

Charting the course towards disaster resilient infrastructure in SIDS

Date: 4 December 2023

Duration: 60 mins

Proposed Venue: Dominican Republic Pavilion, COP28 | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Objective: To showcase the Coalition's commitment towards achieving resilience prosperity in SIDS through climate and disaster resilient infrastructure.

Background:

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are highly prone to disasters due to climate change and extreme weather events such as sea level rise, coastal flooding and erosion, tsunamis and storm surges. Most of these island states also face development challenges that constrain their economic prospects such as remoteness to global markets, poor connectivity, lack of economies of scale, inadequate labour mobility, low levels of development combined with rapid population growth and limited capacity to adapt.

Alternatively, due to their geography and natural resource base, they offer unique opportunities for the growth of eco-tourism, fisheries and forestry sectors, amongst others. Leveraging these opportunities requires significant investment in infrastructure, especially in sectors such as transport, electricity, housing, tourism, water, sanitation and coastal protection. Given the need for infrastructure investment and to reap long-term benefits from these investments, it is imperative SIDS address their disaster and climate risks and adopt a resilient pathway for sustainable development.

At present, SIDS face many institutional challenges to successfully build these resilient pathways. To address these challenges, the outcome document for the Interregional Preparatory Meeting of the 4th International Conference on SIDS has stressed on three key areas i) Technology and Innovation; ii) Capacity Building Support and iii) Innovative adaptation finance mechanism which the international community needs to focus on, to support SIDS towards achieving resilience prosperity. Against this backdrop, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is organising this session to showcase the Coalition's commitment towards achieving resilience prosperity in SIDS through climate and disaster resilient infrastructure. The session will focus on CDRI's role in facilitating access to finance, strengthening capacity development and enabling a data and technology ecosystem for disaster and climate risks through its dedicated initiative-Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS). The discussion will be circle around aligning IRIS as a vehicle for implementing the new programme of Action for SIDS to be adopted in SIDS4

Tentative agenda and Script

Session Spilt	Description	Time
Opening - 30 mins		
Context Setting	Moderator to welcome participants and give an overview of the session	3 Mins
Special Addresses	Moderator introduces Minister and invites to deliver his address Special Address by Hon. Matthew Samuda, Minister of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Government of Jamaica	5 Mins
	Moderator introduces Minister and invites to deliver his address Special Address by Hon. Sir Molwyn Joseph, Minister of Health, Wellness & The Environment, Antigua and Barbuda	5 Mins
	Moderator to introduces SG PIFS invites for to deliver his address Special Address by H.E. Henry Puna, Secretary General, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS)	5 mins
Signing of Project	Moderator introduced Dr Max Puig and invites for his address, followed by ceremonial signing of DR project Address by H.E. Max Puig’s address and Signing & Photo Op	6 mins
Panel Discussion-30 mins		
Panel Discussion	<p>Moderator (DG CDRI) to invite and introduce panelists on the stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ms Vasiti Soko, Director, National Disaster Management Office, Fiji ii. Ms Carla Montesi – Director at the European Commission’s Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA)- iii. Dr Cate Rogers: Assistant Secretary for Climate Resilience and Finance in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) iv. Ms Tishka Francis, Head of SIDS Sub-Programme, UN-OHRLLS (What role can organizations like CDRI can play in supporting the vision of SIDS4) <p>Moderator to pose questions to each of the panelists</p> <p>Q1. Vasiti Soko, Fiji Q2. Ms Carla,EU Q3. Dr Cate Rogers, Australia Q4. Ms Tishka-UN-OHRLLS</p> <p>Moderator to reflect on panelists’ responses, thank them and close the panel discussion.</p>	30 Mins

Speaker Bios:

