in the small island developing States of the Dominican Republic and Papua New Guinea.

32. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) leveraged a regional approach in its anti-corruption technical assistance delivery and plans to launch a regional platform for the Caribbean covering Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. UNODC supports small island developing States in preventing trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, mainly through the “Strengthening Transregional Action and Responses against the Smuggling of Migrants” (STARSOM) project,²⁷ funded by Canada, and the “Transforming Alerts into Criminal Justice Responses to Combat Trafficking in Persons within Migration Flows” (TRACK4TIP) project,²⁸ funded by the United States of America. UNODC activities in small island developing States include activities in the areas of anti-corruption, crime prevention and criminal justice, organized crime, border management and cybercrime.

33. Through its small island developing State national focal point network, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States fosters the sharing of the experiences and best practices of small island developing States on mainstreaming the SAMOA Pathway and Sustainable Development Goals in national development processes as well as their implementation and follow-up, in the context of COVID-19 recovery. The Office promoted coordinated and integrated United Nations support for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through the Inter-agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States, which it co-chairs with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In 2022, the Office published a report on financing for development in small island developing States focusing on the changing financial trends for development finance for small island developing States owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the opportunities for developing small island developing State capital markets. Together with the Rocky Mountain Institute, the Office published a report entitled *Accessing Climate Finance: Challenges and Opportunities for Small Island Developing States* providing, inter alia, an overview of the main challenges confronting these States in accessing climate finance and putting forward realistic, concrete and actionable

²⁷ See <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/migrant-smuggling/starsom.html>.

²⁸ See <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/track4tip/overview.html>.

recommendations to support and inform policymakers and funders. Together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office provided secretariat support, within their respective mandates, to the High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States.

34. In 2022, through two joint Sustainable Development Goal funds, the United Nations Office for Project Services, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies (ITU, the International Labour Organization, UNICEF, FAO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNODC and OHCHR) promoted the digital economy in the Pacific to support economic transformations and build greater resilience across social, environmental and economic dimensions in Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Similar collaborations and assistance are being advanced by the Office in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Haiti, Maldives, Saint Lucia, Sint-Maarten and Timor-Leste.

35. Through its interim multi-country strategic plan 2019–2023, WFP prioritized close collaboration with national Governments and communities across the Pacific²⁹ in their efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 2 (zero hunger) and 17 (global partnerships). Regarding the Caribbean, in 2022, WFP transitioned from the interim multi-country strategic plan 2020–2022, which finished in February 2022, to the new multi-country strategic plan 2022–2026, which started in March 2022.

36. The World Health Organization (WHO) provides emergency support to small island developing States experiencing extreme weather events and climate-induced emergencies, for example, to Tonga after the volcano eruption, Belize after Hurricane Lisa and Vanuatu after Cyclone Kevin. WHO supported small island developing States through disaster and vulnerability assessments in the health sector and the establishment or strengthening of emergency medical teams. WHO is implementing programmes in Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Guyana, Saint Lucia and Suriname to address obesity and non-communicable diseases and has rolled out programmes for strengthening and training the health workforce and improving national responses to mental health conditions. In June 2021, WHO convened Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Health and other senior officials from the small island developing States and partner countries for the first WHO Small Island Developing States Summit for Health: For a healthy and resilient future in small island developing States.³⁰ WHO will continue to support the small island developing States with policy guidance on improving health financing and the establishment of national health insurance schemes, with emphasis on equitable access to medicines and other health products and technologies.

37. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) submitted a comprehensive report on its development-oriented technical assistance activities for small island developing States in 2022 and 2023, which were focused on assisting the development of an innovation ecosystem, technological capacity-building, access to scientific and technical information and skills-building on using intellectual property for economic growth and sustainable development. WIPO Technology and Innovation Support Centres have been established in four small island developing States and as of 2023, 30 small island developing States have joined the Access to Research for Development and Innovation programme. Least developed small island developing States also benefit from the WIPO Graduation Support Package for Least Developed

²⁹ The Pacific Island countries and territories covered by the World Food Programme under its interim multi-country strategic plan include the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

³⁰ See also the Joint Programme – Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security Programme of the United Nations Migration Network.

Countries. In March 2023, WIPO commenced the implementation of a country-specific graduation support programme for Sao Tome and Principe.

