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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 [75/215](#). It covers the period from August 2020 to July 2021 and contains summaries of activities undertaken by Member States and entities of the United Nations system to implement the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. It also responds to additional requests of the Assembly, set out in paragraphs 10 and 20 of resolution [74/217](#).

* [A/76/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in response to paragraphs 8 (a) and 20 of General Assembly resolution 75/215 and paragraphs 10 and 20 of resolution 74/217. Member States, entities of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, intergovernmental organizations of small island developing States and major groups were consulted in its preparation. The Secretariat issued a questionnaire, to which 38 responses were received, 13 from Member States¹ and 25 from entities of the United Nations system, including regional commissions.²

2. The comprehensive responses to the questionnaire have been summarized and reflected in section II. The full text of all submissions is available at <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/small-island-developing-states>.

3. Section III contains information, including findings and recommendations of an examination of the disaster-related funding and support environment to assist small island developing States, pursuant to paragraph 10 of resolution 74/217. It also contains an identification of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway) priority areas not covered by the Sustainable Development Goals or the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), with recommended targets and indicators, pursuant to paragraph 20 of resolution 74/217. Section IV contains recommendations on the possible development, use and coordination of and finalization of work on a multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States, pursuant to paragraph 8 (a) of resolution 75/215.

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

4. Small island developing States remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. The economic fallout of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has hit such States particularly hard and continues to do so. In 2020, while the gross domestic product (GDP) of developing countries decreased by 3.3 per cent, that of small island developing States decreased by around 9 per cent.³ The economy of Maldives, for example, shrank by 20.4 per cent, the Bahamas by 14.5 per cent and Belize by 15.5 per cent in 2020.⁴ Many of the most tourism-dependent small island developing States are middle-income countries, which have limited access to concessional finance and often resort to expanding external debt. The year 2020 also saw a

¹ Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Malta, Mauritius, New Zealand and Qatar.

² Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, GEF, IMF, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, International Renewable Energy Agency, International Trade Centre, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNCTAD, UNEP, United Nations Children's Fund, UNDP, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Population Fund, World Food Programme, World Health Organization and World Intellectual Property Organization.

³ UNCTAD, "Small island developing states face uphill battle in COVID-19 recovery", 10 June 2021. Available at <https://unctad.org/news/small-island-developing-states-face-uphill-battle-covid-19-recovery>.

⁴ *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021* (United Nations publications), statistical annex.

continued trend of increasing disasters and extreme weather events. For small countries, the costs of post-disaster reconstruction can be exorbitant. On average, natural disasters cause damage corresponding to 2.1 per cent of GDP every year in small island developing States.⁵ High levels of debt, limited access to concessional finance and growing challenges in gaining access to international capital markets reduce those States' resilience and adaptive capacity.

5. The external debt of small island developing States is significantly higher than that of other developing countries. Between 2000 and 2019, it increased by 2 per cent as a share of GDP, while in all developing countries it decreased by 6 per cent. By 2019, external debt totalled 62 per cent of GDP on average in small island developing States, compared with 29 per cent for all developing countries and countries with economies in transition.⁶ The debt servicing cost is also high as a share of government revenues for many small island developing States. On average, such States spent 15 per cent of that income on debt servicing, which is twice the world average.⁷ Such States are generally not eligible for existing debt relief mechanisms, including the Debt Service Suspension Initiative launched by the Group of 20 in response to COVID-19, for which only five small island developing States are eligible.

A. Updates from Member States

6. Argentina assisted in the areas of disaster risk reduction, water and sanitation, health and non-communicable diseases in Caribbean small island developing States and sent COVID-19 test kits to Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Through South-South and triangular cooperation, it sent water purification and disinfectant tablets, nitrile gloves and rehydration salts to Haiti.

7. As a member of "Team Europe", Austria supports efforts to strengthen a coordinated global health response to the pandemic and equitable distribution of vaccines. It made contributions to the COVID-19 response and recovery multi-partner trust fund and the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility, where small island developing States are among the beneficiary countries.

8. Belgium continued to support small island developing States through the International Maritime Organization (IMO). A memorandum of understanding was signed between Solomon Islands, Belgium and IMO to provide training to civil servants of the Solomon Islands Maritime Authority to support and enhance capacity and knowledge to transform the maritime sector.

9. Denmark mobilized resources through the Climate Investment Platform, a global partnership, providing integrated and streamlined support to accelerate climate investment for low-carbon, climate-resilient development, and continued to support small island developing States through the Small Island Developing States Lighthouses Initiative 2.0, launched by the International Renewable Energy Agency,

⁵ UNCTAD, "For heavily indebted small islands, resilience-building is the best antidote", 7 January 2021. Available at <https://unctad.org/news/heavily-indebted-small-islands-resilience-building-best-antidote>.

⁶ UNCTAD, "Small island developing states need urgent support to avoid debt defaults", 12 April 2021. Available at <https://unctad.org/news/small-island-developing-states-need-urgent-support-avoid-debt-defaults>.

⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "The COVID-19 pandemic puts small island developing economies in dire straits", Policy Brief, No. 64 (April 2020). Available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-64-the-covid-19-pandemic-puts-small-island-developing-economies-in-dire-straits/>.

as well as the Nationally Determined Contributions Partnership and the Small Island Developing States Global Business Network.

10. France continued its Adapt'Action Facility initiatives supporting 15 countries, including small island developing States, and regional organizations. Together with multiple donor partners, France also supported the continued implementation of the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems initiative and the Kiwa Initiative on biodiversity, climate change and resilience in the Pacific.

11. In Ireland, the Strategy for Partnership with Small Island Developing States contains 36 commitments, of which 32 have been fully or partially implemented. They include: the establishment of a small island developing States unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs to take the lead on policy regarding such States; a fellowship programme for promising individuals from small island developing States for master's-level study in Ireland; and the establishment of regular dialogues (dubbed ceili) for small island developing States to be informed of Irish policy positions at the European Union, the United Nations and other multilateral forums.

12. For 2021–2023, Italy plans to further broaden the scope of both its Tonga Fellowship on Sustainable Development and its Alliance of Small Island States Fellowship Programme. The latter will cover not only climate change, but also environmental protection, oceans and sustainable development. Both fellowships are aimed at strengthening the capacity of small island developing States to advance their ambitions and increase coherence at the global level, strengthen capacity to build back better after the pandemic and prepare, strengthen and guide young people in their participation in efforts to raise awareness of climate-related challenges confronting small island developing States before the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in November 2021.

13. Japan contributed, on a disbursement basis, \$4.2 billion to the United Nations system in 2019, of which \$112.02 million was allocated to small island developing States. Responding to the pandemic, Japan provided \$15.4 billion bilaterally and through international organizations to support medical systems in developing countries through the provision of vaccines and medical equipment and the strengthening of infectious disease control. For small island developing States, Japan provided bilateral grant aid of approximately 5 billion yen to 14 Pacific small island developing States, 1.2 billion yen to 2 Asian small island developing States (Maldives and Timor-Leste), 6.5 billion yen to 4 African small island developing States (Comoros, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe and Seychelles) and 1.3 billion yen for 4 Caribbean small island developing States (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica). Japan also provided an additional COVID-19 crisis response emergency support loan of approximately 500 billion yen to assist economic activities in developing countries, including five small island developing States, as follows: 30 billion yen each to Mauritius and Papua New Guinea, 10 billion yen to Fiji, 5 billion yen to Maldives and 2.5 billion yen to Solomon Islands.

14. The COVID-19 pandemic has not reached Kiribati; however, its indirect cost implications have caused the Government to shift focus and resources towards preparedness. Kiribati has committed itself to continuing to strengthen its capacity for sustainable and resilient solutions to the pandemic, in line with the Goals, the Paris Agreement and the Samoa Pathway. The Kiribati 20-Year Vision contains the national long-term development blueprint for the period 2016–2036. The Kiribati Development Plan guides the formulation of policies and programmes to advance economic development.

15. Malta has put in place policy and institutional arrangements, including the appointment in 2021 of its first-ever ambassador for islands and small States, to

strengthen its relationship with and support for small island developing States. The Commonwealth Small States Centre of Excellence is partnering with the Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning to offer small island developing States advanced training in digitalization, information technology-enabled communication and other twenty-first-century learning technology.

16. In Mauritius, the sustainable development priorities and vision are focused on redistributive and regenerative growth encompassing sustainability and inclusiveness. Its strategies comprise four pillars, namely: “high-income economy”, where sustained economic growth and higher development levels translate to improved living standards; “inclusive economy”, entailing reductions in poverty and inequality and the promotion of greater social justice, equity and well-being; “green Mauritius”, pursuing sustainable economic development to meet needs without undermining the natural environment or jeopardizing the needs of future generations; and “safe Mauritius”, where the safety of citizens and tourists is reinforced, efforts to combat social ills, drugs and domestic violence are stepped up and preparedness for health threats, including infectious diseases, and resilience to climate change are improved.

17. New Zealand is developing a second-generation action plan to continue to guide effective advocacy with regard to the interests of small island developing States through development outcomes that are effective, inclusive, resilient and sustained. In 2021, it refocused its official development assistance to the Pacific to respond to the impact of the pandemic, with primary focus on health system strengthening and health security, including vaccine procurement and roll-out; building economic resilience, in particular promoting economic stability and the creation and maintenance of jobs, focusing on small and medium-enterprise lending, tourism recovery and resilient infrastructure; and strengthening systems of social inclusion targeting the most vulnerable groups.

18. Qatar continued to assist small island developing States through humanitarian (relief), economic empowerment, education, health and budget support.

B. Updates from the United Nations system

19. In line with decision XI/15 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the secretariat of the Convention is implementing a programme of work on island biodiversity, which is focused on six priorities affecting livelihoods and island economies, namely: the prevention, eradication and control of invasive alien species; climate change adaptation and mitigation activities; the establishment and management of marine protected areas; capacity-building; access to and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources; and poverty alleviation.

