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Agenda item 9

Report of the multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues

Summaries by the Chairs of the multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues*

I. Sustainable economic development

Chair: Barbados

(1 September, 3-6 p.m.)

1. There is potential for small island developing States to pursue sustainable economic development by steadily raising economic productivity, generating income and employment by fully utilizing their resources in a sustainable manner, paying particular attention to the sustainable management of their natural and human resources.
2. In doing so, small island developing States need to adopt integrated planning of economic activities in order to decouple economic development from environmental degradation. This endeavour also requires capacity-building and investment in infrastructure development and job creation, particularly in the area of information technologies and financial services.
3. Many small island developing States have large exclusive economic zones that have significant economic potential in terms of fisheries, tourism and possible exploration of seabed resources, which is necessary in view of the limited resource base of those States.
4. Climate change is the backdrop against which these discussions must take place. In this context, the opportunities for renewable energy are particularly rich. In islands carbon energy is so expensive that no subsidies would be required for renewables, and small island developing States offer a value-for-money opportunity for implementing renewable solutions.

* As presented at the 8th plenary meeting on 4 September 2014.



5. There are opportunities for innovative solutions to economic challenges, including debt-for-nature swaps. Domestic resource mobilization will also be important. In these and all initiatives, it is important to involve communities so as to ensure local buy-in to reform.

6. A number of partnerships both existing and new were presented that can be scaled up and replicated in different small island developing States and can be useful as lessons learned.

7. The partnerships that were presented covered, among other topics, small business promotion, sustainable tourism, business matchmaking, public finance management, trade promotion, economic empowerment of women, sustainable pearl farming, youth vocational training, business intelligence using information and communications technologies, business continuity in natural disasters, renewable energy, clean energy and organic agriculture and value chains.

II. Climate change and disaster risk management

Co-Chairs: Japan and Spain

(2 September, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

8. Climate change and natural disasters are two of the most difficult challenges facing small island developing States. However, these challenges can also prove to be an opportunity for them. The experiences of small island developing States can serve as models and examples for other countries to learn from. Small island developing States need to adopt measures such as strong coordination between donors, cohesive policies and the clear identification of priorities. They must integrate climate change and disaster risk reduction into development policy in order to ensure integrated and coordinated actions, minimize duplication and reduce potential conflicts in policy development, and make best use of available resources.

9. The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States has demonstrated that newly established partnerships need to implement robust and rapid measures so as to enhance the resilience and build the capacity of small island developing States to combat climate change for the benefit of their people. New partnerships need to reach cruising speed quickly, as climate change and disasters are more than ever an immediate and pressing concern.

10. The transition towards sustainable economic growth and a low carbon society is essential for enhancing resilience and ensuring adequate financial resources for economic and social development. Innovative clean technologies are indispensable as is extensive capacity-building in small island developing States in order to increase their ability to adapt to climate change and manage disaster risk.

11. In order to ensure the successful implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures to combat climate change and the development of effective disaster risk reduction strategies, it is essential to include in partnerships various stakeholders, including Governments, the private sector, civil society and local communities. All these stakeholders need to feel ownership of the partnerships and their management. Small island developing States have realized, through their implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 for disaster risk reduction, that there is

very little practical difference between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, in particular at the community level.

12. The session recognized numerous partnerships, including: weather monitoring and evacuation drills; flood hazard maps for small island developing States; the Global Climate Change Alliance plus; a Pacific renewable energy partnership; a scalable renewable energy and water project in the Canary Islands that shares technology with Cabo Verde and other small island developing States; the promotion of investment in fisheries and tourism; the integration of food energy security into development plans; and investments for building resilience through the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility plus.

III. Social development in small island developing States, health and non-communicable diseases, youth and women

Chair: Trinidad and Tobago

(2 September, 3-6 p.m.)

13. Social development is a driving force for sustainable development and calls for a social capital framework based on community trust, social justice, social inclusion, sustainable livelihoods and safe communities with access to essential goods and services.

14. Heritage and culture energize society and are forces for social cohesion. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including underwater cultural heritage, should be preserved and promoted for its intrinsic value as well as its potential to drive sustainable economic development.

15. Many small island developing States have relatively young populations. If the youth are given appropriate opportunities to contribute to their communities and lead fully productive lives, the societies in these States could reap a “demographic dividend”.

16. Quality education is the key to social inclusion and mobility, empowerment of women and girls, preventing violence against women and girls, fighting disease, including HIV/AIDS, safeguarding sexual and reproductive health, and addressing children’s development and nutrition. Current educational systems in small island developing States train job seekers, but what is needed are job creators and entrepreneurs. In this regard, mentoring schemes and peer-to-peer training for young people should be expanded.