38. The World Trade Organization has played a key role in facilitating the resilience and recovery of small island developing States in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Aid for Trade initiative, small island developing States have received grants and concessional loans to assist in implementing trade and trade-related programmes and projects to build their trade capacity and infrastructure and benefit from global trade. Since 2006, small island developing States have received close to \$17 billion in Aid for Trade disbursements. Four countries account for over half of the assistance provided since the launch of the initiative: Haiti (\$3.3 billion, 20 per cent), Papua New Guinea (\$2.8 billion, 16 per cent), the Dominican Republic (\$1.3 billion, 8 per cent) and Cabo Verde (\$1.1 billion, 7 per cent).

C. Priorities for the next small island developing States agenda

39. Submissions received highlighted the following as potential priority issues for the next small island developing States agenda:

- Climate change and climate finance – 17
- Ocean governance, ocean conservation and the blue economy – 13
- Access to finance and sustainable financing – 13
- Economic development, including economic diversification – 13
- Disaster risk reduction and enhancing resilience – 11
- Science, technology and innovation – 11
- Health systems, universal health coverage and social protection – 10
- Gender equality and women’s empowerment – 9
- Food security and sustainable agriculture – 8
- Partnerships and international cooperation/coordination mechanisms – 8
- Renewable energy, clean energy and sustainable energy – 7
- Education and capacity-building – 7
- Data management/data and statistics – 6
- Sustainable tourism – 4
- Trade – 4
- Technology transfer – 3
- Water resource management and wastewater – 3
- Multidimensional vulnerability index – 3
- Sustainable infrastructure – 2
- Promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns – 2
- Biodiversity and habitat protection – 2
- Peaceful societies and safe communities – 2

III. Update on General Assembly resolution 77/245

A. Data Platform for the Small Island Developing States

40. Improved data collection and statistical analysis are required to enable small island developing States to effectively plan, follow up on, evaluate and track the implementation and achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including its Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. There exists a need to assist small island developing States in strengthening their statistical offices and to provide enhanced support in developing national capacities for improved data collection and statistical analysis, including high-quality and disaggregated data. In August 2022, UNDP launched the Data Platform for the Small Island Developing States³¹ at the Wadadli Action Platform convened in Antigua and Barbuda in August 2022. In paragraph 43 of its resolution 77/245, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide an update on this initiative:

(a) **Small island developing States data hub.** UNDP is in discussion with the Alliance of Small Island States to further develop the hub not only to move beyond the datasets included in the Data Platform for the Small Island Developing States but also to provide a central repository for datasets within each small island developing State, through toolkits for countries to improve their data collection, management and availability through data pipelines and interfaces;

(b) **Small island developing States data course.** UNDP has developed a course for building capacity in data science for development stakeholders in small island developing States, including six interactive modules: Data context in small island developing States, Development indicators, Data visualization, Machine learning, Geospatial data, and the Future of data in small island developing States;

(c) **Machine learning.** UNDP has also developed a parametric machine learning approach that allows users to enter their own model parameters in order to train an imputation model in the cloud that can provide indicator estimates based on correlation between other indicators and years. Several approaches have been tested, and five discrete models have been trained for users to test the advantages of each approach;

(d) **Indicator database.** For its database of over 4,000 indicators, UNDP has been improving the automation and processing pipeline to keep the database up to date as new data products are released to each organization curating these data sources. The data pipeline is also being integrated with the UNDP Data Futures Platform to standardize the complete set of indicators used across UNDP;

(e) **Geographic Information System database.** The Geographic Information System database has been expanded and updated to refine the metadata and datasets and to increase the accuracy and interactivity of the datasets. Further work is being done to align this work with the UNDP GeoHub to share datasets and cloud processing functions.

B. Updates on the multidimensional vulnerability index for the small island developing States

41. In its resolution 75/215, the General Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to provide recommendations on the potential development and coordination of work within the United Nations system on a multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States, including on its potential finalization and use. Subsequently, the Assembly, in its resolution 76/203, welcomed the recommendation contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/76/211) on the development of the index and

³¹ See <https://data.undp.org/sids/>.

decided to establish a representative high-level panel of experts co-chaired by two eminent persons. The panel's co-chairs were Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, and Erna Solberg, former Prime Minister of Norway.