20. In addition to its current programmes, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea implemented two capacity-building programmes, one on oceans economy and trade strategies and the other on assistance to meet the strategic capacity needs of developing States in the field of ocean governance and the law of the sea. In 2020, 6 individuals from small island developing States were engaged in in-person training, while 96 participated in the Division’s online training activities.

21. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean maintained its support for Caribbean small island developing States, inter alia through: the promotion of sound fiscal management and market diversification; the wider application of information and communications technology; human and institutional capacity-building for monitoring and reporting and enhancing the role of social development, including gender and vulnerable groups requirements; the integration of disaster risk reduction and management measures into national planning; and the

strengthening of statistical capacity to support evidence-based policymaking. The Commission also pursued the establishment of a Caribbean resilience fund to tackle liquidity, solvency, debt, economic restructuring and resilience-building issues that are central to jump-starting growth in the region.

22. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific supported, *inter alia*, the preparation and in-person participation of representatives of Pacific small island developing States at the annual session of the Commission and the Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development and participated in the priority theme groups for Pacific small island developing States as part of the multi-country office review process. It is proposing the creation of a Professional position to support a new multi-country office in the North Pacific and is recruiting new talent to the Subregional Office for the Pacific to leverage existing resources.

23. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations partnered with key international and regional financing institutions to provide country-focused investment support in 23 small island developing States⁸ on a range of initiatives, including investment policy studies and analytical work, investment project design, implementation and evaluations, and COVID-19 risks and impact assessments. In 2021, it also supported a subregional process in seven Caribbean small island developing States (States members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States) to conduct a rapid food systems assessment.

24. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), *inter alia*, is replenishing for the period 2022–2026 (the eighth replenishment) and is seeking to ensure continued solid support for green, clean and resilient programming in small island developing States. Concurrently, it is developing a climate change adaptation strategy for the period 2022–2026, in which the need for resilience-building will continue to be emphasized.

25. Several workstreams under the programme and budget for the biennium 2020–2021 of the International Labour Organization are relevant to small island developing States, including employment promotion, social protection, international labour standards, supply chains, the informal sector, child labour, skills development, the rural economy, occupational safety and health, sustainable enterprises, and technical and vocational education and training.

26. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lending policy provides breathing room for orderly policy adjustments. Concessional support provided through the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust is available to 17 small island developing States out of the 34 countries on the Fund's list of small developing States. IMF also provides regional technical and capacity assistance on fiscal, monetary, financial and statistical issues.

27. The International Organization for Migration allocated resources to Pacific small island developing States to enhance policy and technical support to, *inter alia*, eradicate risks of trafficking in persons and forced labour in the fishery sector, as well as for gender equality and women's empowerment. In the Caribbean small island developing States, it continued to implement counter-trafficking, diaspora mapping and engagement, emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction initiatives.

28. The Small Island Developing States Lighthouses Initiative, coordinated by the International Renewable Energy Agency, has a strategy that supports energy transition

⁸ Including, in Africa: Cabo Verde, Comoros and Sao Tome and Principe; in Asia and the Pacific: Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Tuvalu; and in Latin America and the Caribbean: Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Dominica, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Suriname.

through technical assistance and advisory services in response to countries' formal requests, as well as regional capacity-building initiatives.

29. The International Trade Centre launched a small island developing States task force in 2021 to develop a corporate programme for such States. It is also developing a tourism strategy, which is critical for the resilience and economic transformation of such States. Under the Centre's auspices, the United Kingdom Trade Partnerships Programme, covering the period 2019–2022, supports Fiji and Papua New Guinea in keeping their trade and supply chains open, boosting resilience and diversification and deepening trade relationships during the pandemic.

30. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States organized webinars and events to facilitate partnerships by small island developing States with the private sector. The biannual Small Island Developing States Global Business Network Forum, scheduled to take place in the context of the "Our Ocean" Conference in Palau, was postponed. The "Most Vulnerable 91" campaign, launched in September 2020, tracked the amount of COVID-19-related funding spent by international partners and drew attention to the overwhelming disparity in funding being mobilized to support the 91 least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

31. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published "Rising up for small island developing States", in which it presents an integrated approach to accelerating green recovery and transformation based on three interconnected pillars: climate action, the blue economy and digital transformation. On climate action, there are three entry points: energy transition, climate adaptation and resilience, and nature-based solutions. In 2020, UNDP supported 38 small island developing States through its energy portfolio. UNDP blue economy investment has been scaled up to \$210 million. On digital transformation, the global small island developing States team and the Chief Digital Office are carrying out a rapid digital readiness assessment to serve as an entry point for building national digital strategies.

32. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction conducted online webinars, courses and knowledge exchanges on disaster risk reduction and saw the number of small island developing States reporting using the online Sendai Framework Monitor increase from 12 in 2020 to 22 in 2021. It rolled out four resilience partnerships strategies in Pacific small island developing States and is supporting similar initiatives in the Caribbean under its "Making Cities Resilient 2030" campaign. It is also working with the Caribbean Chambers of Commerce to promote business resilience and continuity through the implementation of the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies strategy.

33. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supports small island developing States through its medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025, facilitating access to finance, technology and innovative solutions to build resilient and inclusive economies and societies in a post-COVID-19 world. Through its regional and subregional offices, UNEP engages in the development of multi-country sustainable development frameworks and supports United Nations country teams by providing environmental data and analysis through the World Environment Situation Room. High-quality, credible, open and shared, sex-disaggregated environmental data, assessments and expertise are critical to supporting integration efforts throughout the United Nations system.

34. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has a small island developing States action plan covering the period 2016–2021 that revolves around five priority actions, namely: enhancing island capacity to achieve sustainable development through education and the reinforcement of human and

institutional capacity; enhancing the resilience of small island developing States and the sustainability of human interactions with ecological, freshwater and ocean systems; supporting small island developing States in their management of social transformation and the promotion of social inclusion and social justice; preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage and promoting culture for island sustainable development; and increasing connectivity, information management and knowledge-sharing.

35. With regard to the United Nations Population Fund, its subregional and regional offices support small island developing States by focusing on population data, health, including sexual and reproductive health, empowerment of young people, women and girls, gender equality and humanitarian response. The Caribbean subprogramme for the period 2017–2021 covers 22 English-speaking and Dutch-speaking countries. The Pacific subprogramme for the period 2018–2022 covers 14 Pacific countries, while the small island developing States in the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean and South China Sea are supported through country programme documents.

36. The United Nations Children's Fund has a Pacific programme aligned to the United Nations Pacific Strategy (2018–2022), supporting 14 countries. Support is provided to Papua New Guinea by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2018–2022. Its support through its offices in Belize, Cuba, Guyana and Jamaica is delivered as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020–2024 and the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework. Maldives and Sao Tome and Principe were also supported by the Fund.

37. With regard to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, its small island developing States strategy for the period 2019–2025 is built on the principles of integrated multidisciplinary interventions, multi-country regional interventions and multi-stakeholder partnerships. It responded to requests from small island developing States and provided support in the areas of waste management; development and utilization of renewable energy; export promotion through diversification and compliance with international standards and high-quality infrastructure; building resilience to environmental shocks; mobilizing development finance; agribusiness and fisheries; institution-building and industrial policy development.

38. Corruption and crime, including organized crime, have a detrimental impact on the resilience of States, institutions and communities. The Global Judicial Integrity Network, under the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, creates a space for judges and judiciaries to address emerging integrity challenges and share experiences and knowledge. The Network monitors judicial responses to the pandemic and disseminates good practices and experiences of judiciaries and partner organizations, including through its online library, a global survey, opinion pieces, podcasts and webinars. Numerous small island developing States are official training sites for the implementation of the Network's judicial ethics training tools, and the Office supported the roll-out of such training in Belize, Cabo Verde, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Jamaica, Maldives, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.

39. With resources from bilateral donors and multilateral financial institutions including the Government of Japan, the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund, the Islamic Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, the United Nations Office for Project Services supported the implementation of projects to build the resilience of small island developing States, mainly in the health-care sector, as they recovered from the pandemic. Support

was provided to Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Maldives, Palau, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

40. The World Food Programme supports small island developing States through a focus on, inter alia, resilience and building back better, including by improving emergency logistical coordination and supply chain management, improving emergency communications infrastructure and coordination mechanisms, providing food security data analysis and food security programme response design, coordination and implementation, and developing innovative tools and procedures that respond to climate-related disasters.

41. The World Health Organization programme of work runs from 2019 to 2023 and has a platform for addressing the health effects of climate change in small island developing States, with the aim of tripling health-related climate finance by 2023 and ensuring that health systems in such States are resilient to the impact of extreme weather events and climate-sensitive diseases by 2030.

42. The World Intellectual Property Organization implemented technical assistance projects, including in the areas of technological capacity-building, innovation ecosystems, branding, copyright in creative industries, traditional knowledge, and institutional and national intellectual property policy and strategies. Currently, 17 out of 38 small island developing States have adopted and are implementing such policy and strategies.

43. The Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund is an innovative multi-partner trust fund, designed to provide incentives for transformative policy shifts and stimulate the strategic investment required to get the world back on track to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. The Fund aims to close the funding gap to achieve the Goals in small island developing States by providing funding for actionable proposals. In 2021, it announced a call, with an overall funding envelope of \$30 million, for proposals focusing on strengthening the resilience and addressing the vulnerabilities of small island developing States to accelerate the achievement of the Goals. All such States are eligible, including those previously funded. Intended to be catalytic, the funding will support the targeting of programmatic solutions of two years or less, with a budget of \$1 million per country. The United Nations multi-country offices are also eligible, on a case-by-case basis.

III. Updates on General Assembly requests

A. Disaster-related funding and support environment

44. In paragraph 10 of resolution [74/217](#), the General Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to conduct an examination of the disaster-related funding and support environment, with a view to the possible development of a targeted voluntary disaster fund, mechanism or financial instrument, coordinated with and complementary to existing mechanisms, to assist small island developing States in managing disaster risk and building back better after disasters, and to report thereon at the seventy-sixth session. The present section has been prepared in response to that request.