17. Gender equality issues need to be addressed, such as the low rate of women participating in decision-making, gender wage gaps and violence against women and girls.

18. Non-communicable diseases are an epidemic in small island developing States, especially in the Pacific region, but also in the Caribbean region, cutting lives short and undermining all aspects of social development. Partnerships to address non-communicable diseases require whole-of-society, multisectoral and interregional approaches. Close attention needs to be given to encouraging, through awareness-raising, healthy food choices, which would often involve returning to

more traditional ways of eating and regulating processed foods, both domestic and imported.

19. Partnerships recognized included: Pacific non-communicable diseases partnerships; better nutrition against non-communicable diseases; the Apia challenge on non-communicable diseases; entrepreneurship for youth; education; women's empowerment; health in small island developing States; farmers' night markets; marketplace women; microfinance for women; insulin for life; sex education for youth; prevention of gender-based violence; and corporate volunteerism.

IV. Sustainable energy

Chair: Romania

(3 September, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

20. Available, affordable and reliable sustainable energy for all small island developing States represents a major key enabler to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

21. Even though small island developing States face a number of challenges and circumstances, including climate change and dependence on fossil fuel, they are rich in renewable energy resources and now have the opportunity to lead a major global transformation towards greener economies through the deployment of low carbon energy technologies and the development of sustainable energy systems.

22. In order to ensure sustainable energy in small island developing States, it is necessary to develop enabling environments with the appropriate national policies and international support in relation to technology transfer, capacity development and investment. The private sector will need to play a critical role and work in partnership with the public sector and other stakeholders.

23. Comprehensive and integrated assessments of energy sectors are necessary and will need to be developed on a country-by-country basis. Examples of successful partnerships that help to accelerate the energy transformation already exist. Technologies specifically designed to respond to the needs and conditions of small island developing States are also becoming available.

24. International support for small island developing States will be enhanced by the dedicated sustainable development goal on energy being proposed for the post-2015 development agenda. Furthermore, the objectives of the sustainable energy for all initiative represent important targets to be accomplished by small island developing States with respect to sustainable energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

25. Small island developing States could become the success stories for the world on how to reach sustainable development and how to ensure sustainable energy for all. Declining technology costs, the need to decarbonize energy in order to address climate change, clear examples of success, better business models and investment opportunities are creating a momentum of opportunities that must be seized by small island developing States. Partnerships with political leadership, technical expertise,

financing and community involvement are critical to the acceleration of the transformation of the energy sectors in small island developing States.

26. Numerous partnerships were recognized, including the Lighthouse renewable energy partnership of the International Renewable Energy Agency, the European Union-New Zealand Energy Access Partnership, the partnership programme on renewable energy and climate change adaptation in the Pacific SIDS (small island developing States) and strengthening energy grid stability to promote energy efficiency in the Caribbean.

V. Oceans, seas and biodiversity

Chair: Mauritius

(3 September, 3-6 p.m.)

27. Small island developing States have an intrinsic economic, social, cultural and environmental connection with oceans and seas. As such, they are well placed to develop sustainable ocean-related economic activities.

28. Oceans are part of daily life in small island developing States and contribute greatly to their economic activity, in particular through fisheries and tourism. However, the unsustainable use of marine resources, including overfishing for commercial purposes and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, has led to the rapid decline in fish stocks.

29. Promoting the sustainable use of marine resources is essential for ensuring long-term food security and protecting marine biodiversity. Integrated, holistic and global approaches should be adopted for effective management of coastal and marine areas.

30. Small island developing States serve as the conscience of humanity on climate change, oceans and seas and biodiversity. They continue to champion these issues in international negotiations.

31. In the area of oceans, seas and biodiversity, significant sectors for developing partnerships include food security, energy, tourism, minerals, protecting biological diversity, financing, technology and the impact of climate change on oceans and seas.

32. Integrated and ecosystem approaches to the management and governance of ocean spaces and activities must be adopted for the development of ocean economies, with cooperation and coordination at all levels as the key to success.

33. Effective partnerships for sustainable capacity-building of small island developing States require clear and achievable goals and objectives that respond to the needs and priorities identified by those States, as well as the necessary financial resources.

34. Partnerships at the community level require access to relevant and accurate data through innovative information and communications technologies, such as matching platforms that connect seekers and providers of funding. Such platforms and supporting databases could act as an “ocean without borders”, connecting local communities and small island developing States with partners around the world.

