



**SIDS  
GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK**

## **Report**

### **SIDS GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK (SIDS-GBN) PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP FORUM 2018**

**“Strengthening private sector partnerships for sustainable tourism development”**

21 - 22 May 2018

Maritim Resort and Spa, Balaclava, Mauritius

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The UN Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), together with the Government of Mauritius convened the SIDS Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN) Private Sector Partnership Forum, referred in this report as the “2018 Forum” from 21 to 22 May 2018, in Balaclava, Mauritius. This is the third in a series of SIDS Private Sector Partnership Forums launched by UN-OHRLLS and its partners. The SIDS-Global Business Network (SIDS-GBN) was announced at the first Forum held in conjunction with the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, in Apia, Samoa and was co-organised by OHRLLS, the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce. This was followed-up by the Aruba P3a Conference, which focused on public-private partnerships which was co-organised with the Government of Aruba with support from the Kingdom of Netherlands and was held in Oranjestad, Aruba from 22 – 24 March 2016.

2. Around 60 participants attended the 2018 Forum which brought together Small Island Developing States (SIDS) governments, the UN system, business leaders from SIDS, financial institutions, academia, civil society and other stakeholders. The 2018 Forum was held under the overarching theme “Strengthening private sector partnerships for sustainable tourism development”. The event provided a platform for multi-stakeholder networking and for forging private sector partnerships that support the objectives of the SAMOA Pathway and the achievement of the SDGs in SIDS.

3. The Forum included thematic sessions on tourism, namely: Tourism as a driver of SDGs; Promoting Tourism through Cultural Heritage; Improving Connectivity for Tourism; Environmental Sustainability and Renewable Energy and Financing for sustainable tourism development. A key objective of the event was also to launch new partnerships with and for SIDS which will further the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the achievement of the SDGs in these countries. The thematic sessions included a panel of experts followed by an interactive session which allowed for exchange of experiences and best practices as well as discussion on potential partnerships among the business community and SIDS.

The 2018 Forum was aligned to provide substantive inputs to other Global events in 2018 including the AIMS regional preparatory meeting for the SAMOA Pathway mid-term review as well as the inter-regional meeting for the above-mentioned review.

## **II. Background**

6. The ‘special case’ for the development of SIDS was first recognised in the Chapter 17 on oceans and coasts in Agenda 21 in 1992 which also called for the first global conference on SIDS which was convened in 1994 in Barbados. The Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) adopted in 1994, further complemented by The Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) of 2005 and

MSI+5 Outcome document, recognized that although they are afflicted by economic difficulties and confronted by development imperatives similar to those of developing countries generally, small island developing States (SIDS) have their own peculiar vulnerabilities and characteristics.

Most recently, the Third International SIDS Conference adopted the SAMOA Pathway in Apia, Samoa in September 2014, with the overarching theme of “The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships”.

7. Under its mandate on advocacy and mobilisation of resources, the OHRLLS has been working with a wide range of stakeholders to build partnerships towards the implementation of SAMOA pathway in SIDS. Pursuant to General Assembly, 70/202, OHRLLS together with DESA supports the work of the Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS including the convening of Steering Committee meetings, both at the Ambassadorial level and at expert level at the request of the Steering Committee co-chairs which is open to all Member States.

8. Recognizing the important role of the private sector in promoting sustainable tourism in SIDS, the 2018 Forum was held under the theme “Strengthening private sector partnerships for sustainable tourism development”.

9. Tourism accounts for a significant proportion of the GDP of many SIDS, with tourism accounting for more than 50 per cent of exports in the case of the Maldives, the Seychelles and St. Lucia. Tourism is often one of the few activities for which their location, coupled with exceptional natural and cultural resources, is a strong competitive advantage for SIDS. Tourism has been key in the recent graduation of Samoa, Cabo Verde and the Maldives from Least Developed Country (LDCs) status.

10. For SIDS, there is a strong connection between sustained tourism and the achievement of SDG 8 “to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. The Forum also delved into Goal 8 target 8.9 to “by 2030 to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products” and the role of the private sector in achieving this target.