45. In 2020, the Secretariat conducted a study. A summary of the findings and recommendations is set out below. The full version of the study is available at <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/small-island-developing-states>.

1. Financing landscape and understanding access

46. The international community has long recognized that small island developing States face significant challenges in gaining access to sufficient and affordable

financing for sustainable development. Development partners have also acknowledged the need for new methodologies to better account for the complex and diverse realities of such States, including support for risk-informed recoveries and the integration of disaster risk reduction into policy and investment decisions across all sectors.

47. The study has revealed that bilateral and multilateral funds have evolved to support disaster risk reduction activities. Bilateral partners are also increasingly designing projects and programmes aimed at delivering resilient outcomes in small island developing States. However, the differing eligibilities for and the quantum of resources required to gain access to some of those funds, and, in some cases, with a need to manage the desire among development partners for visibility for their investment, present challenges for such States, which have limited capacity to gain access to some of the funding opportunities for which they may be eligible.

48. The eligibility criteria of a majority of the funds examined are linked or tied to the World Bank income thresholds criterion, the gross national income (GNI) per capita, which automatically excludes middle-income small island developing States. In other cases, some small island developing States move in and out of eligibility over time. That presents challenges in designing and implementing predictable, coherent and comprehensive national financing strategies and/or approaches.

49. The study has also revealed that other important sources of funding or financing modalities include public loans to Governments, equity and debt finance for the private sector and a range of blended financing instruments, including risk-mitigating instruments such as credit and political risk guarantees, risk insurance and catastrophic bonds, regional catastrophe risk pools, currency swaps and arrangements that combine public and capital market funds. Rapid credit facilities and deferred drawn-down loans are also now more widely available. However, not all small island developing States have access to those tools on concessional terms because, once again, the World Bank income classification excludes upper-middle-income small island developing States.

50. Access to funds on concessional terms at IMF is also determined by the World Bank GNI threshold. IMF applies both a small State and a microstate exception for access to its Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust windows, along with a five-year graduation process and additional exceptions based on serious short-term vulnerabilities and/or countries' inability to have access to financial markets. In contrast, only the small State exception is applied to the new IMF Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust, and those countries already on the path to graduation from the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust are ineligible.

51. The study has further revealed that official development assistance has yielded some financial resources for disaster risk reduction, but the quantum has generally been low, with disbursement ratios to small island developing States below 50 per cent. It also appears that official development assistance generally favours post-disaster funding rather than disaster risk reduction. The reality of disaster risk finance for small island developing States is that most of it is country-level finance, sourced from Governments and, in some cases, the community through remittances.

52. Existing global climate and disaster funds also present their own complex eligibility requirements, ranging from eligibility for nearly all small island developing States in the case of the Adaptation Fund, the GEF trust fund and the Special Climate Change Fund to eligibility for only nine such States for the Least Developed Countries Fund. Concerns have been raised about the slow pace of access with regard to the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund. Improvements have been sought to enable faster and simpler means for small island developing States and least developed countries to gain access to funds through nationally accredited entities.

53. The study has also revealed that risk insurance instruments have grown in popularity as a means of risk reduction. Currently, there are two schemes, the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility and the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company. Both are based on parametrics that are triggered in the event of a disaster. Parametric risk finance products have, however, been called into question regarding the payout versus premium levels, the focus of coverage on short-term and high-intensity disasters and a lack of coverage for slow-onset events. Those observations and comments confirm the limitations of current insurance instruments and what is insurable within current models.

54. The study has also shown that, while many small island developing States are grappling with declining eligibility, innovative financing modalities, such as debt swaps for conservation and climate change adaptation, are growing in popularity as a means of attracting new investment.

55. Apart from the World Bank income thresholds criterion, other factors affect a country's ability to gain access to and/or absorb available finance. They include lack of capacity to devise national strategies for utilizing available resources and for attracting suitable investment; legal issues within entities; financial management and integrity issues; institutional capacity at the design, appraisal and implementation phases; risk assessment capacity; coordination challenges between and across national focal points; the need for more flexibility from development partners on what qualifies as sufficient evidence of the application of policies and standards; lengthy project development and approval processes and delays in fund disbursements; delayed project implementation, coordination challenges and the need to also comply with environmental and social standards; and the need sometimes to update existing policies or procedures or create new ones, which often results in lost time and requires additional resources.

2. Conclusion

56. An examination of the disaster-related funding and support environment has confirmed that bilateral and multilateral funds have evolved to support disaster risk reduction activities. However, gaining access to those resources remains the biggest challenge for most small island developing States, owing to their income classification and to factors such as those alluded to above. Addressing those factors could result in the unlocking of a potentially significant quantum of current development finance towards disaster risk reduction. That should be addressed before considering any possible development of a targeted voluntary disaster fund.

