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Introduction

Mainstreaming sustainable development is a process of both integrating the concept of sustainable development into general policy-making and management and embracing a set of core values and principles which should underpin policy vision and the development goals that guide priorities and the formulation of activities. These core values and principles crucially include the pursuit of a balance between economic well-being, environmental quality and social harmony so that development goals can be achieved and there is participation of all sectors and people in decision-making and planning.

This book focuses on the tools, or practical means, that are being used to bring policies and programmes for sustainable development out of the shadows into the mainstream of decision-making at all levels of governance, both public and private, and in all sectors. It provides useful insights into the practical realities of moving forward with the complex task of implementing sustainable development in SIDS. It offers a package of practical ideas and working examples of current actions in small states and SIDS that, it is hoped, can assist as a guide to policy-makers and managers to make more rapid progress in the pursuit of the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI).

Mainstreaming sustainable development in small states means that the thematic areas of sustainable development take centre stage in policy-making and action and are integrated within the core processes of politics, planning, institutional and human capital development, finance, strategic and operational management. This concept of mainstreaming contrasts with the traditional mode of taking separate themes for action and sidelining them to particular ministries or sectors. For example, traditionally, ministries of environment deal with ecology and ministries of finance handle the economy but when sustainable development is mainstreamed, these issues are addressed holistically through an integrated development planning system.

This book is the latest in a series from the Commonwealth addressing issues of sustainable development for small states and islands. The original concept and overall theme of this book arose from brainstorming sessions of a consultative group comprising the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM) and Indian Ocean Commission, as well as representatives from the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and from small island developing states (SIDS) themselves.

This volume will be especially useful for small states which are often inhibited in making

progress with mainstreaming sustainable development as they tend to have limited funding, have an inappropriate scale and scope of institutions, lack critical expertise, suffer from high fixed costs of government both in the public and the private sectors, and present highly specific challenges which are complex and not easy to resolve through technical assistance means. It is evident that small island developing states¹ share not only the characteristic vulnerabilities of small states in general but have, in addition, their own specific vulnerabilities arising from the risks of extreme weather events and sea level rise.

Each chapter in the book takes, as its starting point, the Brundtland Commission definition of sustainable development – ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ – and seeks to develop its scope, context and content. What is evident from the contributors is that sustainable development, when mainstreamed, can assume greater prominence and attract more human and financial resources for implementation. The concepts and tools highlighted herein can also serve as a guide for the process of policy formulation and its implementation to ensure that economic, social and environmental factors are kept in balance. This balance is in the best interests of all countries but especially pertinent to small states whose economies and ecologies are inherently vulnerable.

This book identifies and describes tools in use in countries in the three SIDS regions. It examines their effectiveness in strengthening national and regional processes and in support of specific thematic areas for sustainable development. The tools reviewed include macro devices used by policy-makers in these countries to strengthen national processes and the broad development of partnerships as well as tools at the fieldwork level for improved implementation within communities.

The identification of common concepts and effective methods and tools for MSI has an obvious potential benefit if it eases the burden of devising practical processes for individual states which are constrained by scarce planning and development resources. Common strategic concepts, for example, can include the use of environmental accounting methods for setting out the justification for current investment for preserving the environment for future generations, reducing import costs by replacing fossil fuels with local renewable energy sources taking into account externalities, and improving the livelihoods of local people by not only engaging them in the process of planning and development, but also establishing local short-term and long-term returns for them for practices that make sustainable use of the local endowment of natural resources. The tools for doing this vary and have to be adapted to local opportunities and needs but common guidelines for practice are emerging.

The major strategies for mainstreaming sustainable development which are outlined in this book are:

- 1 **Engendering participation** – This can occur through a number of processes including promoting awareness, education and training to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are understood and acted on by all participants, establishing inter-linkages between various government agencies and promoting stakeholder consultation and participation in decision-making.

