

A/9/19

**Ninth Session of the SIDS DOCK Assembly
Via Telephone and Videoconferencing
Thursday, 25th September 2025
4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time)**

STATEMENT

**H.E. MR. CARLOS FULLER, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE,
PERMANENT MISSION OF BELIZE TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND
VICE CHAIR OF THE SIDS DOCK EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

ON THE OCCASION OF

**HLPF SIDE-EVENT HOSTED BY THE EU DELEGATION, TOGETHER
WITH PERMANENT MISSIONS OF LATVIA AND
MALDIVES TO THE UN, AS THE CHAIRS OF THE SIDS PARTNERSHIP
FRAMEWORK STEERING COMMITTEE**

**PANEL DISCUSSION: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ABAS
THROUGH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

**TOPIC: “WHAT ARE THE MAIN CRITERIA FOR DURABLE
PARTNERSHIPS TODAY IN SIDS?”**

21 JULY 2025

**UNITED NATIONS HQ, CONFERENCE ROOM C
NEW YORK**

“MAIN CRITERIA FOR DURABLE PARTNERSHIPS TODAY IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The development challenges facing Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are well documented by the United Nations systems, which has responded and convened four international conferences on sustainable development challenges in the SIDS: Barbados in 1994, Mauritius in 2005, Samoa in 2014, and Antigua and Barbuda in 2024.

SIDS stand at the crossroads of opportunity, where partnerships can transform our future. In the case of SIDS DOCK - the SIDS Sustainable Energy and Climate Resilience Organization created and established by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in 2015, one of the most enduring and genuine partnership is with the Government of Belize, the Host Country of the SIDS DOCK Secretariat, since the signing of the agreement in 2017.

This partnership led to a special commitment during the COVID, where the Government continued to support the SIDS DOCK Organization so that it could continue to function and serve its members. This is a real example of commitment, paying back in a growing pipeline of sustainable energy and climate resilient projects that has already yielded additional partners from the private sector. The level of trust made an effective and efficient partnership and an environment suited to demonstration projects, and an example for other member countries.

Our decade-long partnership between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centers (GN-SEC) and the Government of Austria, provides an example of a successful partnership.

In 2023, the GN-SEC platform, supported by Austria through the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and implemented by UNIDO, received a UN SIDS Partnerships Award for its impactful work in fostering South-South and triangular cooperation to accelerate sustainable energy and climate action in SIDS. The GN-SEC initiative contributes to the achievement of SDG7 on sustainable energy, SDG9 on sustainable industrialization and innovation, SDG12 on sustainable consumption and production, SDG13 on climate action, SDG14 on protecting life below water, as well as SDG17 on strengthening means of implementation, by supporting regional energy centres across the Global South.

The partnership was formed based on a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNIDO, SIDS DOCK and the Government of Austria, and an official pledge at the Third International Conference on SIDS, held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa. The partnership has contributed significantly to the strengthening of the SIDS long-term capacities to accelerate the energy and climate transition “from the regions for the regions” through dedicated regional institutions, which lie in the ownership of the economic communities and their member states.

In March 2014, SIDS DOCK, Austria and UNIDO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing a network of regional sustainable energy centres for SIDS in Africa, the Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Ocean regions to act as technical implementation hubs for activities of SIDS DOCK and respective regional

organisations. The Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE) was inaugurated in 2015 in Barbados, and the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE) was inaugurated in 2017, in Tonga. The partnership is contributing significantly to the transformation of the SIDS energy sector in helping to kick-start the biggest transformation in modern history, and has been an important contribution to the SAMOA Pathway implementation.

Ten years after implementation, the GN-SEC is covering thirty-four (34) of thirty-eight (38) SIDS in Africa, the Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Ocean. Under the GN-SEC platform, hosted by UNIDO in Vienna, Austria, the partners are facilitating SIDS-SIDS and triangular cooperation on common energy issues and appropriate island solutions.