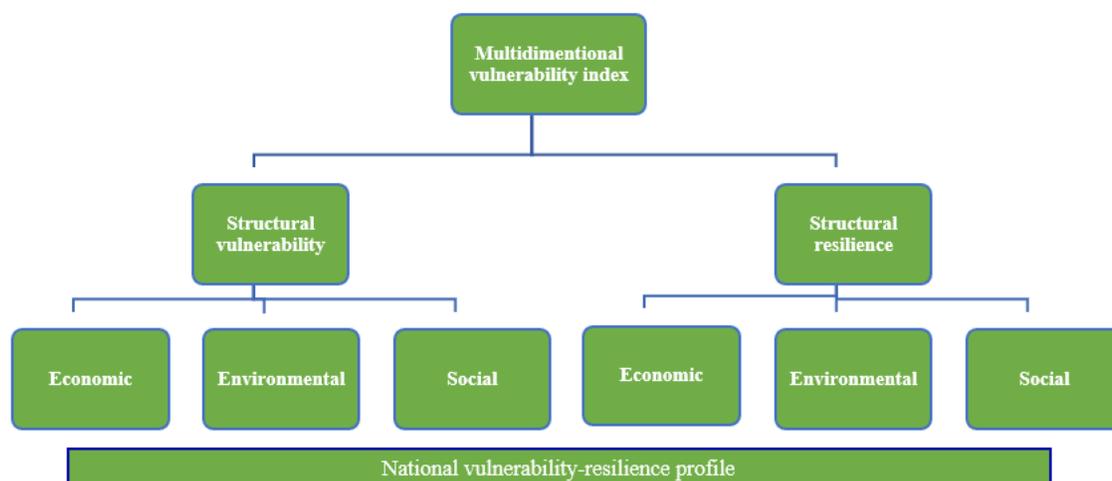
42. In its resolution 77/245, the General Assembly welcomed the progress of the High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for Small Island Developing States on its work and on its interim report, and in this regard expressed support for the proposed definitions for structural vulnerability and resilience and the two-level structure outlined in the report as the basis for the Panel's continued work, guiding the selection of appropriate indicators to inform vulnerability across all sectors of sustainable development, the proposed governance structure and the development of the country vulnerability-resilience profiles. In paragraph 10 (b) of the same resolution, the Assembly also tasked the Panel to finalize its work in accordance with its terms of reference.

Proposed multidimensional vulnerability index framework

43. The proposed Multidimensional Vulnerability Index framework, the details of which are contained in the Panel's final report,³² has been designed as a new quantitative benchmark measuring structural vulnerability and structural resilience, using a quadratic mean. Currently, there is no international, widely accepted, quantitative benchmark to measure structural vulnerability or lack of resilience across multiple dimensions of sustainable development at the national level. The rationale behind its construction is that countries characterized by structural risks leading to diminished well-being merit special assistance, especially if they lack inherent resilience.

44. The proposed multidimensional vulnerability index framework is two-layered, consisting of a global assessment of structural vulnerability and structural resilience (the index) and a systematic and in-depth country vulnerability-resilience profile that complements the assessment of the index. A country may, if it so desires, undertake to develop a country vulnerability-resilience profile to guide cooperation and assistance. It is to be noted that the present index results are expressed in scores; a low score does not mean that a country is not exposed to or is immune from the effects of external shocks.

45. The proposed framework has been designed based on the following principles shown in the figure below.



³² Available at <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/small-island-developing-states/mvi>.

(a) **Multidimensionality.** To ensure fairness and widespread acceptance, indicators used in the assessment of structural vulnerability encompass all three dimensions of sustainable development;

(b) **Universality.** The design of the index captures the vulnerabilities of all developing countries, to ensure credibility and comparability on an equal basis;

(c) **Exogeneity.** The index clearly differentiates between exogenous and inherited factors to allow alignment with existing performance-based allocation models;

(d) **Availability.** The index uses the best available, recognized, comparable and reliable data. The indicators chosen for the index capture its core concepts using the best available data;

(e) **Readability.** The index's design is clear and easily comprehensible and avoids redundancy;

(f) **Resilience.** Corresponding measures of resilience have been incorporated because there is also a structural dimension to resilience that influences a country's capacity to withstand and absorb shocks in the long term. These factors are encompassed within the second pillar of the index. Both structural aspects, vulnerability and resilience, are crucial for a comprehensive assessment of the overall risk posed by vulnerability. This theoretical foundation underpins the index.