35. Partnerships are needed for developing the ocean economy of small island developing States as it contributes to the generation of income and employment, poverty eradication and social inclusion. Given the vital role of oceans to the economy of small island developing States, the reduction of water pollution and the protection of marine ecosystems services and biodiversity are essential.

36. Minerals and hydrocarbons should be one of the key sectors of the new partnerships, including partnerships among the small island developing States, which should cover such topics as legal and policy frameworks related to licensing and regulatory matters, exploration contracts, further assessment of environmental impacts and managing income sustainably for the benefit of future generations.

37. Partnerships would also be required to establish further development frameworks for formulating effective sustainable ocean policy, managing exclusive economic zones, implementing coastal management and building capacities in these areas.

38. Partnerships relating to the following areas were recognized: conservation and fisheries; combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; multi-use marine parks; protecting biodiversity in exclusive economic zones; protecting the marine environment from ship discharge; ocean acidification; a global ocean carbon observatory network; conservation in the Caribbean; prospecting and exploiting deep-sea minerals; developing the green economy; strategic cooperation with small island developing States on biodiversity and forestry; marine scientific cooperation; marine capacity-building and effective management of marine areas; protection for refugees at sea; and a global framework for climate service for small island developing States.

VI. Water and sanitation, food security and waste management

Chair: Seychelles

(4 September, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

39. Water scarcity, lack of sanitation, food insecurity and poor waste management are closely interlinked challenges faced by small island developing States. Population increases and climate change exacerbate these challenges, as do disastrous hydrological events brought about by climate change.

40. These challenges cannot be solved at the country level or by Governments alone and so call for multi-stakeholder national and international partnerships, including with other small island developing States, civil society, the private sector, academia, traditional donors and new development partners from the emerging economies.

41. Multi-stakeholder engagement is key, especially with the private sector, which has know-how, capacity and technologies, and can harness market forces and promote innovation. Public-private partnerships are therefore particularly desirable.

42. Water is a basic resource and a prerequisite for human life. Climate stresses have led to groundwater overextraction and the use of seawater desalination plants, which increase energy expenditure.

43. There is a pressing need to improve the creation and diffusion of island-specific technologies, to improve data collection and information-sharing, and to build human capacity to address these issues and scale up green technologies.
44. Proper water management implies integrated management that considers all parts of the water cycle.
45. World Water Day every year illustrates the importance of partnerships and awareness-raising in improving access to safe water.
46. Water problems are closely linked to sanitation challenges. Poor and inadequate sanitation negatively affects water quality and supply, with associated negative impacts on child and maternal health, and causes death from preventable diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea.
47. Women and girls suffer disproportionately from inadequate sanitation and access to water. They face increased exposure to sexual violence when they walk to water sources or practice open defecation. Consequently, adolescent girls are often removed by their parents from schools lacking safe girls' toilets and deprived of an education.
48. The United Nations has designated 19 November as World Toilet Day to increase awareness of the global sanitation challenge.
49. Small island developing States are net importers of food. They lack fertile lands and agriculture competes for land with other economic sectors, such as infrastructure and tourism. Likewise, food production requires good water management.
50. Declining agricultural output leads to the increased use of fertilizers and pesticides. This practice in turn compromises water and land quality and increases the cost of production. Climate change further exacerbates all these challenges. Both adaptation and mitigation are necessary.
51. Food security and nutrition are closely linked and are significant challenges in small island developing States, which face increasing health crises owing to alarming levels of obesity because of poor nutrition.
52. The fact of being net importers of food strains the budgets of small island developing States and affects the availability of nutritious food in those countries. Free trade will not necessarily improve food and nutrition. Food access and food imports need to be healthier and regulatory frameworks for food imports and public awareness-raising are essential.
53. Agricultural production requires an integrated management approach, as it has an impact on water, land quality, productivity and use of fertilizers and other chemicals. Partnerships in this area can also play a catalytic role, for example, through agricultural and food cooperatives that produce nutritious food and generate local employment opportunities, including for women.
54. Waste generation and proper management are a global challenge, especially for small island developing States. These countries use landfills, which are expensive and require proper management, are unsightly and attract pests, and their close proximity to populations can compromise the health of neighbouring populations.

55. Partnerships were recognized for community learning for rural water quality, water science, hygiene coalitions to improve sanitation, organic agriculture, agricultural and food cooperatives, horticulture, livestock management, investment promotion in agriculture, agricultural research, improving food quality, locally grown food, agricultural and food safety, organic agriculture, access to intellectual property, including small-island-scale technology, integrated waste management, waste-to-energy technology and wastewater management in atolls.
