

Small Island Developing States: The Samoan Pathway

Samoa 1-4 Sept 2014

Report by Betsan Martin

Key Messages:

The Green/Blue economy in Small Island States puts the environment at the centre of the economy. SIDS is at the forefront of the 'Green/Blue economy because they are natural resource economies.

Small Island States are at the frontlines of climate change, with their security threatened by the impacts of climate on food security, fisheries, floods and droughts and weather disasters, ocean acidification, population migration.

Digital connectivity is the way to overcome the tyranny of distance that is one of the challenges of SIDS. In Pacific world views, the oceans connect Islands. Oceans are an asset that bonds people together. Partnerships between governments, private sector and NGO's are vital for the management, regulation and protection of oceans and fisheries.

Partnerships: Governments cannot lead development and transitions to green/blue economies alone. Business investment is need to catalyse innovation and provide expertise.

Aid for sustainable development could be replaced by investment.

SIDS Conference Report

You might have thought this was a climate change negotiation conference. You might have thought



it was a renewable energy conference. You knew you were in the centre of the Pacific universe with the eloquence and hospitality, the incredible spirit of generosity which emanated not only from a magnificent State occasion – you felt that every village and school and church was on its toes to extend a Pacific welcome and ensure that visitors entered into the oceanic imagination and received the richness of the economy of giving at the heart of Samoa.

The green economy is putting the environment into the economic equation; we have yet to account for nature's ecosystems in economic measures. Sustainable development in Small Island States is by way of the blue economy. Christiana Figueris, Executive Director of the UNFCCC said the blue economy is the only guarantee for the future. There was a recognition that SIDs are at the forefront of the green/blue economy

(turquoise economy) because they have no other option. These are natural resource economies. In line with this affirmative theme was the UNDP presentation where Administrator Helen Clarke said SIDS are the incubators in climate responsibility, not the victims, and development need to recognize the mutual accountability of developed and developing states. UNDP is a partner with the Global Environment Facility and recognizes that biodiversity contributes 70 percent of GDP of SIDS.

President Tong of Kiribati said:

Our security is on the line. SIDS economies are 70 percent in coastal areas. The issues of climate are desertification, acidification of oceans, increase in natural disasters. Global citizenship requires urgent global action to climate proof development efforts. No responsible government should take a business as usual approach. The question is not negotiation but how to mobilize? We want action and for this we need access to funds.

Partnerships

The theme of Partnerships made more and more sense – business and state sectors, environment and financial sectors, development interests combine with Island resilience all seemed like a recent concept layered onto long and deep traditions of relational systems and strategic alliances that are embedded in Pacific indigenous traditions. It is more that the ‘developed world’ is finding its way to Pacific systems of strategic engagement and co-operation that are essential to sustainability – at every level, from family to business, State and global scale . On the matter of partnerships, even the notion of ‘development’ was considered outmoded, with ‘investment’ as a less charitable and patronizing term. Multistakeholder partnerships are the way forward because governments cannot achieve development goals alone. The private sector have the capacity and innovation to invest and mobilize the market. Island specific technology in telecommunications, energy, oceans regulations, fisheries management, will overcome barriers of energy costs, isolation and distance.



Some of the investment talk was to address the well identified challenges of distance, limited land resources and small populations. Fresh thinking by the World Bank would envisage achieving the ‘death of distance’ by bringing digital cables to every island in the Pacific. The motif of digital connectivity was reinforced by the connectivity of oceans. Oceans not only connect people, they are the ecosystem which regulates the climate, and therefore Small Island land and Ocean territories are essential to the global climate equilibrium. They are an asset that binds Island nations together. In the same vein, partners for finance, clean energy, trade and tourism are development pathways through connectivity. Healthy oceans are essential to the global economy.

Climate Frontlines

Ban Ki Moon identified Small Islands as being on the frontlines of climate change. There has not been progress on the goals identified in the Barbados commitment and the Mauritius



implementation strategy. The pathway ahead is to transform unsustainable production and consumption – imported poor quality foods that are dumped in Pacific countries as a case in point. Green economies achieved through partnerships are the way to address the vulnerabilities of Pacific SIDS now- it was often said Climate is not I the future, it is now. The UN General Secretary spoke about the high level meeting he has called on Climate Change 23rd September in NY to accelerate agreements for the commitment period.