At the Fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS4), held from 27-30 May 2024, in Antigua & Barbuda, the partners solidified their genuine and durable partnership forged in Samoa in 2014, with the signing of a Joint Declaration that is in line with the SIDS4 Conference Outcome Document, the *2024-2034 Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)*, and will continue to see UNIDO and Austria, for the next decade, actively supporting SIDS in their economic diversification aspirations towards higher added value manufacturing and servicing in traditional sectors and emerging ones of the green, blue and digital economy.

The United Nations has given us a powerful framework: the **SMART Criteria for Durable SIDS Partnerships**. These are the guiding principles:

- a. SIDS-specific;

- b. **Measurable;**
- c. **Achievable and Accountable;**
- d. **Resource-based and Results-focused, and;**
- e. **Timeline and Transparency.**

However, to build partnerships that last, we must be intentional, and our partnerships are beyond SMART. There are four key additional criteria that are all part of the equation, but they must be embedded within a broader framework of accountability, alignment, and inclusivity. They are:

Trust and Respect: More than anything, trust facilitates cooperation and collaboration and enhances stability and predictability, as we experienced during the COVID pandemic, where there was reduced uncertainty. Trust created a sense of reliability, where each side could count on the other to honor commitments, thus building resilience in times of crisis. Predictable behavior fosters confidence in future interactions and encourages long-term collaboration rather than short-term gains as evidenced by the signing of the Joint Declaration.

Financing & Core Funding: From the very beginning, the Government of Austria and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), has been the pioneering donor of the partnership. The Government of Austria is providing core funding to the GN-SEC programme and has contributed several million euros since 2014, and mobilized additional support from various donors, including the EU, UN, AfDB, BMZ/GIZ, AUD, NZ and USAID, for various technical activities of the centers. It shall be mentioned that the coverage of the core costs (e.g. staff and administrative) is a significant challenge. International partners are open to co-fund technical activities but are reluctant to cover core operating costs. This is where Austria is an exception.

The Government of Belize also provides core funding as well, and is actively engaged in pilot project development. Core funding enables implementation, turns plans into action by covering operational costs, technology, and expertise, and it ensures continuity and scalability of projects.

Commitment: This is the fuel that keeps a partnership moving forward. Without it, even the most well-funded or well-intentioned collaboration can falter. Commitment is absolutely essential as it ensures reliability and follow-through and builds confidence that promises will be kept and actions will be taken. For example, in 2022, SIDS DOCK and UNIDO, with support from Austria, launched the Global Ocean Energy Alliance (GLOEA) at the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, based on commitments received from the partners in 2020. The GLOEA aims to establish a global community of vested interest with the capacity to develop a pipeline of bankable ocean energy projects. The mobilization of risk capital for technology demonstrations will be an important role of the Alliance. The GLOEA Secretariat was established in April 2024, in Belmopan, Belize and is coordinated by the SIDS DOCK Secretariat, and hosted by the Government of Belize. This new initiative shows that the partners are invested in the long-term success of the partnership.

Time and Patience: These are two quiet forces that shape strong partnerships. While trust, financing, and commitment are the visible pillars, time and patience are what allow those pillars to stand firm and grow. Time allows for strategic planning, capacity building, and institutional development, while patience helps partners stay focused on the big picture while navigating cultural, political, or economic differences. When partners stick together through slow progress or setbacks, it deepens their bond. Patience shows that the partnership is valued beyond immediate results and loyalty grows when both sides feel supported over time.

Trust fosters cooperation, reduces conflict, and builds resilience. Financing, especially core funding from donors, enables development, strengthens commitment, and provides a safety net in times of crisis. Commitment drives consistent effort, supports long-term planning, and promotes accountability. And time, along with patience, allows for learning, adaptation, and strategic thinking. Durable partnerships are not built in a day. They are cultivated through shared vision, mutual respect, and unwavering dedication. Let us commit to partnerships that uplift, empower, and endure.

Thank you.