57. The study has also reconfirmed the need for small island developing States to clearly define their resilience agendas by, inter alia, establishing appropriate baselines, metrics and targets for each sector, defining a road map and according priority to investment (country resilience profile). An enabling environment at the national level is necessary to allow insurers and financial institutions to engage. Involving the right mix of public, private, international and national actors (partnerships) is key to the development of instruments and mechanisms that add long-term sustainable value to domestic risk management and recovery efforts.

58. Other areas identified as requiring further attention before any consideration of a fund are as follows:

(a) *Addressing misallocation.* This is important because most financing is provided for post-disaster purposes rather than for risk reduction. In addition, post-disaster financing needs to have a longer-term horizon. Alternative financial support could also include freezing or waiving debt service with regard to heavily indebted countries to enable them to finance local rebuilding efforts and provide financial support to businesses and communities;

(b) *Enhancing access to innovative financing and risk transfer mechanisms.* This is necessary, given the limited and volatile fiscal revenues and constrained access to concessional finance. Development partners can support access to insurance and other forms of risk transfer and risk-sharing mechanisms, as well as encourage the use of contingency funds or contingent credit lines;

(c) *Prioritizing resilience financing.* Development partners and development finance institutions should maximize financing for resilience plans devised by small island developing States. Funding and support should reflect vulnerability and the effects of disaster, not the likelihood of recovery. Per capita income is a weak metric for a country's ability to cover the costs of recovery and build resilience. If Governments can provide a robust and compelling investment plan, borrowing rules should be flexible and not be focused exclusively on immediate returns.

B. Monitoring framework, targets and indicators for the Samoa Pathway

1. Samoa Pathway targets and indicators

59. The present section has been prepared in response to paragraph 20 of resolution 74/217, in which the Secretary-General was called upon to identify the Samoa Pathway priority areas not covered by the Sustainable Development Goals or the Sendai Framework and, if any were identified, to develop targets and indicators for those areas while ensuring complementarities and synergies and avoiding duplication, in order to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Pathway as a whole, and to provide recommendations at the seventy-sixth session.

60. An assessment of the priority areas of the Samoa Pathway against the focus areas and the targets and indicators of the Goals, the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement was conducted by the Secretariat in consultation with Member States. The assessment has identified, inter alia, nine Pathway areas for which there are no indicators. It has also shown that there are areas of overlap in categorization and focus, suggesting that clear advantages would be obtained from streamlining reporting.

61. Set out below is a summarized narrative of the findings and conclusion of the assessment, together with recommendations for further action. The full version of the assessment is available at <https://sdgs.un.org/documents/development-monitoring-framework-samoa-pathway-34262>.

2. Challenges

62. There are challenges involved in developing and implementing a monitoring framework for the Samoa Pathway. There are data issues to be considered, including definitions and measurements and harmonized approaches for national and regional reporting. There are also questions as to the use of standard international definitions, methods of data collection and analysis and common legal bases for reporting and disseminating information. Lastly, with most small island developing States collecting data for fewer than 50 per cent of the Goal indicators, there are capacity issues to be considered at all stages of the monitoring process.

63. Unlike the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework or the Paris Agreement, the Samoa Pathway does not have its own monitoring framework. Such a framework would allow for more targeted resource investment at the national and regional levels and better results management.

64. The extent to which any new monitoring system will make additional demands for data on national statistical systems will also be a major consideration in the identification and selection of a final set of indicators. Regional and State-wide comparability of development progress will also demand additional capacity, a situation that could present challenges, in particular for smaller States. In that regard, any proposed monitoring framework must be reduced to a very small core set of indicators.

3. Assessing the gaps

65. To identify the gaps, an alignment exercise was undertaken in which the Samoa Pathway's priority areas (and their dimensions) were assessed against the Goals indicators, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda/financing for development commitments, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. The regional Goals monitoring frameworks in the Caribbean⁹ and Pacific¹⁰ regions were also examined, so as to assess the indicators selected for those regions.

4. Findings

66. The assessment has revealed that, when taken as a whole, many of the gaps in the Samoa Pathway largely reflect the need for policy, programme and project actions by small island developing States. Those actions lend themselves better to qualitative assessment. Other types of qualitative measures include those actions that require a yes/no response or those that call for global aggregation.

67. Overall, the assessment and alignment exercise have established the following:

(a) There is a high degree of alignment between the Samoa Pathway priority areas and the Goal indicators, in particular, and also with the relevant Sendai Framework monitoring indicators and the Paris Agreement;

(b) There are nine Pathway priority areas for which there are no indicators, as follows: oceans and seas, sustainable transportation, education, biodiversity, climate change, sustainable energy, health and non-communicable diseases, culture and sport (social development) and capacity-building;

(c) Those nine gap areas consist of a mix of actions that could benefit from quantitative measurement and others that are more conducive to qualitative assessment (those tend to be policy or programmatic areas);

(d) For those areas that do require quantitative measurements, only seven need the development of either a target or indicator.

5. Conclusion

68. The Secretariat has proposed, in the full version of the assessment, a set of targets or indicators for the seven priority areas highlighted above. The proposals need to be validated by Member States before any consideration by United Nations deliberative bodies.

