

THIRD ISC GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Muscat, Oman 2025

Activity report on SIDS region

Document 12e

For noting



**International
Science Council**

وزارة التعليم العالي
و البحث العلمي والابتكار
Ministry of Higher Education
Research & Innovation



Activity report on SIDS regions

29 November 2024

Summary

This report highlights the activities, achievements, and strategic priorities of the International Science Council (ISC) in relation to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) during the 2022–2024 period. It covers the establishment and operations of the ISC SIDS Liaison Committee, key engagements at global forums like SIDS4 and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2024, and the Council's ongoing efforts to support sustainable development and environmental leadership among SIDS.

Background

Small Island Developing States (SIDS), often referred to as Large Ocean States, face unique challenges and opportunities due to their geographical, ecological, and socio-economic characteristics. The ISC has long recognized the critical need to amplify the voices of SIDS in global scientific and policy discussions. SIDS are disproportionately impacted by climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic vulnerabilities, but they also play a leadership role in global environmental governance, especially in areas such as marine conservation and sustainable ocean management.

To strengthen the representation of the SIDS scientific community across the ISC's activities and initiatives, the SIDS Liaison Committee was reactivated in late 2023 after a hiatus since March 2021. This revitalization was driven by the need to prepare for key multilateral events, including the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the High-Level Political Forum, and the upcoming United Nations Ocean Conference in 2025.

Objective of the ISC SIDS Liaison Committee

The Small Island Developing States Liaison Committee serves as a strategic advisory body for the International Science Council (ISC). Its primary purpose is to ensure that the representation of the SIDS scientific community is strengthened across the Council's activities.

The Committee provides guidance on strategic matters, working to enhance the visibility and influence of SIDS scientists in global scientific and policy processes. It facilitates connections between regional and global networks, ensuring that the unique perspectives and expertise of SIDS are effectively integrated into ISC initiatives.

This approach underscores the ISC's commitment to supporting equitable participation in global science, particularly for regions facing disproportionate challenges from climate change and other pressing global issues.

Composition of the ISC SIDS Liaison Committee

The SIDS Liaison Committee brings together a diverse group of experts from academia, regional organizations, and research institutions. Members are:

- **Peter Gluckman** (International Science Council)
- **Terrence Forrester** (University of the West Indies, Chair, ISC Foundation Fellowship Council)
- **Dania Bacardí Fernández** (University of Medical Sciences in Havana)
- **Xavier Estico** (National Institute of Science Technology and Innovation)
- **Eric Katovai** (Solomon Islands National University)
- **Michelle Mycoo** (University of the West Indies)
- **Teatulohi Matainaho** (Pacific Adventist University)
- **Vidushi Neergheen** (University of Mauritius)
- **Salome Taufu** (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat)
- **Adelle Thomas** (Natural Resources Defense Council and IPCC)
- **Mark Wuddivira** (Caribbean Academy of Sciences/University of the West Indies)

Achievements during the 2022-2024 period

Reconvening the SIDS Liaison Committee

The ISC SIDS Liaison Committee was reconvened in late 2023 to prepare for key multilateral engagements. After a hiatus since March 2021, this revitalized Committee aimed to position the scientific priorities of SIDS at the forefront of international policy discussions. In 2024, the Committee convened twice to coordinate efforts for major events, including the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) and, to a lesser extent, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

A significant achievement of these meetings was the drafting of the From Shores to Horizons Declaration, which became the cornerstone of the ISC's contributions to SIDS4. This Declaration outlines a vision for amplifying science and innovation as tools to build resilience, prosperity, and environmental sustainability in SIDS.

The 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4)

The ISC actively contributed to the outcomes of the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held from 27 to 30 May 2024 in Antigua and Barbuda. Under the theme "*Charting the Course Towards Resilient Prosperity*," the conference evaluated the progress of SIDS toward sustainable development.

The ISC's contributions included mobilizing 40 scientists and experts from SIDS, leveraging the expertise of its SIDS Liaison Committee, and collaborating with its Regional Focal Points in Asia and the Pacific, as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. These efforts ensured that the perspectives and research from SIDS were brought to the forefront of global discussions.

The ISC organized a well-attended side event, *Amplifying Science in and from Small Island Developing States*, which highlighted the crucial role of regional scientific cooperation in addressing the unique challenges faced by SIDS. This event featured discussions on climate resilience, sustainable ocean economies, food security, and renewable energy.

Additionally, the ISC delivered a plenary statement to Member States on leveraging digital technologies

to enhance climate resilience in SIDS. This emphasized the importance of robust data systems, interdisciplinary research, and indigenous and local knowledge in formulating effective solutions.

Key outputs of ISC's engagement included the publication of the *From Shores to Horizons* Declaration, as well as contributions to side events organized by the International Panel for Ocean Sustainability (IPOS) and the Stockholm Environment Institute. These engagements strengthened partnerships and expanded the ISC's network, further amplifying the voice of SIDS scientists in multilateral spaces.

Contributions to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2024

The SIDS Liaison Committee's involvement in the HLPF 2024 included the submission of a case study, *Science in Action in Small Island Developing States: The Case of Dominica*, authored by Committee member Michelle Mycoo. This study provided a comprehensive analysis of Dominica's vulnerabilities to climate change and the evidence-based interventions needed to enhance resilience. By showcasing how science informs policy and action in Dominica, the ISC underscored the broader role of SIDS in advancing the SDGs. The ISC also contributed to discussions on sustainable development financing, disaster risk reduction, and climate adaptation, further emphasizing the interconnectedness of science, policy, and action in addressing global challenges.

Strengthening regional scientific capacities

The ISC facilitated collaboration between its Regional Focal Points, the Caribbean Academy of Sciences, and the Establishment Committee for the Pacific Academy. These efforts aimed to build regional scientific capacities and promote knowledge-sharing among SIDS. Notably, the ISC supported the development of a *Talent Book* to showcase the expertise of SIDS scientists, which served as a resource for media and policy-makers during SIDS4.

Future directions

Building on the momentum from SIDS4 and the HLPF, the ISC is preparing for significant engagements in upcoming multilateral events, including the UN Ocean Conference in 2025. The Council remains committed to promoting evidence-based solutions and fostering international collaboration to support the sustainable development of SIDS.