Oceans and Fisheries

Repeatedly the ridge to reef was invoked to represent an integrated framework for economic development. While SIDS has put oceans and fisheries on the map for sustainable economic development, there was persistent recognition of the impact of land management on the coastal marine area and on fisheries. The management of agriculture, tourism, forestry, mangroves and fresh water are inseparable from the protection of oceans, coral reefs and fisheries. The scope of oceans interests are huge. They range from local livelihood interests of coastal fisheries to the regional scale of over-exploitation of fisheries magnified through subsidies. Norway and China pay the costs of fishing boats to reach Pacific fisheries areas, thus compounding the plunder of overfishing and unregulated fishing and of oceanic environmental destruction from bottom trawling. The UN Undersecretary for Legal Affairs and Legal Council of the UN, Miguel de Serpa Soares identified the need for sustainable management of oceans through partnerships to assist with respect for national jurisdiction, and identified issues of pollution, control and regulation within EEZ territories, unreported and illegal fishing. UNCLOS is the legal instrument for the rights and duties of sovereign states, with the need for supplementary instruments for Small Island States to give effect to protections in their territories.

Growing populations in SIDS put further pressure on fish resources. Moses Amos, Director of SPC spelled out the dimensions of additional needs for fish referring to 400 million more fish! (per year? Not sure of the detail). He saw the way to meet this need would be through aquaculture. Coastal areas are in customary management, such as with the gologoli system in Fiji which combines stewardship and protection with use of resources. There 75% of partnerships are in coastal areas under customary frameworks for management. An example is Emua village in Fiji where the village has a partnership with a hotel. The village manages the land and coastal areas for environmental quality and the hotel provides jobs and community facilities, thus achieving environmental, tourism, and village benefits.

Marine protected areas are an insurance policy for oceans, and marine policies for EEZ must include MPA's as core business of High Seas Management. As I understand it, MPA's in the Pacific do not completely exclude use of the resources, but allow managed, or sustainable use for customary purposes. Taholo Kami, Director of IUCN Oceania elaborated this as a unique framework for marine protection emanating from Pacific indigenous world views in which people are understood as part of the environment, not separate from the natural world.



Debt Burdens, Financing and Economic Policy

Development can leave Islands indebted. A Parallel event on debt was packed. Debt forgiveness is optimal for SIDS. GDP is an inadequate measure of economic activity for SIDS as it does not measure what makes for prosperity. The problem of measurement for SIDS is an indicator of the global system which externalises environment and ecosystem services. The exceptional vulnerability of Small Islands should be factored in to measures of sustainable development by use of a vulnerability index. A vulnerability index could be a factor for financing

Proposals for debt management include debt restructuring. The Seychelles floated their currency as a strategy to restructure debt which bought a reduction of debt by 45%. With the credit created redundant workers were offered low interest loans for small businesses. Direct Foreign Investment from Dubai was crucial for growth and the success of the new small businesses.

IMF style economic policy leads to no growth and debt. Kyte took an approach that the World Bank is being educated by Small Island States. The World Bank has a Pacific Regional Investment Programme and a Global Program on Oceans for integration and restoration to agreements on Ocean health. Healthy oceans essential to global economy. Kyte referred to the importance of alignment between language of the Pacific and financial investment language. Kyte also proposed a stop to SIDS as a destination for aid, referring an investment approach. As an example she referred to \$74m on smart tuna as a way to bring dollars into economies.

Examples of Green Economic Pathways

Several SIDS have embarked specifically on 'blue economy' frameworks, including the Maldives, Fiji and PNG. PNG is implementing a 'Responsible Sustainable Development' pathway for economic development. This includes a plan to stop tuna fishing and over exploitation of ocean resources –



somewhat contingent on investment partnerships to enable this. For Mauritius transitions to sustainable economic development require massive investment to overcome poverty. Capacity building is a cornerstone, with partner investment in green buildings, biogas, solar hot water, procurement and deep ocean research as keys to achieving green growth.