11. Furthermore, tourism as the backbone of many SIDS economies have a critical role to play in the achievement of all other SDGs. The Forum reviewed the linkages between sustained tourism in SIDS with other cross-cutting sectors such as sustainable energy, connectivity, sustainable ocean, sustainable agriculture disaster risk reduction and finance --- the key thematic areas of the SIDS Global Business Network

### **III. Summary**

#### **A. Opening**

12. Mr. Raju Jadoo, Secretary-General of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small

Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and Hon. Minister Premdut Koonjoo, Minister of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping made remarks at the opening of the 2018 Forum.

Speakers emphasized the role of tourism as a key economic driver and contributed to GDP for SIDS. It was recalled that the SAMOA Pathway specifically mentions sustainable tourism as well as its impact on culture, land use, water management, coastal zone management and the development of protected areas. It was highlighted that the strategy for moving forward with tourism should include: reinforcing connectivity to compensate for the remoteness of SIDS; build partnerships; leverage local assets; and adopt a coordinated approach for a win-win situation. Examples on how tourism development and sound environmental management can be made to be mutually supportive were provided, from niche markets in eco-tourism, nature and cultural tourism to involving local populations in the identification and management of natural protected areas set aside for eco-tourism. It was noted that the ocean plays an integral role for SIDS economies and has a lot to offer in terms of opportunities for sustainable tourism with much of economic activity concentrated near the coastlines. SIDS rich cultural heritage is an asset, with the potential to generate significant revenue from arts and handicraft and growing demand for “authentic” heritage experiences. Speakers also noted the role of innovative approaches and utilizing technological advances to address challenges to sustainable tourism facing SIDS including in the area of environmental sustainability.

Speakers called for strengthening global partnership and collaboration toward the shared goal to achieve sustainable development aspirations of SIDS and recognized that the SIDS-GBN provides an ideal platform for relevant stakeholders. Important milestones have been achieved with the previous Forums, including establishment of the SIDS-GBN Network to link the three SIDS regions and speakers emphasized the opportunity and importance of the present Forum, for advancing sustainable tourism for SIDS and discussed the importance of continuing engagement among stakeholders to seek new opportunities to advance the tourism sector in SIDS.

## **B. Thematic Sessions**

### **Session 1: Tourism as a Driver of SDGs**

Session One on tourism as a driver of SDGs emphasized the critical role of tourism in attaining the SDGs in SIDS. It was emphasized that tourism itself must be a paradigm of sustainability and that tourism has the potential to most directly contribute to the achievement of SDG 1 (poverty eradication), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 14 (oceans) and SDG 17 (partnerships). Particular emphasis was placed on poverty eradication and community engagement and the need to strengthen the “trickle down” effect of tourism to promote equity. Private and public-sector partnerships must be strengthened to move towards sustainable tourism model which can accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in SIDS.

The session underscored that impacts from climate change poses major challenges to the tourism sector in SIDS which in turn has a negative effect on their progress towards attaining the SDGs. It was noted that global commitments over the last two decades such as the adoption of the Rio Declaration, Millennium Development Goals in 2000, and the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement in 2015, has set a transformative agenda for sustainable development however a gap exist between policy frameworks and their implementations.

It was further noted that increase efforts and support from the international community is required for SIDS to better manage the impacts of climate change and to enable them to effectively harness the potential opportunities to promote the tourism sector in SIDS. The urgent need to support climate actions and targets to reduce emissions must be intensified every to progressively move toward a 'no carbon' era by 2050, to prevent global temperatures from increasing by no more than 1.5° C by 2050.

It was underscored that the travel and tourism sector have many positive effects including its impacts, but it must change and respond better to address its negative impacts including those concerning environmental sustainability.

The session also highlighted the need to raise awareness, education and capacity building, monitor regional policy framework, to provide technical support to national tourism offices to establish strategic multi-stakeholder partnerships and resource mobilization to induce sustainable tourism growth that can support the SDGs in SIDS.