- 2 **Integrating policy planning and budgeting** – Through this strategy the national budget, sectoral plans and environmental concerns are interlinked. The national plans which include sustainable development concerns will then be linked to national budgets. The budget tools used by governments may include environmental accounting of the value of natural assets and the cost of externalities of traditional development processes which involve pollution and biodiversity degradation.
- 3 **Using regional approaches** – Due to lack of human and financial resources and the synergies that can occur when countries work together, implementing sustainable development using regional mechanisms can involve supranational arrangements such as those adopted through CARICOM, PIC and to a more limited extent in the AIMS region by the IOC.
- 4 **Enacting national laws** – For multilateral environmental agreements to become effective in small states, efforts have to be made to enforce these agreements through the enactment of national laws.
- 5 **Targeting development finance** – Assistance from the international community is vital for the survival of small island developing states. Development assistance in the form of grants, technical assistance and concessional financing can be used to promote sectors which are essential in the pursuit of sustainable development.
- 6 **Conducting environmental impact assessments** – Environmental impact assessments remain the only legal means through which policy-makers can ensure that economic activities do not harm the environment.
- 7 **Monitoring progress** – Through monitoring, policy-makers will be able to evaluate the progress made and take the necessary steps to ensure that goals are achieved. The indicators to monitor this progress have to be agreed on and steps taken to ensure that a monitoring and evaluation system is established, as well as a system to report on the progress to decision makers so that the necessary steps are taken to correct deficiencies.

About the chapters

The book is divided into four parts. The first deals with the tools for moving from the MSI to devising practical national strategies; the second part focuses on the need for new laws, fresh financing arrangements and the broad economic issues of costs, benefits and their distribution; the third part deals with tools for tackling social and environmental aspects of making progress with MSI; and the fourth part is concerned with methods for monitoring progress. The final chapter is an essay on the quest for the ideal case for making progress with MSI.

Part 1 Devising the strategy

Chapter 2, written by Albert Nita, examines the approach to achieving sustainable development through government systems. The chapter sets out the process undertaken in Papua New Guinea (PNG) for establishing a strategy of sustainable development and provides a critical review of its strengths and weaknesses and lessons that can be used by other small states. After the 1992 Rio conference, steps were taken in PNG to reform the

approach to national planning to take account of the impact of development on natural resources. The formal framework built on the goals for national development established on independence in 1975. The PNG government, aided by the university and a range of other national and provincial participants from the public and private sectors and civil society, began to unfold a continuing process for sustainable development planning and implementation. Constraints were experienced in terms of capacity, governance and political will. The author suggests that to resolve conflicts and to establish more effective policy, planning and implementation of sustainable development, a number of tools should be used including active participation in policy-making and implementation at all levels of governance; promoting awareness, plus education and training to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are understood and acted on by all participants, especially those in central government; clarifying and defining roles, functions and responsibilities and inter-linkages to ensure full and effective participation by relevant groups and individuals and establishing a comprehensive method for critical assessment of national policies and their capacity for sustainable development.

Chapter 3, written by Tighe Geoghegan, explores sustainable development at the community level. The chapter calls for more emphasis on participation in sustainable development processes to counter-balance the voice of the weak against the influence of the most powerful in society. Active participation in the formulation and the implementation of policy is cited as a powerful driver of the changes necessary to ensure equitable outcomes and overturn unsustainable practices. But it does not always work and can be manipulated to the benefit of special interest groups. The author gives examples of good practice of effective frameworks for active participation, such as in Bolivia through the use of the 1995 Popular Participation Law, the 1998 UN Aarhus Convention providing for access to information; and the St. George's Declaration for Environmental Sustainability in Caribbean states. Real participation takes time the author asserts. Citing experience from the development of national sustainable development strategies (NSDSs) formulation in various countries, the author suggests that five years may be necessary to achieve active community-level participation throughout a country. Even then, it is difficult to engage with the hard-to-reach people such as women with children. The chapter offers examples of tried and tested tools for promoting active participation. These include participative learning and appraisal, stakeholder analysis, participative planning and conflict management, deliberative and inclusive processes, radio call-in programmes, community consultation, and opinion surveys. Finally, the chapter considers the ways in which these tools need to be adapted to the special needs of SIDS. Detailed material is given to illustrate the practice of participation in three locations: community opposition to a proposed new port development in Trinidad; poor women farmers in Swaziland in consultation on gender equality; and developing national Development Councils for SD strategies in six Caribbean states.