46. The translation of these principles into technical indicator choices requires multiple trade-offs. The index has to be multidimensional, but it also has to fairly balance the very different kinds of shocks or stressors that developing countries face. It has to be structural, but only a small set of factors can arguably be qualified as purely exogenous, and that small set would not match the ambition of a universal index such as the multidimensional vulnerability index. The index also has to be simple, even though the concerns or factors seen as vulnerabilities by developing countries are many. This apparent plethora of information also has to be balanced with critical questions of data availability, an issue of significance for many vulnerable groups of countries, in particular small island developing States.

47. It should also be noted that the proposed multidimensional vulnerability index is not a general index of lack of development, policy performance deficiencies or the general structural handicaps to growth. It is also not an index that captures any single vulnerability, for example, social, economic, environmental or climate vulnerabilities. It is multidimensional and universal, although this does not mean that every specific factor of vulnerability has been or has to be introduced individually in the index for it to be effective. It is in effect the translation of a highly complex phenomenon into a simplified version of reality.

Index construction: definitions

48. The following definitions underpin the multidimensional vulnerability index:

(a) **Structural vulnerability.** The risk of a country's sustainable development being hindered by recurrent adverse exogenous shocks and stressors. It results from factors that are inherent or slow-moving and are independent of current or recent policy choices;

(b) **Structural resilience.** The inherent characteristics or inherent capacity of countries to withstand, absorb, recover from or minimize the adverse effects of shocks or stressors.

Index construction: the use of concepts

49. The proposed index uses concepts, which bridges the gap between the broad definitions of the framework and the selection of specific indicators. As such, the multidimensional vulnerability index does not aggregate an exhaustive list of indicators related to the vulnerability and resilience of developing countries. A simple narrative on each concept and the components considered by the index is also included, which allows for a simple understanding that each indicator is acting as a proxy for its associated concept rather than representing a specific measure of vulnerability and resilience.

Index construction: lack of resilience

50. The multidimensional vulnerability index relies on a lack of a structural resilience index. A country may be highly vulnerable despite a lower risk of being affected by external shocks if its level of structural resilience is very low. Relying on a lack of a structural resilience index simplifies the understanding of the articulation between vulnerability, resilience and the overall index score, as both the structural vulnerability index on one side and the lack of a structural resilience index on the other are now positive factors of the overall multidimensional vulnerability index. It also allows for a better assessment of the lack of structural resilience by making it easier to focus on the key factors that generate low resilience.

Index construction: indicator selection and data

51. The following criteria govern data and indicator selection in the proposed multidimensional vulnerability index:

- (a) **Data availability.** Selected indicators must have data on all (or almost all) developing countries;
- (b) **Data quality.** The index should be based on data of the highest quality;
- (c) **Transparency of the indicator selection process.** The relationship between vulnerability, resilience and the selection of indicators has to be based on clear and detailed rationale, backed by solid evidence on causality or, at a minimum, association;
- (d) **Acceptability of the selection of indicators.** The selection of indicators has to lead to an acceptable index. This ensures the credibility of the index as well as its robustness and stability across time.

Index construction: computation

52. The selected indicators are then rescaled (using the min-max technique), transformed (using logarithmic transformation), aggregated (using quadratic mean) and weighted (using a neutral approach).

Country vulnerability-resilience profiles

53. The country vulnerability-resilience profile is a deeper, country-level diagnosis of a country's vulnerability and resilience conditions that enables the identification of key policy and other actions to build resilience, including appropriately costed responses. It can also, should a country choose to use it as such, provide a framework for managing and channelling international assistance to ensure that countries can better manage their vulnerabilities and build resilience to sustain progress and achieve irreversible gains. Linking the country vulnerability-resilience profile to the index recognizes that there are a variety of country contexts behind similar levels of vulnerability and country-specific pathways to close the vulnerability-resilience gap.

54. The objectives of the country vulnerability-resilience profile are to:

(a) Provide a detailed, multidimensional vulnerability and resilience characterization at the national level;

(b) Articulate and recommend priority, integrated and costed interventions for resilience-building at the national level;

(c) Enhance, inform and contribute to the formulation, implementation and monitoring cycle of national development plans.

55. In effect, the country vulnerability-resilience profile is the vehicle through which countries can move from the assessment by the index towards the formulation of appropriate policy and, by extension, the selection and prioritization of investments that are required to promote development objectives, while also strengthening the country's internal resilience capacity. In that way, the profile functions not only as an assessment tool, but also for the deployment of policies within a coherent, consistent framework that can be monitored and provide a pathway from where a given country is to where the country intends to be in accordance with its national sustainable development goals.