Panelists also highlighted some of the challenges to sustainable tourism development in SIDS as follows: lack of baseline data and robust systems to measure sustainability; low level of awareness and appreciation of sustainable tourism; lack of technical expertise and incentives for private sector investment for sustainability initiatives; resource constraints for already struggling SME's to implement best practices and sustainable measures and high energy costs and waste management.

The session included a presentation on the Strong Universal Network (SUNx) initiative, a project which aims to empower and resource a new generation through establishment of climate resilience centres and support to climate champions across different communities. By 2030, the SUNx project aims to build a network of 100,000 graduate climate champions including in urban, rural and island settings to help communities adapt, build resilience and embrace a green growth vision to tourism development.

## **Session 2: Promoting Tourism Through Cultural Heritage**

This Session focused on integrating tourism and culture and its role in sustainable and inclusive growth of SIDS. Speakers noted that tourism presents a significant opportunity to involve traditional and local communities so that they may benefit from the rising trends for cultural tourism and how SIDS can successfully compete in new and growing markets focused on culture and heritage. Speakers emphasized the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships, including those with academic institutions, local universities must be strengthened to promote research informed decision and formulate evidence-based policy.

Examples were shared from Mauritius, where the University of Mauritius created the International Center for Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality which helps to inform policy and efforts aimed at promoting sustainable tourism and destination competitiveness. The Centre also partnered with the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority in the Switch Africa Green Project funded by the European Union Project.

Examples of partnership between the South Pacific Tourism Organisation and UNITAR, UNESCO, New Zealand and the CTA where the Pacific is reaching out to better preserve and promote culture and heritage were highlighted. Pacific is also investing in women, development of traditional skills such as weaving to promote their participation in culture and heritage experience of the region.

Speakers highlighted that food and culinary experiences and is estimated to constitute 25 to 30 per cent of tourist expenditure. Typically, SIDS are net food importers and tourism food imports can have a significant impact on overall food imports in the absence of sufficient quantities of locally sourced produce. The session included a presentation on CTA's project chef4dev, where hotels work with chefs and local farmers to introduce local cuisine in the menus offered to tourists. Opportunities exist for SIDS to promote linkages between agriculture, tourism and health where countries can focus on developing their unique culture and develop quality niche markets as part of sustainable tourism strategies. The challenges SIDS face in offering local food that is also of high quality and sourced locally was noted. A main challenge here to have the buy-in of the local community and expand product offering.

Speakers underscored that cultural resilience in SIDS is impacted by interactions with vulnerabilities that are more commonly associated with small islands such as climate change, sea-level rises and destruction from natural disasters. The sessions also highlighted UNESCO's partnership with small islands to support culture for sustainable development of SIDS.

### **Session 3: Improving Connectivity for Tourism**

Panelists shared national and regional experiences on promoting partnerships to address the challenges to connectivity, including the issue of lack of critical mass required for successful private sector ventures and provided case studies from the airline industry and cruise liners. It was stressed that there is a need for a more holistic understanding of the interrelated concepts of connectivity and sustainability. Sustainable tourism requires not only boosting human traffic, but also creating a proper enabling environment/ecosystem e.g. telecommunications infrastructure and digital connectivity.

One of the key takeaways from this session is that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach in tackling the challenges of connectivity in SIDS. Speakers emphasized that different industries - aviation, cruise and even cable/telecommunications – encounter specific issues which, are further accentuated in archipelagic SIDS. Speakers highlighted cruise liners can provide significant revenue for SIDS, and demand is increasing. Regional partnerships can be further strengthened to facilitate private investments in infrastructure and regional lines. The session also noted the challenges to inter-island connectivity and that in SIDS many of the outlying islands remain unconnected.

The session also focused on the global airline industry and their contribution to the world’s economy – in terms of revenues, number of passengers, direct and indirect revenues and jobs created by the airline industry. Presentation on Air Mauritius highlighted recent investments in new aircraft that are more energy efficient to reduce carbon footprint and shared examples of partnership with major airlines including Air France which has helped develop strong tourism market bases.