⁹ Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, *CARICOM Core Indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Assessment of Data Availability in Member States and Associate Members* (Greater Georgetown, Guyana, 2018). Available at <http://statistics.caricom.org/Files/Publications/CARICOM%20Core%20SDGs%20Indicators.pdf>.

¹⁰ Alison Culpin, "Pacific SDG indicators", presentation available at www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/IV_SPC%20Indicator%20availability%20preso.pdf.

6. Recommendations

69. It is recommended that the General Assembly take note of the present section of the report, together with the full version of the assessment, and give direction on next steps.

IV. Implementation of paragraph 8 (a) of resolution 75/215

70. The present section has been prepared in response to paragraph 8 (a) of resolution 75/215, by which the General Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to provide recommendations on the potential development, finalization and use of a multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States, as well as coordination of work within the United Nations system thereon.

71. To implement the mandate, the Secretariat¹¹ undertook consultations, through technical webinars and virtual briefings, with individuals, Member States, organizations and institutions from within and outside the United Nations system that were developing, had worked on or had developed a multidimensional vulnerability index for small island developing States.¹² The visual records of the consultations, together with written submissions (including drafts), are available at <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/small-island-developing-states/mvi>.

72. In addition, the Secretariat has prepared a comprehensive assessment report in which it examines, inter alia, information received during its consultations, the submitted literature on each multidimensional index and available index methodology, including their strengths and weaknesses. The report is available at <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/small-island-developing-states/mvi>.

A. Call for a multidimensional vulnerability index

73. Small island developing States have consistently and repeatedly submitted that the traditional measure of development, primarily used for the allocation of concessional resources, i.e. GNI per capita, insufficiently captures their vulnerabilities. The call for the development of a globally accepted vulnerability assessment was first made in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (in Agenda 21). The call was repeated by small island developing States in 1994, in the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 49/122. Between 1995 and 2003, the Assembly repeated calls for the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index (see, for example, resolution 57/266).

74. Following more than three decades of advocacy by small island developing States, international agencies including the World Bank have now, inter alia, set up

¹¹ The Division for Sustainable Development Goals, the Small Island Developing States Unit and the subprogramme on small island developing States of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

¹² Individuals and entities consulted included the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, Lino Briguglio (University of Malta), the Asian Development Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Commonwealth, UNEP, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Caribbean Development Bank, IMF, UNCTAD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Meteorological Organization, Sabina Alkire (University of Oxford), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the secretariat of the Committee for Development Policy, Simona Marinescu (United Nations Resident Coordinator), Jeffrey Sachs (Sustainable Development Solutions Network), the African Development Bank and the United Nations Population Fund.

dedicated offices for small States, created special funds to address small States' specific needs and given small States a stronger voice in international discussions. However, there remains a lack of international consensus on how to characterize and, by extension, mitigate small States' vulnerabilities. Consensus on an index that accurately takes into account the vulnerability of small island developing States could assist them to develop and adopt more informed policies and strategies for building and sustaining long-term resilience.

75. The challenges and vulnerabilities of small island developing States have been exacerbated by the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic, highlighting the urgent need for decisive action. In 2020, Belize, in its capacity as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States, wrote to the Secretary-General reiterating the need to move work on the multidimensional vulnerability index forward. The General Assembly subsequently requested, in resolution [75/215](#), specific recommendations from the Secretary-General on, inter alia, the possible development and use of such an index.

B. Possible development of an index for small island developing States

76. Drawing on information gathered during the consultations, the following observations and conclusions were made:

(a) It is possible to develop a multidimensional vulnerability index for any specific purpose or for a particular targeted group. Information from and methodologies developed and submitted by the Caribbean Development Bank, the Committee for Development Policy, the Commonwealth, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the resident coordinators confirm the possibility;

(b) It is also possible to develop an index whose application is either specific to small island developing States and that primarily takes cognizance of those States' specific vulnerabilities, as shown by the work of the Caribbean Development Bank and the resident coordinators in such States, or one that is universal in nature, that is, an index that includes all countries' vulnerabilities. The activities of the Committee for Development Policy, the Commonwealth, UNCTAD and UNDP are examples of that option;

(c) It is also possible to develop an index that, to the extent necessary, differentiates between and reflects both exogenous factors, that is, factors that are external to or independent of current policies, and endogenous factors linked to current policies, which may affect a country's capacity to adapt and respond to shocks, that is, resilience;

(d) It is possible to construct an index that reflects and takes cognizance of all three dimensions of sustainable development. The work by the Caribbean Development Bank, the Commonwealth and the supplementary graduation indicators developed by the Committee for Development Policy demonstrates that possibility;

(e) It is also possible to capture in an index changes in a country's net vulnerability over time, that is, the difference between a country's vulnerabilities and measures implemented to build its resilience. The work of the Commonwealth illustrates that;

(f) It is possible to develop an index that can complement the existing performance-based allocation models used by the international financial institutions and multilateral development banks, which rely mainly on per capita income and the quality of economic policies. In their submissions, the Asian Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank confirmed that possibility.