56. The detailed vulnerability and resilience characterization will be driven by an "extended dashboard" of indicators that are based on national priorities and available data. Indicators may be structural or non-structural and may reflect both vulnerability and/or resilience conditions. By tracking these areas and through the development of actionable road maps, the country vulnerability-resilience profile could provide entry points for international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and other development partners to complement national efforts towards resilience-building, through, inter alia, smarter and better targeted resource allocations.

Governance arrangements for the multidimensional vulnerability index

57. On the governance arrangement, the Panel recommends that for the long term, the index will be best governed, served and maintained by two distinct bodies, co-located for administrative purposes, in a United Nations entity or department, comprising a multidimensional vulnerability index secretariat and an independent multidimensional vulnerability index advisory and review panel.

58. The Panel also invited Member States to decide that in the interim, pending the final decision on the most appropriate custodian arrangement for the index, the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the small island developing State subprogramme of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in line with their respective mandates, within existing resources and for a specified duration, would continue to serve as interim secretariat for the index.

Possible uses of the multidimensional vulnerability index

59. The Secretary-General, in paragraphs 84 and 85 of his report [A/76/211](#), recommended several possible uses of a multidimensional vulnerability index. While the specific end use would ultimately depend on the user, the index's potential use for development support, including access to concessional finance and debt relief mechanisms, is further elaborated in this section.

60. The current architecture of access to development support, including concessional finance, is essentially based on the categorization of countries in a dichotomous way. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee lists all countries and territories eligible to

receive ODA. This consists of all low- and middle-income countries based on gross national income (GNI) per capita as published by the World Bank, except for Group of Eight members, European Union members and countries with a firm date for entry into the European Union. Countries that have exceeded the high-income threshold for three consecutive years at the time of the review are removed from the list. With a few exceptions, access to most concessional financing windows of many international financial institutions depends on lower income thresholds, combined with other criteria such as population size.

61. The complexity of the issues combined with the multiplication of development objectives has led to a proliferation of financing instruments, tools or modalities, also linked or tied to GNI, for which countries are eligible or not, with limited considerations for the continuous nature and complexity of all the interactions between structural handicaps, in particular, the multiple dimensions of vulnerability and sustainable development. The use of per capita income for eligibility purposes or as the major proxy for assessing a country's need for development support, including concessional finance, hides a very large heterogeneity in terms of structural vulnerability between countries.

62. There is a strong case to be made for allowing vulnerable countries to also access development support, including concessional finance and other support facilities particularly related to debt, and to allocate more resources to the most vulnerable countries. Indeed, the multidimensional vulnerability index could also serve as a tool to inform approaches to debt restructuring, to act as a vehicle to extend eligibility for comprehensive debt treatment and to allow exceptional eligibility for vulnerable States. High vulnerability affects a country's capacity to service debt in that the ability to service debt may vary and fall unexpectedly following shocks. In a situation of recurrent shocks, current per capita income may not sufficiently reflect the risks of future shocks and become a poor proxy for future capacity to pay. A multidimensional vulnerability index could complement tools assessing debt carrying or debt absorption capacity, especially in an age of growing systemic risks and more frequent and severe natural hazards, as it would reflect elevated risks of future shocks and their impacts in one indicator. High vulnerabilities, as reflected in a multidimensional vulnerability index, could also contribute to the calibration of debt relief needed to restore sustainability in the context of debt restructuring. In addition, the United Nations development system could use the index as an advocacy tool as well as to better target support to address vulnerabilities in countries and to have a stronger focus on resilience-building.

Towards consensus on the multidimensional vulnerability index

63. Securing consensus and broad support for the multidimensional vulnerability index framework is of critical importance, as this will be the first step in galvanizing action towards its use. It will also inject the right momentum into the ongoing preparatory process of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States and other internationally agreed conferences, processes and meetings. The international community has advocated for the inclusion of vulnerability in determining eligibility for development assistance, including concessional finance, ODA and debt relief, and the multidimensional vulnerability index is a credible complement to current approaches.

64. To advance the multidimensional vulnerability index and ensure that the momentum continues, the following recommendations are proposed in three categories as set out below.