### **Session 4: Environmental Sustainability and Renewable Energy**

This session highlighted the nexus of environmental sustainability and renewable energy for sustainable tourism in SIDS. Several SIDS has taken initiatives to build resilience through policy, national strategic plans and programmes designed to promote an integrated approach to environmental management and enhancing economic benefits of tourism. Some have embarked on national energy strategies, focused on diversifying the country’s energy supply, improving energy efficiency, addressing environmental and climate change issues, and modernizing the energy infrastructure. Some 36 SIDS are also involved in the SIDS Lighthouse initiative to develop roadmaps which support island transitions to renewable energy by providing clear pathways for the deployment of renewable energy, which cover technical, economic, and policy elements.

The private sector is playing an increasingly important role in addressing environmental sustainability, renewable energy, smart agriculture and sustainable tourism and their involvement must be further strengthened in advocacy for the achievement of the SDGs. SIDS have made great strides in the switch to renewable energy. By 2020, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands will have achieved a 100 per cent renewable energy target, Barbados will achieve 80% energy efficiency by 2030 while Kiribati will have reached 35% renewable energy efficiency in the same period.

The natural and cultural richness of SIDS upon of which the tourism industry relies upon is under threat from increasing impacts of climate change, including from coastal damage, increased flooding, loss of coral reefs, mangrove destruction and storm surges and hurricanes.

Seychelles Ministry of Tourism developed the Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy (SSDS) 2012-2020, which addresses sustainability across all sectors and is a result of consultations with various stakeholders and groups, including community groups.

Speakers shared examples of important partnerships that have flourished between hotels and civil society that have yielded positive results in terms of environment protection and biodiversity conservation. Some have also developed sustainable tourism labels to encourage hotel enterprises to mainstream sustainability practices into their business operations, including in activities such as waste management, energy management and other activities being undertaken by hotels.

SIDS' small economies face significant challenges to environmental sustainability due to limited financial and human capacity, lack of awareness among tourism operators to ensure environmental protection and preservation.

The tourism industry is typically energy intensive, and renewable energy play an important role in moving onto a sustainable tourism path. Governments, are increasingly exploiting the potential of the abundance of natural energy sources in SIDS to transition to renewable and energy-efficient technologies and low carbon development. There is a growing role for the private sector to develop new technology and solutions that are feasible for the energy market in small island economies. One such technology is the Solarsea system, that utilizes solar power to generate electricity using floating solar panels positioned in the lagoon sea. Currently the system is installed in resorts in the Maldives but is replicable to other small islands. Another technology entailed desalination operations through a renewable energy powered process to address water scarcity of SIDS.

The upfront investment for renewable energy and energy-efficient is often a challenge several SIDS face and private sector can reduce these barriers through collaboration and financing models to find optimal solutions depending on the need of SIDS. Furthermore, development

partners have scaled up support to SIDS to transition to a green economy including under the framework of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. The EU has been partnering Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) in the region in Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles including a € 14.5 million project called ISLANDS that featured disaster risk profiles for each of the members of the IOC as well as private sector involvement in the development of financial instruments and innovative mechanisms for protection against natural disaster and protection of the coastal regions.

The importance of sustainable growth in the tourism sector, and its impact on oceans is noteworthy. There is growing economic activity linked to the ocean and tourism industry, and there is need to develop partnership and network comprised of oceans/coasts and islands business community informed and engaged on sustainable development, science and stewardship.

### **Session 5: Financing for Sustainable Tourism Development**

The session underscored micro, small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) which, play a significant role in the generation of jobs and employment in SIDS and access to finance is a key component. Experiences were shared of strengthening micro businesses and SMEs for poverty reduction. Mauritius has had success with the creation of a social register to identify the poor and have more targeted interventions to empower vulnerable groups out of poverty. Such considerations can be extended to target tourism SMEs to improve the operational environment for these small businesses as well as to strengthen economic inclusion, including the important role played by women in the operation of SMEs in tourism.