1. **Mr Amit Prothi, Director General, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI):** Amit Prothi is the Director General, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Mr. Prothi brings a wealth of international experience and expertise on climate and disaster resilience issues. He is an international expert with nearly 25 years of progressive leadership in the fields of urban planning and resilient infrastructure, with experience across more than 15 countries in North America, Asia and Europe. He has managed multidisciplinary teams on thematic topics that relate to climate change mitigation and adaptation including environmental planning, urban policy, land use and transportation planning, natural resource management, flood management, disaster resilient infrastructure, housing, and community development.
2. **Hon. Matthew Samuda, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Government of Jamaica:** Senator the Hon. Matthew Samuda currently serves as Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth & Job Creation. He is assigned portfolio responsibilities for Water, Environment, Climate Change, and the Blue & Green Economies
3. **Hon. Sir Molwyn Joseph:** Hon Sir Joseph is currently acting as a Minister of Health, Wellness & Environment, Antigua & Barbuda. As someone who has always been concerned about people and an activist for positive social changes, in 1984 he entered politics as Junior Minister in the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism and Energy. Since then, he has served as Minister for Planning, Implementation and Environment, Minister of Health and Social Improvement, and Minister of Tourism. Minister, Joseph worked to attract new visitors and investments to Antigua, increasing the number of hotel rooms, bringing new air carriers to the island and succeeding in expanding the cruise ship facilities through additional building of the Nevis Street Pier.
4. **Hon. Henry Puna, Secretary General, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS): Mr Henry Puna is the 10th Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum.** He is the first Cook Islander to hold this post. Prior to taking up the regional role on May 24th, 2021, Secretary General Puna was Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, from November 2010 until October 2020. In Cook Islands, he held numerous portfolios including Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Marine Resources, Energy and Renewable Energy, Climate Change, Tourism, and the Outer Islands, Puna steered his nation on a path which has earned the Cook Islands global recognition for Oceans sustainability and renewable energy.
5. **H.E. Max Puig, Executive Vice President, National Council for Climate Change, Dominican Republic:** H.E. Max Puig is the Executive Vice President of the National Council for Climate Change and Clean Development Mechanism (CNCCMDL) since August 2020. CNCCMDL is the body in charge of outlining the public policies on climate change in the Dominican Republic. H.E. Puig was a candidate for the Presidency of the Dominican Republic in 2012. He is Professor at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD) since 1971 and Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Dominican Republic since 1974. Mr. Puig was Minister of Labour from 2008 to

2011; Minister of Environment and Natural Resources from 2004 to 2007; Secretary of State and National Authorising Officer of the European Development Funds in the period 1996 – 2000, and Senator for his native Puerto Plata in the period 1990 – 1994. H.E. Puig holds two bachelor's degrees, in Public Law and Sociology and a doctorate in Public Law and Political Science.

6. **Ms Vasiti Soko, Director, National Disaster Management Office, Fiji:** Vasiti's industry experience spans 15 plus years in the highly technical field of geospatial science and surveying. She has assisted a number of significant projects while working for the Fijian Government including developing a disaster-integrated system prior taking on her current role. She has also worked across a number of regional projects in Nauru, Federate of Micronesia, Palau, Tuvalu, Marshall Island, Kiribati and Australia.
7. **Ms Carla Montesi** – Carla Montesi is currently Director at the European Commission's Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA). She is responsible for the Directorate "Green Deal and Digital Agenda", covering policy areas such as climate change, environment, sustainable energy, agri-food systems, transport, technology and digitalisation.
8. **Dr Cate Rogers:** Cate is the Assistant Secretary for Climate Resilience and Finance in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with responsibility for Australia's approach to climate finance implementation, accounting and the integration of climate in the development program. She has over 20 years' experience working in development, economics and foreign policy, spanning Asia and the Pacific and multilateral engagement. Most recently, this includes co-chairing the G20 Infrastructure Working Group in 2021. Cate recently led the Indo-Pacific and National Security Branch at Australian Treasury, where she led on bilateral loans to Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. Cate holds a PhD in Economics from the Australian National University, with a research focus on Papua New Guinea.
9. **Ms Tishka Francis:** Tishka Francis is Head of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Sub-Programme in the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), where she spearheads the work in support of the sustainable development of SIDS. Previously, Ms Francis served in the Permanent Mission of The Bahamas to the United Nations in New York.