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United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

**Plenary Meeting - Item 8 - Ms. Dima Al-Khatib, Director, United Nations Office
for South-South Cooperation**

**4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States:
Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity**

**Antigua and Barbuda
27-30 May 2024**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a privilege to participate at the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

I extend my thanks to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for hosting this significant event and to UNDESA and UN-OHRLLS for their leadership roles.

This is a critical moment for transformational action on priorities that matter most for Small Island Developing States, including climate action, reform of the international financial system, and delivering the SDGs.

At the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, we are committed to advancing sustainable development through robust South-South and triangular cooperation, particularly within the unique context of SIDS and other countries of the Global South.

Our efforts will be further guided by **a bold new plan of action to build the resilience of 39 small island nations in tackling the world's most pressing challenges**, with a focus on fostering partnerships that integrate South-South and triangular cooperation within the UN system and beyond.



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The support of UNOSSC to Small Island Developing States encompasses a range of strategic knowledge-based and demonstration initiatives addressing priority developmental issues from the South-South and triangular cooperation perspective, and leveraging the expertise of the UN system on the ground and at the regional level.

As the custodian of the UN-system wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation, UNOSSC provides policy orientation for UN entities to ensure a coherent approach to South-South policy and programmes. Stemming from this strategy, we have rolled out practical guidelines for UN country teams to assist Member States in implementing South-South and triangular cooperation at the country and regional levels. These guidelines aim to put South-South and triangular cooperation at the centre of UN Country Teams' development cooperation frameworks.

Through our partnerships with emerging and leading countries from the South, such as, Brazil, India, South Africa, China, South Korea, the Office has enabled the UN system to implement innovative approaches addressing the challenges of climate change in the South.

UNOSSC has been a vital supporter of SIDS through SDG-aligned initiatives.

Notably, SIDS have benefited the most from the India, Brazil, and South Africa Fund and the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, managed by UNOSSC. **These initiatives have channeled over \$55.5 million into 63 projects across over 30 SIDS, supporting sustainable development at various levels.** The projects have yielded impactful results that pave the way for scaling up support as we embark on the new 10-year action plan.

With knowledge and experience as cornerstones of South-South and triangular cooperation, digital and innovation-related platforms and analytical capacity housed in UNOSSC make more than 950 solutions, including over 220 for SIDS, available to all countries for experience sharing and scaling up.

Similarly, our support for the SAMOA Pathway has demonstrated the power of South-South cooperation in driving progress for SIDS.

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Looking forward, the operationalization of the 10-year action plan presents a historic opportunity for UNOSSC to elevate its support to this vulnerable group of countries.

We will take bold action to:

- **First, strengthen the capacities of SIDS through the establishment of a Center of Excellence**, which UNOSSC stands ready to support by identifying, evaluating, and documenting successful development solutions and technologies from the Global South. **We will be the catalyst that brings proven ideas to scale.**
- **Second, we will enhance platforms for cooperation on Science, Technology, and Innovation. In the digital age, geography is no barrier to collaboration.** By engaging with research networks, technological resources, and innovation hubs through our digital tools, such as South-South Galaxy and Global Thinkers, we will create a virtual marketplace of ideas that empowers SIDS to leapfrog traditional development hurdles.
- **Third, we will enhance human and institutional capacities. The greatest resource of the Global South is its people.** By leveraging South-South cooperation, we will facilitate exchanges and training between SIDS and other Southern countries, providing technical assistance, training programmes, and policy advice to strengthen capacities.
- **Fourth, we will strengthen coordination among Southern-led financial institutions. Access to finance is the lifeblood of development.** By sharing best practices and offering tailored financial products to SIDS, we will unlock the potential for investment and growth.
- **Last, but not least, UNOSSC will work closely with specialized UN agencies** in promoting capacity-building initiatives and economic partnerships among SIDS to help **build resilient economies that can withstand global shocks.**

This is our vision. This is our commitment.

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Together, we can ensure that Small Island Developing States are not left behind, but are at the forefront of sustainable development.

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