77. The consultations led to three additional observations, as follows:

(a) All submissions received reflected their author's purpose and focus, whether in their choice of indices or in the sphere of their coverage;

(b) Thus far, none of the work on the index has received universal endorsement or secured global agreement;

(c) The development of an index can be concluded within a year, as shown by the work of the resident coordinators and UNDP.

C. Recommended guiding principles for the development of an index

78. While anyone could develop an index for small island developing States, attracting universal acceptance for its use is a matter for Member States and users to consider. Lessons learned thus far, without discussions on the matter having been concluded, suggest that a new approach is required. The international community cannot continue to declare that small island developing States are a special case for sustainable development because of their particular vulnerabilities, without, at the very least, addressing their long-standing call for such an index.

79. In his previous report to the General Assembly ([A/75/273](#)), the Secretary-General reached the following conclusion:

In the light of the present and ongoing global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and its socioeconomic impacts, in particular on the most vulnerable, strengthening the long-standing cooperation and support provided by the international community in assisting small island developing States to make progress in addressing their vulnerabilities and supporting their collective sustainable development efforts, is even more critical and genuinely necessary now, than at any other juncture in the history of our interdependent multilateral journey.

80. For an index to attract universal consensus, discussions on its development and use have to take place in a spirit of partnership and be guided by an agreed set of principles.

81. Given that the development of an index is possible, should the General Assembly decide to proceed therewith, the following are recommended as the principles guiding and parameters for such work:

(a) *Multidimensionality*. Indicators should be drawn from all three dimensions of sustainable development to ensure equity and broad acceptance;

(b) *Universality*. The index should be designed to capture the vulnerabilities of all developing States well, so as to ensure credibility and comparability;

(c) *Exogeneity*. The index needs to clearly distinguish between exogenous and inherited factors to ensure compatibility with current performance-based allocation models;

(d) *Availability*. The index needs to employ available, recognized, comparable and reliable data, while approximations and imputations may be necessary to avoid inaction;

(e) *Readability*. The index's design needs to be clear and easily understood, avoiding redundancy.

82. In addition, corresponding measures of resilience should be employed to determine "net vulnerability" over time, such that measures of vulnerabilities are balanced by resilience, thus eliminating the need for perpetual support.

83. The important work and products of the entities and organizations that took part in the consultations provide a rich reservoir of in-depth, deliberate and informed attempts at constructing index architecture, which could inform the work of the General Assembly and form the basis for an internationally agreed index.

D. Potential uses of the index

84. Based on the findings of its consultations and literature review, there are several possible uses of an index, as follows:

(a) To facilitate action to address vulnerability and build in-country resilience through the development of evidence-based policies and partnerships. In that regard, an index could underpin cooperation and partnership frameworks specifically designed to meet the needs of targeted vulnerable countries;

(b) To facilitate evidence-based, targeted and effective support and smarter resource allocations;

(c) To complement performance-based allocation models, allowing the use of a vulnerability component;

(d) To support and guide the design of innovative financing mechanisms and act as a vehicle for providing exemptions or wider eligibility with regard to the rules governing access to development and concessional financing;

(e) To serve as an advocacy tool to promote the principle to leave no one behind;

(f) To serve as a tool for monitoring, evaluation and measuring vulnerability and targeted policies in that regard;

(g) To support and guide the formulation of country vulnerability resilience profiles;

(h) To be used for evidence-based decision-making and the development of smarter, risk-informed national, bilateral and multilateral cooperation policies;

(i) To inform United Nations in-country engagement and to support the preparation of country graduation strategies;

(j) To 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.

85. In April 2021, the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up acknowledged the work of the General Assembly on the possible development of an index and tasked the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development to include in its 2022 report an analysis of the potential use of the index for debt restructuring, with the aim of building credit worthiness and expanding access to financing, including concessional financing (see [E/FFDF/2021/3](#)). In that regard, it is recommended that the outcome of the analysis of the Task Force inform and guide the approach by the General Assembly to debt in its deliberations on the index's possible uses.

E. Coordination and finalization of work

86. In resolution [75/215](#), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make recommendations on the coordination and finalization of work on the index. Given the consistency of the calls made over three decades for the development of

the index, the factors underpinning the slow momentum towards international consensus and the grim realities and inescapable socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, there have been few more appropriate opportunities for the international community to move forward with the development of an index.

87. To encourage and attract broader acceptance, the coordination of work on an index has to be led and driven by Member States. Such work should take place under the auspices of the General Assembly, in a spirit of partnership and with a genuine desire and commitment to bring closure to this long-standing matter.

88. Work on the index by the General Assembly should be carried forward by a high-level expert panel, supported by the Secretariat, headed by two eminent persons, one of whom from a small island developing State, both appointed by the President of the General Assembly, tasked with finalizing the index. Panel members could be drawn from senior policymakers, academia, civil society and the public and private sectors, with due consideration given to geographical and gender balance. They should have relevant knowledge and experience of the development challenges facing vulnerable countries and development finance.

89. It is also recommended that work on the index by the General Assembly be finalized in 2022.