The Barbados Prime Minister laid out plans for a green economy with National Development Goals. A coastal infrastructure project with a waste management strategy means scaling back on oil imports by \$800 million per year. Barbados produces 100 tonnes of waste per day. They are looking at trapping energy from land fills and upgrading water systems.

Education for Sustainable Development

A panel led by UNESCO – supporting education for sustainable development and climate change education. Gwong-Jo Kim is the regional Director of Education for Sustainable Development and anticipates implementation through the Global Action Programme via the UNESCO Conference Nov. 2014. Apia Statement being sent to the UNESCO Conference. T.Matsumoto@UNESCO.org

Ahead

ECOSOC has a mandate to address the challenges of countries in special situations, so has a responsibility to facilitate partnerships across sectors. ECOSOC identified itself as having a monitoring role for the commitments in Samoa, and reports to the General Assembly. The Samoa pathway is a compass to guide the journey ahead not only for SIDS but as a blueprint for the future because the messages have been heard around the globe. Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary General for ECOSOC said we look ahead with a renewed sense of responsibility.

Report of Six Partnership Dialogues

Sustainable Economic Development

SIDS to pursuit of economic development will be through employment and via protection of natural resources. Economic development has to be decoupled from environmental degradation. Job creation opportunities are in ICT, fish, tourism, seabed mining. Climate is the backdrop so clean energy is a big opportunity. Community involvement is necessary to get local buy in for reform. Opportunities include: small business, business matchmaking, trade promotion, youth training, sustainable farming, ICT, business continuity after national disasters, clean energy for climate.

Oceans Seas and Biodiversity

Oceans are part of the daily life of SIDS, so SIDS are champions of the oceans. Development brings impacts on seas and financial resources and partnerships are needed for conservation of fish, protection from ship discharge, blue green economy linking with forestry, management of marine protection within national jurisdictions. Illegal and unregulated fishing lead to decline of fisheries. Partnerships at the community level are required for monitoring and data collection; at the regional level to create connectivity. SIDS - SIDS partners can carry out monitoring and frameworks for ocean policy. A climate framework for SIDS will be good for oceans.

Water, Food Security and Waste

Population growth exacerbates these challenges. Interlinked issues need integrated management. An example which relates to water to the capacity futures of women is when young women walk to get water. When there is no safe pathway their parents withdraw them from school, thus their education is restricted.

Food production requires good water management and integrated systems. These can be catalyzed by private sector partnerships. The use of pesticides and fertilisers puts water at risk. Importing food strains the budget, and in Pacific SIDS food imports are often low grade. Waste management is urgent - landfills are a problem for health. Solutions include organic horticulture, agricultural research, locally grown food, access to intellectual property, integrated waste management.

Energy

SIDS are rich in renewable energy resources, the challenge is to provide reliable energy. An enabling environment with national policies for technology transfer and investment are the key to mobilizing transitions to clean energy..

A comprehensive assessment of energy needs can be provided through partnerships which provide technology expertise. Partnership examples include IRENA and NZ, International support for SIDS will be enhanced by SDG. SIDS could be success stories for world for decarbonising energy.

Climate and Disaster Risk Management.

This is the most difficult challenge for world. It requires coordination and the integration of climate with disaster risk reduction while making use of available resources. Adaptation must go hand in hand with risk reduction.

Sustainable economic growth is an essential part of climate responses. Transitions will be achieved through the activation of partnerships involving Government, private sector and local communities for renewable energy, technology, investment in fish and tourism, and capacity development.

Social development Health, Communicable disease, Health, Women

Social development is the driving force of sustainable development, based on trust, inclusion, sustainable livelihoods, access to good sanitation services. Heritage and culture energises sustainable economic development. SIDS have young populations and the local village systems are a democratic dividend. Education is key to social inclusion and development. The current education system is geared to training job seekers but job creators and entrepreneurs are needed for the blue/green economy. Action is needed on domestic violence, equality and women in decision making roles. Non communicable diseases are epidemic. Healthy food means more traditional eating and the regulation of processed food. Opportunities and challenges include entrepreneurship for women, farmer night markets, availability of insulin treatment, sex education and prevention of gender violence.