Padma Lal argues in **Chapter 4** that to achieve desired sustainable development outcomes given the limited domestic resources, there should be an integration of National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), ecosystem-based management (EBM) frameworks and the medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEF) – the NSDS-EBM-MTEF approach. Adopting the NSDS at the practical level includes mainstreaming key values, sustainable development and good governance principles at all level of decision-making and linking

this to national and sectoral plans. Further, the use of an EBM framework will guide analysis of ecological, social, human and economic interactions, and their effects on management issues. Using examples from the Pacific region, the author shows that where EBM and NSDS are linked, there is an increase in the transparent allocation of domestic resources and increased aid effectiveness in the country. The author sees the NSDS-EBM-MTEF as including the critical tools of situation analysis, appointing a lead agency, conducting an issues and root cause analysis and solution analysis, as well as prioritising a sector plan. The chapter emphasises that mainstreaming is a process of including or integrating an idea into strategic intervention at national, sectoral, community and individual levels, involving the national plan, the sectoral plans and the budgetary process.

Margaret Harris and Wonderful Hope Khonje examine the regional approaches to sustainable development in **Chapter 5**. They start with a historical review of how regional co-operation developed in the small states regions – Africa, Caribbean and Pacific. In the Caribbean region, the 1973 Treaty of Chaguaramas which established the Caribbean Community is examined. The Africa Region, after 1959, saw the establishment of a number of trading and regional integration blocs, based on location – East, West, South and the Maghreb regions. The motivations for regional co-operation in Africa and the Caribbean included increasing trade, addressing poverty and improving the living standards of its peoples. Both these regions have sub-regional organisations – the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States in the Caribbean region and the Indian Ocean Commission in the African Region. The membership of these two organisations is mainly small states. The Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) includes a number of regional organisations including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The chapter notes that strengthened inter- and intra- regional co-operation and partnership is needed as are tools to support the implementation of sustainable development in SIDS. Knowledge and experience can be transferred through regional co-operation. This requires problem identification, research and preparation, team building, working groups and networks and the development of regional co-operation strategies. The chapter posits that the best form for optimum effective regional co-operation involves co-operation between sectors, regions and South-South co-operation.

Part 2 Laws, finance and economics

Chapter 6, written by Mark Griffith and Derrick Oderson, looks at the use of national laws for implementing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Small states are party to many MEAs. For these MEAs to have legal effect in the national jurisdiction, they must be incorporated into national law. The chapter focuses on the Caribbean region, examining a few of the MEAs to which they are party and the relationship between the treaty obligation and national law. Theoretical perspectives which provide an understanding of the relationship between international law and national law as well as the approaches used for incorporating treaty obligations into national law are examined in the chapter. These perspectives include the dualist-monist perspective and methods through which countries can transform treaty obligations into domestic laws. Drawing on Caribbean case law, the chapter illustrates why it is necessary for Caribbean small states to transform treaty obligations into national legislation, as an integral part of their environment and sustainable planning

frameworks. The paper shows that the failure of Jamaica to incorporate the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) into national law meant that CITES was unenforceable although the country had acceded to CITES since 1977. Since 1999, Jamaica has incorporated a number of MEAs into its national laws. The authors conclude that while transformation of treaty obligations into national law is fundamental, it is not, by itself, a panacea for effective implementation at the national level.

Michael Witter considers in **Chapter 7** the different sources of financing for sustainable development in small states. The chapter examines public- and private-sector financing from international and domestic sources, and how these can best be oriented to the goals of sustainable development. Witter estimates that private foreign direct investment (FDI) is a greater potential source of funds than overseas development aid (ODA) but that domestic finance, even in small states, is potentially still greater if it can be refocused through mainstreaming sustainable development in public and private decision-making. The use of national sources of funding in this way requires a culture change in government and private sector policy with a new reorientation of programmes in energy, water, waste, education, health, housing, and contracting to embrace environmental values. The tools of financial policies should reflect concerns for addressing social neglect and environmental abuse. The tools of fiscal policies need reform to remove subsidies which have adverse affects on the environment, such as on fuel, fertilisers and pesticides, water and energy. Incentives should be given for reducing packaging, increasing recycling and the safe disposal of hazardous materials. Other tools are available through government and private contracting which should adhere to regulations and standards for environmentally friendly infrastructure, locations and materials use. Examples are given from the experience and practice in the EU. The chapter calls for countries, international and regional organisations to respond more effectively to the call for financial partnerships proposed in the Mauritius Declaration to which the response has been weak. The author recommends, in particular, that small states should use administrative tools to maximise the financing available for sustainable development, these include reconfiguring the use of public resources in the pursuit of the goals of sustainable development by removing environmentally unfriendly subsidies, increasing the use of economic instruments (subsidies, incentives, taxes, regulations and penalties) to promote environmentally friendly investment and establishing public-private sector partnerships for investment in sustainable development. Here, it is a matter not of developing new tools but of putting existing tools to better use.