(a) **Advancing the multidimensional vulnerability index in the General Assembly**

- (i) The proposed multidimensional vulnerability index framework, inclusive of the index and its components and the country vulnerability- resilience profile,

should, at the outset, be agreed as the basis on which the General Assembly will work towards consensus. Consequently, any possible further work to improve the framework, if needed, should be based on the proposed framework;

(ii) A phased approach should be adopted on securing consensus for the multidimensional vulnerability index framework. Phase 1 of this approach could be an agreement on the Panel's recommendations on the governance arrangements for the framework;

(iii) Further discussions and consultations on the index could either be advanced through:

a. A process led by the President of the General Assembly where the incoming President could be requested to lead further consultations if necessary. In that regard, the President could appoint co-facilitators in consultation with the chair of the Second Committee; or

b. Through the current channel, within the ambit of the Second Committee's resolution on the SAMOA Pathway;

(iv) The country vulnerability-resilience profile could be pilot-tested in a set of developing countries;

(v) The United Nations system should begin to mainstream vulnerability and resilience, in a more systematic manner, in United Nations programmes at the global, regional and national levels. The multidimensional vulnerability index could be used to better tailor theories of change, improve country programmes and support resilience-building policies and initiatives in-country;

(b) Advancing the multidimensional vulnerability index in the international community

(i) Strategic planning and ex-ante funding for resilience-building need to be scaled up to protect vulnerable countries that are most exposed to the adverse effects of shocks of various dimensions and origins. A stronger focus on ex-ante strategies is needed, as the business case for a preventive rather than a curative approach is clear. Considering vulnerability in the international cooperation frameworks of development partners is a critical aspect of their effectiveness;

(ii) The multilateral development banks should be encouraged to pilot-test the multidimensional vulnerability index. Progress has already been made, with the Caribbean Development Bank's Board of Governors giving the green light for the Bank to pilot the index with one of its soft loan funds. In addition, in their recently concluded Summit for a New Global Financing Pact,³³ multilateral development banks committed to, inter alia:

Explore eligibility for concessional financing for the most vulnerable countries with a multidimensional approach to vulnerability, encompassing economic, environmental and social dimensions. To facilitate cooperation, multilateral development banks could explore a common definition of vulnerability, taking into account the United Nations workstream in that regard, and could develop common guidelines for the targeted use of concessional finance to address vulnerabilities;

(iii) The international financial institutions should be encouraged to closely examine how best the index could be incorporated into existing policies and practices;

³³ See <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-takes-part-summit-new-global-financing-pact>.

(c) **Capacity-building needs**

(i) The magnitude of the data challenges in developing countries, in particular in small island developing States, is alarming. The international community should reflect further on how to address the data challenges and needs of developing countries, which will be required to ensure the proper use of the index. There is a great need for meaningful partnerships to assist with strengthening capacities of national statistical institutions and for appropriate support to improve data collection and statistical analysis, including high-quality and disaggregated data. Improved statistical systems will also be key for the successful development and use of the country vulnerability-resilience profile and for national planning purposes from a regional perspective;

(ii) Work should begin on the development of an appropriate debt indicator that could be considered in the index. However, the success of that will depend on the extent to which there are rapid improvements in the quality and frequency of debt data and transparency in reporting of debt data. The Statistical Commission could play a key role in advancing that discussion.

C. Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States

65. Preparations for the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States are progressing. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Li Junhua, was appointed Secretary-General of the Conference. The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Rabab Fatima, was appointed Special Adviser. On 30 May 2023, the intergovernmental Preparatory Committee of the Conference held a one-day organizational meeting and elected Thilmeeza Hussain (Maldives) and Carolyn Schwalger (New Zealand) as co-chairpersons. Members of the bureau include Barbados, Cabo Verde, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Italy, Latvia, Romania and Seychelles. Antigua and Barbuda (host of the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States) and Samoa (Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States) serve as ex officio members. Andrejs Pildegovičs (Latvia) was elected Rapporteur. At the same meeting, the Preparatory Committee also adopted the agenda of its organizational, first and second sessions, the provisional rules of procedure for the Conference and a draft resolution on the additional modalities and format of the Conference.

66. The preparations for the regional and interregional preparatory meetings are also progressing. The outcome of the meetings will form the basis of the position of small island developing States in the negotiations for the outcome of the Conference. The preparatory meetings are scheduled as follows:

(a) Mauritius, 24 to 26 July 2023, for small island developing States in the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean and South China Sea region;

(b) Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 8 to 10 August 2023, for small island developing States in the Caribbean region;

(c) Tonga, 16 to 18 August 2023, for small island developing States in the Pacific region;

(d) Cabo Verde, 30 August to 1 September 2023, for the small island developing States interregional preparatory meeting.

67. The Conference will be held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27 to 31 May 2024.