Micro and SMEs and family operated businesses are the backbone of handicraft products, catering and several personalized services that cater for the tourism sector. The sharing of concrete examples of micro financing projects on the ground including those catering to women was a highlight of the session. The need to support these community-based finance initiatives was also underscored. In some SIDS, local/national banks have introduced microfinance facilities, gaps exist in terms of coverage and an important role can be played by international financial institutions in bridging the gap to strengthen financial mechanisms for tourism SMEs in SIDS.

Ireland shared their experience of financial incentives including number of tax relief schemes to promote SMEs and also as part of overall strategy to reduce economic vulnerability to external economic shocks in the future.

The session discussed challenges to financing sustainable tourism such as accessing climate finance for environmental projects, accessing affordable infrastructure financing and low interest rates. She highlighted negative factors of economic sustainability for the tourism sector include high leakages for imports, workers and profit remittances; high dependence on the tourism sector, lack of inclusive growth, and limited linkages to agriculture and fishing.

Presentation on an overview of tourism and sustainable growth in Ireland, to share experience and lessons learnt which may be of benefit for SIDS. In 2017, tourism revenue in Ireland increased by 6.7 per cent, to €5.78bn in total. This was accompanied by an increase in visitors by 3.2 per cent to 10.65 million for the year. Ireland has had success in forging commercial partnerships including with tour operators, airline industry and media outlets that have resulted in effective targeting and branding to successfully increase visitor numbers.

Discussion focused on financing mechanisms to increase the resilience of the tourism sector in SIDS. The Global Environmental Fund (GEF) provided examples of projects they support in small islands to increase resilience through adaptation in the tourism sector. It is important to create an enabling environment for community-oriented, private sector investment in environmentally and socially sustainable tourism.

Case studies were shared from the Mauritius model, which was underpinned by sustainable policy support for tourism through government policies, private sector initiatives, financial institutions and foreign investments. The model has been successful through an adaptive policy framework, independent private sector implementation and through support from stable financing options from banks, retained capital and foreign direct investment. Financing sustainable tourism should include preferential financial support to agriculture, preferential financial support to handicraft products, financial support for renewable energy, water, theme parks and other activities.

### **Mr. Cyrille Frederic Marie Barnerias, Global Environment Facility**

Mr. Barnerias provided an overview of finance for sustainable tourism from the Global Environment Facility. The GEF was founded in 1991 as a pilot and in 1992, officially began operating as a financing mechanism for the Rio Conventions, International Waters and support for Chemical and Waste. He provided that the GEF7 is scheduled to begin in July 2018 with an anticipated budget of 4.1 billion over 4 years. Projects are presented and implemented by one of 18 agencies and are executed by ministries and state agencies. Mr. Barnerias highlighted that the first challenge is to determine priorities and listed priorities for the environment as: habitat destruction, waste and waste-water treatment, light pollution, invasive alien species, energy consumption as well as socio-economic priorities. He also mentioned that in addition to each of

the priorities listed, their cumulative impacts have to be taken into consideration as well. In terms of financing, he outlined that to find the best use of scarce public and aid resources, policy reforms and enforcement are needed to create a level playing field. Mr. Barnerias provided examples of projects supported by the GEF which included increasing climate change resilience in the Maldives through adaptation in the tourism sector; reduce GHG emissions from Montenegro's tourism sector; reinforce enabling conditions for community-oriented private sector investment in environmentally and socially sustainable tourism in Mozambique.

### **Mr. Nagarajan Sridhar, CEO and Executive Director, Mau Bank**

Mr. Sridhar explained the role of financing for sustainable tourism development from Mau Bank in Mauritius. He provided the Mauritius model of sustainability as a case study and shared that this model provided continuity in policy making which favoured the expansion of the industry. It enlists the private sector to own the implementation space, clear demarcation in responsibilities of the state and private sector, and equitable sharing of the pie where everyone is a shareholder. He also explained the sustainable policy support for tourism through government policies, private sector initiatives, financial institutions and foreign investments. He highlighted that the financial market has been dedicating 14% of their financing to the Tourism industry, primarily to hotels, transport services, IRS/ERS, SMEs and traders. Mr. Sridhar discussed tangible outcomes and that tourist arrivals have been expanding consequently, rising from 18K in 1970 to 103K in 1977, and then 1,775K in 2016. Gross earnings from tourism increased from MUR 18M in 1970 to MUR 55.8B in 2016. His overview concluded that according to the Mauritius model, sustainability works through an adaptive policy framework, independent private sector implementation and through support from stable financing options from banks, retained capital and FDI. In conclusion, Mr. Sridhar highlight the importance that financing sustainable tourism should include preferential financial support to agriculture, preferential financial support to handicraft products, financial support for renewable energy, water, theme parks and other activities, and share the pie to build solidarity for sustainability.