Chapter 8, by Mark Bynoe, explores applying resource economics as a set of tools to integrate sustainable development principles for policy analysis and decision-making for small island developing states. He starts with a broad economic framework and then examines the specific tools available for analysis and their use. The concept of total economic value (TEV) is illustrated using an example of valuing tropical rainforest, a critical global resource and one that is subject to increasing pressure in those small states that have any remaining natural forest areas. Classes of economic benefits are distinguished into two groups: use and non-use values. The use values are further identified in terms of development benefits, such as timber, the value of forests for carbon capture, and their products for use for medicinal purposes. Non-use values are illustrated in terms of conservation for the sustaining biodiversity and as bequest benefits for future generations. The chapter critically

reviews how far these values can be expressed in monetary terms. The author illustrates the tools adopted by economists in contingency valuation, revealed preferences, hedonic pricing, the application of the neo-classical economic concept of opportunity cost, and the application of the dose response analysis of value. The chapter then considers the constraints that limit and may bias the application of monetary valuation in resource economics and the traps for the unwary in its use. He draws attention to the flaws in the use of market prices where they exist and the care needed in the interpretation of shadow prices in the absence of a market mechanism, which may lead to the adoption of inappropriate or misleading values. A detailed example is presented to illustrate the use of some of these tools showing how resource economics can be applied in the evaluation of subsidies in agriculture and the assessment of the environmental impact of resulting increased production.

Mark Bynoe argues in **Chapter 9** that an important aspect of mainstreaming sustainable development is to incorporate sustainable development parameters into national and sectoral budgets. By doing this, policy-makers would convey to resource users that some ecosystem goods and services are not free. This he shows would encourage greater value to be attached to such resources. Inappropriate budgeting and under-pricing by governments can aggravate environmental degradation, allowing the carrying capacity of biological systems to be exceeded or non-renewable resources to be diminished. The options available to governments to address these problems include educating consumers and creating market-based incentives. The chapter then explains the three main categories of budgetary instruments through which the government can mainstream sustainable development principles in national and sectoral budgets – public expenditure instruments, revenue-generating instruments and budget-neutral instruments. The author concludes that pursuing these instruments jointly and in a complimentary manner would tend to benefit small states more.

Part 3 Social and environmental perspectives

Chapter 10, written by F Ghina, L Higgs and M Tran, explores a youth perspective on SD for SIDS through the eyes of the UN Youth Visioning project initiated in 2003. One test of sustainability is how far the future interests of today's youth are compromised by current production, consumption and mainstream development policy. Another is how far the current concerns of youth, the leaders of tomorrow, are addressed by today's policy-makers. This chapter is an account of how one UN-backed project provided a voice for youth participants from SIDS world-wide to formulate their concerns, present them formally to the 2005 UN SIDS Mauritius Conference and follow them up through an ongoing communications network. The project evolved to engage youth from the three SIDS regions (Caribbean, Pacific and AIMS) with more than 30 island-based activities. The project itself grew out of proposals made in 1994 as part of the Barbados Programme of Action for SIDS. In 2003, it started an internet Forum covering three broad themes identified by the participants: life and love; my island home; and money in my pocket. International meetings of participants took place in 2004 in the Bahamas and St. Lucia and in 2005 at the UN SIDS Mauritius Conference. The current Youth Visioning activities from the three SIDS regions range from health, environment, land tenure and culture to political awareness, the MDGs, and national pride, but also include fishing, gardening, dance, and youth in support of elderly people. The chapter

emphasises that such activities need sustained support as key youth participants move on into adulthood, and new skills need to be developed in young people not familiar with the processes of international linkage and project management.

