

# SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES IN NUMBERS



Office of the High Representative for the Least  
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing  
Countries and Small Island Developing States  
(UN-OHRLLS)



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## WHAT ARE SIDS?

Small Island Developing States, (SIDS) are a distinct group of developing countries facing specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities. SIDS were recognized as a special case both for their environment and development at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This recognition was made specifically in the context of Agenda 21 (Chapter 17 G). In 1994, the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) prescribed specific actions enabling SIDS to achieve sustainable development and in 2005, the Mauritius Strategy for further Implementation of the BPOA was adopted to address remaining gaps in implementation. In September of 2014, The Independent State of Samoa will host the Third International Conference on SIDS. The United Nations General Assembly has also designated 2014 as the International Year of SIDS. While many SIDS have progressed in achieving sustainable development, their inherent vulnerabilities including small size, remoteness, climate change, biodiversity loss and narrow resource base means that progress for many continues to be hampered, and their special case status remains.

## OHRLLS Mandate

The mandate of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) as it relates to SIDS focuses on outreach, advocacy and the mobilizing of resources and international support towards achieving the sustainable development aspirations of SIDS. The Office works closely with the United Nations system, development partners, and others, in helping to raise awareness of the special challenges facing small island developing states. UN-OHRLLS works to ensure that greater recognition is afforded to the sustainable development of SIDS, and that international support measures are geared towards effective and strengthened implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and its Mauritius Strategy for Implementation.

## About SIDS In Numbers

The High Representative, Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, emphasizes the importance of collating facts and figures on SIDS that would contribute toward better understanding the various issues and challenges these countries face. Furthermore, the High Representative is actively involved and works closely with UN-OHRLLS interns to provide them with guidance on their work, especially recognizing the importance of mentoring young future professionals to gain exposure to the multitude of real world issues and challenges being tackled by the United Nations on a daily basis.

This publication has been made possible through the essential work of Ms. Zuzana Holubova and Ms. Bsrat Measho who interned with the SIDS Unit in UN-OHRLLS in 2013 and who took a leading role in compiling the statistics presented herein. The interns worked under the supervision of Mr. Peter Kenilorea and Mr. Damien Sass; both officers of the UN-OHRLLS SIDS sub-programme.

*SIDS In Numbers* provides, at a glance, a snapshot of some select key SIDS indicators grouped under the three dimensions of sustainable development; Environment, Economic and Social that highlight the special case of SIDS. Specifically, it includes indicators such as population, official development assistance, economy and business, remittances, greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity and many more.

The presentation of the data and statistics contained in this publication should not be taken as authoritative. They are being presented in a manner that attempts to highlight the special case of SIDS and as such should be used accordingly. Data was sourced largely from the World Bank's Little Data Book on Climate Change 2011 — published in 2012 — with regards to Demography, Social Development, Economy and Business,



Boys in wooden goggles catch fish off Atauro Island, Timor-Leste.

External Debt, Climate and Environmental Vulnerability, Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Use. Data on Ease of Doing Business are from the World Bank 2013. Data on Important Industries was sourced from the World Bank 2012 while data on Overseas Development Assistance was sourced from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2011. Data on Biodiversity was sourced from The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Conservation International. The data used in this publication are obtained from publicly available sources. Some specific data on a given issue for a number of SIDS were not able to be obtained through publicly available sources. This publication refers to such situations when they occur as 'data unavailable'.



## Biodiversity

SIDS are extremely important for global biodiversity as islands harbour 20% of all plant, bird, and reptile species in only about 3% of the Earth's land surface.

The isolation of islands accounts for extraordinarily high levels of endemism and provide important natural laboratories that contribute to a better understanding of the origins of biodiversity. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity considers the species in SIDS to be at the most risk of extinction: 95% of bird, 90% of reptile, 69% of mammal, and 68% of plant extinctions worldwide have occurred on islands. Common threats include: natural disasters, diseases, overexploitation, clearing of forests and grasslands, draining wetlands for agriculture and cities, fragmentation of habitat with roads, introduction of harmful species into foreign ecosystems, poaching, unsustainable hunting, illegal wildlife trade, pollution and climate change.

Conservation International (CI) identified 34 biodiversity hotspots worldwide; ten of these hotspots are located in regions

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