### ***Interactive Discussion***

The interactive dialogue for Session 5 was chaired by H.E. Mr. Jagdish D. Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations.

The first discussions were on financing for SME's, cases of blending finance in tourism, and what areas of tourism and related sectors could be scaled up.

Ambassador Koonjul shared that poverty eradication projects include a "social register", which was created with the assistance of UNDP, to identify populations living below the poverty line

and subsequent targeted intervention to engage and empower vulnerable groups out of poverty. The Ambassador shared that consideration could be provided so that these interventions are targeted at the tourism sector as well. Mr. Sridhar from Mau Bank discussed the practice of microentrepreneurs who sell handicrafts at small shops in malls and airports and mentioned that these small businesses depend on existing infrastructure and that they would do well to receive external concessional financing support from the World Bank, for example. Mr. Kelleher highlighted the importance of SME's and shared that they serve as the backbone of the Irish economy and that these businesses enjoy tax breaks which serve as an incentive as well as to allow additional income to address unexpected economic shocks in the future.

The next discussion was regarding access to funding for handicraft sector businesses and to what extent is funding provided, is it from public or private banks, and what are the determining factors between those who receive and those who don't receive funding.

Mr. Siebenbrunner shared an example from Swimsol about a special initiative that recycles plastics and is able to create useful products for sale, such as ski poles, and that it was realized through support from UNDP. The importance of taking pro-active steps to address waste management for SIDS was highlighted by Ms. Hunter who underscored the urgency and importance to take a collective approach to solve problems of pollution. The representative from Travel Foundations Mauritius stated that if all SIDS go for 100% renewable energy, that it will be important to also incorporate adaptation measures to address their inadvertent affects on fisheries and agriculture.

Following, the issue of harmonizing the development of nature conservation was discussed within the context of addressing safety and security issues.

Mr. Sridhar provided an overview of the different commercial (9.5 per cent) and loan (3.5 per cent) rates available by Mau Bank for SME private sector scheme's, and shared that 4 out of 10 applications are rejected in part due to nature conservation concerns. He highlighted a particularly successful nature conservation initiative by one company which absorbs about 600 tons of waste on a daily basis, or around 50 per cent of the daily waste for the entire country, and that this is done through an organic process. Ms. Adam highlighted the challenge that most loans are often provided to retail businesses that support imported goods rather than promoting internal or nationally developed projects. She shared that the Maldives is very vulnerable to climate change and are very inclined to provide support for climate mitigation efforts, and shared that the Maldives are working with the World Bank to develop high-powered incinerators. Mr. Kelleher shared that Ireland's national tourism development agency has a grant scheme that allows for loans beginning at 3,000 euro's for SME's. He also shared reducing waste is also important and that they have had successful interventions targeting decreasing the use of plastic bags which has had a positive impact on tourism in Ireland.

In conclusion, H.E. Mr. Jagdish D. Koonjul highlighted the importance that efforts are made through the SAMOA Pathway to target issues of safety and implementation. He emphasized that through country experiences shared, the objectives of the SIDS-GBN to promote sustainable tourism and explore enabling conditions for partnerships have been achieved. In particular, he showcased contributions from Ireland and GEF, and announcements of new partnerships and he recalled the prospects of having a fair-trade arrangement for tourism that could be taken up in the future. Finally, Ambassador Koonjul thanked the panelists, participants and colleagues for their support and engagement throughout the SIDS-GBN Forum.