Cletus Springer examines the social dimension of mainstreaming sustainable development in **Chapter 11**. The chapter explores some of the main conceptual and practical challenges that are usually encountered in designing, analysing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing social policy. The chapter advocates the adoption throughout the policy cycle of an integrated approach that addresses the individual, the community and the inter-sectoral effects of economic, social, and environmental aspects of development. The author asserts that economic growth is not an end in itself but a means of enabling individuals to lead healthy, happy and rewarding lives, whilst drawing on natural resources in a sustainable way not compromising the needs of future generations. Social development is an integrative process engendering well-being and cohesion. The author explains that the principal goals of social policy are redistribution, protection, production, reproduction and cohesion, operating within a balanced integrated approach through consultation and participation. The chapter explains that market failure justifies intervention especially in the fields of employment, water resources, housing, poverty alleviation, health, education, environmental management and support for disadvantaged groups. The chapter promotes the view that national government, the private sector and civil society have a role to play in policy development and its implementation. Regional and international bodies can best play their parts with the tools of supporting best practice, providing targeted aid, capacity building, technology transfer, monitoring and evaluation. To monitor progress with social development, the chapter recognises that the MDGs as tools for policy review, planning and evaluation need to be supplemented with other indices including those in the Human Development Index, plus indicators to cover social cohesion, income distribution, income polarisation, employment and mobility.

Chapter 12, written by Rolph Payet, reviews the role of the tool of environmental impact assessment (EIA) in sustainable development. The author posits that while the EIA process seeks to minimise the impacts of development on livelihoods and the environment, it also seeks to ensure the maintenance of key ecosystem functions and services, to achieve net benefits for society. The chapter supports the view that EIA is a tool that can be operated both as a science and an art and that the number of steps taken varies from country to country. For the tool of EIA to be effective, it has to meet a number of criteria including international standards and provide decision-makers with information on the consequences of their actions. The chapter examines in detail the international and regional context of EIA, noting that early consideration can be found in Principles 17 and 19 of the Rio Declaration. Prior to the development of the EIA, environment considerations were limited to planning issues, such as wastewater management, drainage, development density, noise control, landscaping and building codes. EIA implementation in SIDS needs to be strengthening in terms of legal, institutional, capacity and monitoring and implementation requirements. A lack of follow-up and monitoring of implementation of EIA management plans defeats the purpose of an EIA, which is meant to predict and mitigate the impacts of a particular activity. The author concludes that EIA remains the only legally binding government tool to require projects and policies to be undertaken in a sustainable way.

Part 4 Monitoring process

Lino Briguglio reviews in **Chapter 13** the use of indicators for mainstreaming sustainable development in SIDS. The chapter recognises that indicators are tools that serve a number of functions, including: supporting decision-making, setting targets and standards, monitoring and evaluation, dissemination of information in standard format, focusing discussion on policy issues, promoting wider discussion of issues and a holistic approach. The author considers that indicators as tools for sustainable development should be selected and constructed in accordance with specific criteria, including: relevance, a guiding vision on sustainable development, transparency, simplicity, affordability, a holistic approach embracing environmental, economic, social dimensions and the quality of life. The chapter reviews common difficulties in constructing indicators for SD for SIDS. These include data problems, the number of indicators involved, time factors and the interests of future generations, policy relevance to SIDS, participation and access, and local capacity to establish a value and to maintain its accurate and timely measurement. In reviewing the choices of indicators for SIDS, it is evident that some global indicators are not relevant and that on some issues of priority to SIDS, there are no relevant indicators in the global sets. Gaps in global systems leave the many priority SIDS issues untouched. The chapter offers some solution to these gaps in indicator systems. As part of a case study on indicators for SD for Malta, the chapter presents a table of SD indicators for SIDS covering environmental, economic, and social dimensions, cross-cutting issues, implementation and monitoring. The author argues that many of the special features of SIDS are inherent and therefore permanent or quasi-permanent. For this reason, the relative Sustainable Development Indicators should not attempt to measure the incidence of the features themselves but should be related to policy measures aimed at mitigating or withstanding the negative effects of these features.

