

GEF SIDE EVENT CONCEPT

SIDS and GEF: Three Decades of Environmental Leadership and Innovation

Wednesday May 29, 2024; 12:00-1:30pm: Room 4, SIDS 4 Conference Venue, Antigua and Barbuda

(in person only)

Driven by increasing environment and economic pressures and faced with unique vulnerabilities, SIDS have been drivers of innovation and have demonstrated leadership in the global environmental agenda.

Over more than 30 years, the GEF together with key partners have supported the development of green and blue economy approaches in SIDS, responding to demands for sustainable use of biodiversity, resilience to climate change and other shocks, increased energy access through renewable energy and energy efficiency, halting and reversing land degradation, cooperation on international waters, and supporting a pollution free environment. These investments have helped to build resilient societies, preserve and enhance landscapes and the living environment and contribute to supporting a livable future.

To date, the GEF has provided over US\$2.3 billion in grant finance to SIDS through national, global and regional projects. GEF finance has also leveraged several times that amount in additional resources for sustainable development. The current GEF 8 funding cycle (2022 – 2026) continues to provide strong support and an emphasis on the needs of SIDS and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Objectives of the Side Event:

- To highlight GEF investments in SIDS which have enabled countries to meet commitments under multilateral environment agreements, Sustainable Development Goals and priorities as defined by the global SIDS agenda. This aligns well with the interactive dialogue on **Revitalizing SIDS Economies for accelerated and sustainable growth**
- To strengthen partnerships within the SIDS community and with organizations working to advance nature positive and resilient development in SIDS.
- To inform approaches and thinking on support for the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) through the upcoming GEF-9 funding cycle (9th GEF Replenishment) and beyond.
- To launch a new SIDS and GEF publication showcasing SIDS as leaders and innovators in addressing challenges in the context of their developing blue and green economies.

Format: The event will be opened by high level speakers of the GEF and a GEF Donor country. This will be followed by a panel of partners reflecting/highlighting the impact of GEF investments in SIDS and providing feedback on where GEF's focus should lie for the 9th GEF replenishment in relation to the SIDS.

The event will also launch *the SIDS and GEF: Three Decades of Environmental Leadership and Innovation* publication and showcase the corresponding video.

Length of Time: 90 mins maximum; No Interpretation will be available.

AGENDA

Moderator of Event and Panel: Sonja Teelucksingh, Senior Advisor, GEF

Time	Welcome
12:00-12:03	Moderator, Sonja Teelucksingh, Senior Advisor, GEF
Opening Remarks	
12:03-12:08	Claude Gascon, Director Strategy and Operations, GEF
12:08-12:15	The Rt Hon Lord Benyon, Minister of State (Climate, Environment and Energy – joint with FCDO and Defra), UK
12:15-12:20	<i>Video Presentation and Launch of the SIDS Publication</i> <i>SIDS and GEF: Three Decades of Environmental Leadership and Innovation</i> Asha Bobb-Semple, Environmental Specialist and SIDS Regional Coordinator, GEF
PANEL: Reflections on GEF investments: Panel to i) reflect on GEF investments sharing impact, lessons, opportunities; and ii) offer thinking on the focus for GEF-9 vis-a vis Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)	
12:20-1:20	Honourable Ralph Regenvanu, Minister of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology and Geo-Hazards, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management, Vanuatu
	Louise Baker, Managing Director Global Mechanism, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification,
	Karen McDonald Gayle, Chief Executive Officer, Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
	George Gray, Head of the Inclusive Growth Hub and Chief Economic Advisor, UNDP
	Jennifer Doherty-Bigara, Senior Climate Change Specialist, IDB
1:20-1:25	Reflections for the Future Ashley Lashley, SIDS Youth Activist and Executive Director, Ashley Lashley Foundation



1:25-1:30	Closing Remarks and Outlook for the 9th GEF Replenishment Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, CEO and Chairperson, GEF