### **Closing Remarks**

Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) expressed thanks to the Government and people of Mauritius for the hospitality extended during the SIDS Global Business Network Forum as well as congratulated participants on the outcome of the meeting. USG 'Utoikamanu acknowledged that the meeting served to strengthen efforts toward scaling-up of successful partnerships through sharing information, best practices and networking, thereby strengthening the contribution of the Forum to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and achievement of the SDGs in SIDS. She shared her enthusiasm for the announcements of new partnerships and pledges made during this year's Forum, in support of sustainable development in SIDS, and encouraged additional announcements of partnerships, and stressed that the priority following these announcements is to ensure follow through so that partnership objectives are realized. USG 'Utoikamanu indicated that this year's outcome report results in a set of proposals outlining the key issues, discussions and conclusions of the Forum and that recommendations will serve as an input to the preparatory process of the mid-term review of the SAMOA Pathway, focusing on opportunities for strengthening partnership approaches among public and private sectors, and local communities for sustainable tourism development, as an important economic driver for SIDS. In conclusion, she pledged the continued support of the UN system to the SIDS-GBN and throughout the MTR process.

H.E. Mr. Jagdish D. Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations

## Partnerships announced at the 2018 SIDS-GBN Forum

- ❖ Announcement of partnership between Swimsol and Lux Resorts on Thread Lightly by Lux, to reduce diesel consumption in Maldives.
- ❖ Partnership between SPTO and Elemental Water Makers to work together with the private sector of South Pacific SIDS to address issues of water scarcity using green technology. I understand that SPTO has invited Elemental Waters to present to their Council of Minister Meeting in October this year, and these are exactly the type of networking we want to achieve from our Forums.
- ❖ CTA and SIDS-GBN will collaborate with key national, regional and international partners to promote food tourism across SIDS. This will entail collaboration towards stronger policy commitment to local sourcing, support to the private sector through innovative partnerships with the local industries and access to new markets in the tourism sector.
- ❖ Partnership between Vanilla Islands organization and the International Coalition of Tourism Partners, and that Vanilla Islands will dedicate one staff to strengthen information technology and dissemination of information of the SDGs and a dedicated site on their website for spreading this message.
- ❖ OHRLLS with the World Ocean Council to engage the private sector to really build the business network with the Ocean community, a very important area for all SIDS.

### Key Messages:

- There is a strong business case for investing in sustainability. A recurrent theme which emerged from all the discussions is that the private sector has a key role to play in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. This was a running theme throughout the five substantive sessions — from the role of tourism in the implementation of the SDGs, promotion of culture and heritage, connectivity, renewable energy and of course financing for sustainable development.
- The need to create an enabling environment for investment in research and development. And this is where for SIDS, being small, may have its advantages as small islands have provided ideal testing grounds for new technology, including technologies for climate adaptation and mitigation. In order to attract substantive investment in research and technology that can eventually turn into viable project, there must be a “public push”, through public policies that attract new technologies, increase openness to public-private sector partnerships.

- Strengthening public-private partnerships as a vehicle for attracting private investment to SIDS. The Forum highlighted that public private partnerships can be a vital tool to minimize the perceived commercial and technical risks associated with small economies, particularly in areas such as infrastructure development, including air, sea and digital connectivity.
- SIDS are a diverse group — and there is no one-size fits all approach. Partnership models must be based on the national priorities of individual countries, and based on principals of a shared vision, common objectives and mutual understanding.
- The need for strengthening cross-sectorial partnerships. In the case of sustainable tourism, it was emphasized that tourism has great potential to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality and raise living standards through increased community engagement. The need to bring the value added to the local communities by strengthening linkages with local producers and service providers. with local communities was further noted. It was also noted that greater engagement of local communities, does not apply only to tourism but across other sectors of the economy.