Chapter 14, by John Roberts, examines the use of the Millennium Development Goals as a planning tool. In particular, he reviews the performance of SIDS in the AIMS and other regions against the MDG targets and the interpretation of the results as an aid to developing policy and decision-making for sustainable development. The chapter examines performance using UN data sources across the 8 goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators of the UN MDG system tracking progress since the base-line year 1990. The review broadly covers results for the 55 million people living in some 46 SIDS in the UN data system although for many indicators data is missing. A range of methodological problems are critically reviewed including the arbitrary use of 1990 as a baseline for many targets, and its implications for the assessment of trends. The chapter identifies the next steps in moving from this assessment to investment for improved performance at regional and national levels and examines the strengths and weaknesses of the MDG framework as a tool for planning. The chapter concludes with a set of recommendations for building on the MDG system a more useful set of tools for policy development and decision-making in SIDS including extending the MDG framework to cover absent priority areas including climate change and sea-level rise, and demographic change.

The **last chapter** in the book is an essay on the quest for an ideal solution to the issue of mainstreaming. Al Binger offers in **Chapter 15** five salient tools including synergy and sec-

tor integration, active citizen participation and the utilisation of up-to-date information that are part of an essential toolkit for mainstreaming sustainable development in an ideal small state. The chapter also presents case studies of Barbados and Mauritius to identify the lessons that can be drawn from the experience of these countries in implementing sustainable development and addressing the challenges posed in areas such as energy, marine environment and disaster risk reduction. He suggests that the best practice tools emerging from these countries are their diversification programmes, energy security, citizen participation and resources management.

The Commonwealth and small states

The Commonwealth Secretariat, with more than a third of its members classified as small states, has been strongly committed to policy support and advocacy for these countries. The issue of the vulnerability of small states was first given formal expression at the 1977 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Barbados. Having noted the special characteristics of small states – in particular, their reliance on trade, high dependence on capital inflows and, in some cases, their lack of natural resources – the ministers urged the international community to adopt a more flexible approach to the requirements of these countries, as well as special measures to assist them. In response, the Secretariat designed a programme to assist small states in overcoming ‘the disadvantages of small size, isolation and scarce resources which severely limit the capacity of such countries to achieve their development objectives or to pursue their national interests in a wider international context’.

Commonwealth leaders meeting in New Delhi in 1983 expressed their belief that the problems of small states ‘deserved consideration on a wider basis, including that of national security’. A Commonwealth Consultative Group was thus commissioned to carry out such an examination. Its report, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*, published in 1985, was the first to highlight the inherent vulnerability of small states to external interference. In reasserting the vulnerability of and threats to small states, and outlining economic and foreign policy measures to mitigate these, the report was important in raising the political profile of small states in international forums.

Following this publication, the Ministerial Group on Small States was formed to continue the discussion of issues of importance to small states. At their second meeting in 1995, ministers recognised that the international context faced by small states had changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War. This led to the creation of a Commonwealth advisory group of eminent persons, whose report, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability*, was published in 1997.

In 2000, the seminal report of the Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States, *Small States: Meeting Challenges in the Global Economy*, concluded that small states required effective domestic policy, regional co-operation, assistance from multilateral and bilateral development institutions, and improvement in the external environment to support their development. It highlighted four areas of special relevance to successful development in small states: tackling volatility, vulnerability and natural disasters; transi-

tioning to the changing global trade regime; strengthening capacity; and benefiting from the opportunities and coping with the challenges of globalisation. It also recommended an Annual Small States Forum, where international donors report on their activities in small states. Small states have garnered additional support and attention from international donors as a result, but more remains to be done: a 2005/06 review of the Task Force report established that small states are still vulnerable and continue to face a number of development challenges associated with their size.

At their 2005 meeting in Cyprus, Commonwealth Finance Ministers mandated the Secretariat to collaborate with development partners to convene a biennial conference of small states representatives to promote discussion and sharing of experience. In response to this mandate, the Secretariat held the first Global Biennial Conference on small states in July 2010.

The consensus document from this conference outlines the concerns of small states in the areas of vulnerability and resilience, sustainable development, private sector development, access to international finance, external indebtedness and international trade and regional co-operation. The consensus document called for action by small states themselves and the international community in addressing these concerns. Some of the actions called for included networks for sharing best practices among small states, the need for the international community to recognise small states as a special category in international decision-making and the need to reorient small states' export strategies.

The Mauritius Strategy

The characteristics that shape the sustainable development concerns of small island developing states (SIDS) were recognised in 1992 by the international community when it agreed Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 – one of the key outcomes from the Rio Earth Summit. Agenda 21 notes that SIDS face special challenges in planning for sustainable development, and agreed a Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. This conference took place in Barbados in 1994 and adopted the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), which is the principal international framework for addressing the special challenges and constraints faced by small island developing states in their implementation of sustainable development. The BPOA addresses 14 major themes, ranging from climate change through coastal and marine resources to tourism and human resources development.

A ten-year comprehensive review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action took place in Mauritius in January 2005. The summit involved about 2,000 participants, including 18 presidents, vice-presidents and prime ministers, the UN Secretary-General, and around 60 ministers, and representatives of UN agencies and intergovernmental organisations. This international meeting led to the adoption in January 2005 of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, which includes 20 thematic areas such as climate change and sea-level rise, natural and environmental disasters, and energy resources. The Mauritius Strategy notes that for successful implementation, SIDS require

effective human, institutional and technical capacity development; effective monitoring and co-ordination, including through SIDS regional organisations; and support of the international community, particularly through financial and technical backing. The meeting also adopted the Mauritius Declaration, a political statement which reaffirms the continuing validity of the Barbados Programme of Action, adopts the Mauritius Strategy and makes a commitment to its timely implementation.

It is now five years since the MSI was agreed. In 2009, the five-year review of the implementation of the MSI (MSI+5) started through the UN system, primarily by the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the UN Regional Commissions. The process included the preparation of national assessment reports by SIDS to form the substantive basis of a global synthesis report as well as the convening of three regional review meetings. These Regional meetings, which were held in Vanuatu for the Pacific region (February 2010), in the Maldives for the Atlantic Indian Ocean Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS) region (March 2010), and Grenada for the Caribbean region (March 2010) resulted in regional outcome statements and in-depth regional synthesis reports at various levels of detail. This was followed by the Inter-regional Meeting and PrepCom in May 2010 in New York and drafting of the global synthesis report. The High-Level Session to discuss the global synthesis report was held during the September 2010 UN General Assembly meeting in New York.

The five-year review of the MSI found that SIDS have made substantial progress in the implementation of sustainable development. SIDS continue to be highly vulnerable to external shocks and many of the hard-earned gains have come under threat by the adverse impacts of climate change, natural disasters, and the recent global food, fuel, and financial crises.

Four highlights from the progress report covering the processes and the tools used in the implementation of the MSI are as follows:

- *Management of coastal and marine resources.* Many SIDS have established monitoring mechanisms, for example, Maldives collect data on the evolution of the coastal zone, and the Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observing system and the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum consolidated and standardised information.
- *Energy resources:* Most SIDS are highly dependent on imported oil and other fossil fuels for transport and for energy generation. Oil imports account for an average of 12 per cent of imports of SIDS. In 2009, four Pacific SIDS signed the Bulk Procurement of Petroleum Initiative, in order to improve their market position and reduce the cost of obtaining fuel. Energy plans, policies or action plans, where they exist, tend to address the special vulnerability of SIDS. In the Caribbean, a regional energy policy was drafted in 2007, and the Pacific Islands Energy policy is expected to be reviewed in 2010.
- *Sustainable capacity development and education for sustainable development:* With capacity development and education SIDS face the combined challenges of brain drain and small population size. Progress towards the achievement of the MDG target of universal primary education has been mixed in SIDS. General literacy is

high in Caribbean SIDS, but remains a challenge in the Pacific and in parts of the AIMS region. Steady progress has been made in tertiary education at regional level with well known universities such as the University of the West Indies and the University of the South Pacific.