## V. Annex

Final Programme: <https://sidsgbn.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SIDS-GBN-Forum-Programme-2018-2-1.pdf>

2018

# SIDS GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK FORUM

STRENGTHENING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

## PROGRAMME



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS



UN-OHRLS

## MAURITIUS

MARITIM RESORT AND SPA



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WWW.SIDSGBN.ORG

## MONDAY, 21 MAY 2018

8:30 - 9:30 REGISTRATION

9:30 - 10:30 OPENING CEREMONY

### Speakers

- Mr. Raju Jadoo, Secretary-General of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI)
- Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)
- Hon. Seetannah Lutchmeenaraidoo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius

10:30 - 11:00 COFFEE BREAK / PRESS CONFERENCE

11:00 - 12:30 SESSION 1: TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF SDGs

Moderator: Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative (UN-OHRLLS)

### Speakers

- Prof Geoffrey Lipman, President, International Coalition of Tourism Partners
- Ms. Dessima Williams, former United Nations special adviser for the implementation of the SDGs
- Ms. Sonja Hunter, CEO, Samoa Tourism Authority and Chair Lady, South Pacific Tourism Organisation

Interactive discussion

12:30 - 13:30 LUNCH

13:30 - 15:00 SESSION 2: PROMOTING TOURISM THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE

Moderator: Mr. Garry Kelleher, Ireland Tourism Promotion Board

### Speakers

- Mr. Chris Cocker, Chief Executive Officer, South Pacific Tourism Organisation
- Ms. Isolina Boto, Head of the Brussels Office, Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
- Ms. Khalissa Ikhlef, Associate Programme Specialist, Section for Small Islands and Indigenous Knowledge, UNESCO
- Dr. Robin Nunkoo, Head of the International Centre for Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality, University of Mauritius

Interactive discussion

15:00 - 15:15 COFFEE BREAK

15:15 - 16:45 SESSION 3: IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY FOR TOURISM

Moderator: Mr. Terence Tan, First Secretary (Political), Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations

### Speakers

- Mr. Pascal Viroleau, Chief Executive Officer, Vanilla Islands Organization
- Mr. Somas Appavou, Chief Executive Officer, Air Mauritius
- Mr. Stephen Lyon, Board Member, Cook Islands, Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO)

Interactive discussion

18:30 - Reception Hosted by Hon. Seetannah Lutchmeenaraidoo  
Venue: Château Mon Désir - Maritim Resort & Spa, Balaclava

## TUESDAY, 22 MAY 2018

9:00 - 10:30 SESSION 4: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Ronald Jumeau, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Seychelles to the United Nations

### Speakers

- H.E. Ms. Marjaana Sall, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius
- Mr. Earlston McPhee, Director, Office of the Minister, Bahamas Ministry of Tourism
- Ms. Janice Bristol, Senior Quality and Standards Officer, Tourism Department, Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Ports and Marine, Republic of Seychelles
- Mr. Raj H. Prayag, Chairman, Mauritius Oceanography Institute, Former Director of Environment

10:30 - 11:00 COFFEE BREAK

11:00 - 12:30 SESSION 4 CONTINUED

- Mr. Paul Holthus, Founding President and CEO, World Ocean Council
- Mr. Thomas Siebenbrunner, Head of Sales and Marketing, Swimsol, Austria/Maldives
- Mr. Sid Vollebregt, Managing Director, Elemental Water Makers
- Mr. Leighton Waterman, Programme Officer, IRENA - SIDS Lighthouses Initiative

Interactive discussion

12:30 - 13:30 LUNCH

13:30 - 15:15 SESSION 5: FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Jagdish D. Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations

### Speakers

- Ms. Piera Tortora, Advisor, Development Finance, OECD
- Dr. Azeema Adam, Maldives Envoy on Financing for Development
- Mr. Garry Kelleher, Ireland Tourism Promotion Board
- Mr. Cyrille Frederic Marie Barnerias, Global Environment Facility
- Mr. Nagarajan Sridhar, CEO and Executive Director, Mau Bank

Interactive discussion

15:15 - 15:30 COFFEE BREAK

15:30 - 16:00 CLOSING OF THE 2018 SIDS GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK FORUM

Moderator: Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director, UN-OHRLLS

### Closing Remarks

- Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)
- H.E. Mr. Jagdish D. Koonjul, Permanent Representative of Mauritius to the United Nations