- *Knowledge management and information for decision-making:* Internet penetration is improving in SIDS, and this is crucial to knowledge management in these countries, since it will assist in mitigating limited capacity, isolation and remoteness. Compared to developed countries, good quality data for decision-making is scarce in SIDS. The ability to monitor environmental change has improved significantly, with the availability of global data systems for spatial and real time data including satellite and air photo imagery and remotely-sensed data. SOPAC GeoNetwork, the Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network, and the Pacific Regional Information System are good examples of the use of this data. E-Governance initiatives are being pursued in SIDS, including Antigua and Barbuda, Maldives and Mauritius.

From these highlights, it is evident that certain trends are emerging which affect the progress SIDS have made in the implementation of sustainable development. BPoA and MSI provided the strategic guidelines, leaving the tools to be developed at local and regional level, and it is hoped that this book contributes to the development of tools appropriate for SIDS.

National sustainable development strategies

The Brundtland Commission notes that economic growth, social equity and protection of the environment are the three principal components of sustainable development. The complex relationships between these three principal elements are at the heart of operationalising sustainable development. For example, economic growth must take place without compromising the natural environment and creating negative social consequences. Mitigating negative impacts and establishing trade-offs are therefore essential to the implementation of national sustainable development strategies. As a result, sustainable development strategies involve far-reaching policy and institutional reforms, as well as the involvement of all sectors. Such strategies involve dealing with immediate concerns, while at the same time addressing long-term issues. UNDESA defines sustainable development strategies as ‘a co-ordinated, participatory and iterative process of thoughts and actions to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives in a balanced and integrated manner at the national and local levels. The process encompasses situation analysis, formulation of policies and action plans, implementation, monitoring and regular review. It is a cyclical and interactive process of planning, participation and action in which the emphasis is on managing progress towards sustainability goals rather than producing a ‘plan’ as the end product.

From the experiences of developing and developed countries, UNDESA concludes that the underlying principles of effective national sustainable development strategies include:

- country ownership and commitment;
- integrated economic, social and environmental objectives across sectors, territories and generations;
- broad participation and effective partnerships;

- capacity development and an enabling environment; and
- outcomes and means of implementation focus.

Ensuring sustainable development requires four critical processes to harness the skills, values and energies of countries. These processes – political, participatory, technical and resource mobilisation – have in common the need to involve the key stakeholders and the need to focus on major issues. As with any strategy, the avenue to success is to have an implementation strategy as well as monitoring and evaluation. This would include clarifying respective roles and responsibilities, public communications, assessments, institutional reflections and learning. An added element of the implementation strategy for national sustainable development is the role of the international community in the successful implementation of sustainable development in small island developing states. The role of the institutions and bilateral donors that form this community includes technical and advisory support, and especially resource mobilisation. This is because a lack of financial resources is often identified as one of the greatest impediments to the successful implementation of sustainable development.

This book contributes to the literature on small island developing states in general and on the pathway towards sustainable development in particular. It sets out how countries are pursuing their pathway with a mixed blend of theoretical principles and the use of practical tools. The principles and tools adopted in these countries are based on what should be seen as working hypotheses of what might be best practice.

It is hoped that the book provides a frank and a realistic account of the problems and progress in small states as they implement sustainable development, working as an aid to stimulate mainstreaming of sustainable development in small states.

References

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Notes

- 1 Small island developing states (SIDS) are low-lying and island nations that share similar physical and structural challenges to their development. The UN recognised 38 SIDS in this context, spread across three broad regions. Most SIDS are remote, small in land area and population (less than 1.5 million), with a very narrow resource base and fragile land and marine ecosystems that are highly vulnerable to natural disasters. Their economies are open and heavily dependent on trade for national income. http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_sids/sids_members.shtml The Commonwealth defines small states as 'sovereign states with a population size of 1.5 million people or less' (Source: *A Future of Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability*, Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997). Using

this standard, 46 countries are classified as small states according to the World Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth has 32 of these small states among its 54 members. In addition, the Commonwealth also includes some larger member countries who share many of the characteristics of small states and these countries are Botswana, Jamaica, The Gambia, Lesotho, Namibia and Papua New Guinea.