

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Sustainable Development**

REPORT

**Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies
In Pacific Island Developing States**

New York, USA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
II. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background.....	1
B. Objectives.....	3
C. Participants	3
III. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS	3
A. Opening session	3
B. Status of NSDS in Pacific Island Developing States.....	5
i. Fiji.....	5
ii. Papua New Guinea	6
iii. Solomon Islands	7
iv. Vanuatu.....	8
v. Palau.....	9
vi. Federated States of Micronesia	10
vii. Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI).....	11
viii. Nauru	11
ix. Cook Islands	12
x. Samoa	13
xi. Niue.....	14
xii. Tonga.....	14
xiii. Tuvalu	16
C. Regional Perspectives.....	18
D. Monitoring Sustainable Development Strategies and the Role of Indicators	20
IV. CONCLUSIONS.....	21
V. THE WAY FORWARD	23
ANNEX 1	26
List of Country Participants	26
ANNEX 2	37
Support for the Formulation of National Sustainable Development Strategies in Pacific Small Island Developing States.....	37

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Governments have committed to developing and implementing National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), latest at the Mauritius Meeting to Review Implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action, and at the Pacific Island Forum, held in 2005. In order to support governments in achieving this goal, UNDESA/DSD, with financial support from the Government of Italy, is implementing a project to assist with NSDS development in Pacific Small Island States. As a milestone in project implementation, UNDESA/DSD on the occasion of the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development convened a workshop from 4-5 May 2006 in New York, to assess the status of NSDS in the Region, share and discuss best practice, and agree on next steps in project implementation.
2. Participants included representatives of Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Italy, Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the Global Environment Facility, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.
3. During the Workshop, National Focal Points gave presentations on the status of NSDS development in their countries, including the mechanism for participation of stakeholders, best practices and challenges in planning, and the use of monitoring tools. They also elaborated on their main NSDS needs which differ substantially from country to country with some countries having completed an NSDS or equivalent, while others have only begun the process of integrating sustainable development principles into national planning processes. See Section III-B.
4. Representatives of Australia and intergovernmental organizations also provided information on relevant activities and how they support reaching Pacific NSDS goals. Participants agreed that all countries should have completed national assessment reports by 20 June 2006. (See Section III-C.)
5. Based on the discussions over the two days of the Workshop, and subsequent consultations among the PIF group, countries agreed to a common approach to next steps in the implementation of the Project, where everyone would benefit while taking into account differences in NSDS development and honoring the principle of “caring and sharing”. The decision taken on next steps is contained in Section V of this report.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

6. Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of

Small Island Developing States, and, more recently, the Pacific Plan, all call upon countries to develop national sustainable development strategies.

7. At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), governments committed to develop national strategies for sustainable development, building on and harmonizing the sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans already existing and being implemented in their respective countries. In 1997, at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly to review Agenda 21, governments reaffirmed the importance of national sustainable development strategies and called upon all countries to complete, by the year 2002, the formulation and elaboration of national sustainable development strategies that reflect the contributions and responsibilities of all interested parties. Most recently, the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) called on states to take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and to start their implementation by 2005.
8. Meanwhile, Governments at the 2000 Session of the General Assembly adopted the Millennium Declaration, reaffirming their support for the principles of sustainable development, including those set out in Agenda 21 and adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The related Millennium Development Goals include a mandate to “integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources”.
9. The Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPOA), adopted in 1994, acknowledges that, because SIDS development options are limited, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) present special challenges to planning for and implementing sustainable development⁸. Considering the chronic resource constraints which SIDS face, human, technical and financial, the BPOA emphasized the importance of regional and sub regional cooperative programmes in support of national sustainable development in SIDS .
10. Further, at the International Meeting to Review Implementation of the BPOA, held in Mauritius in January 2005, States once again called on the international community to assist SIDS in completing their NSDS by 2005. Specifically, the Mauritius Strategy, calls for Small Island Developing States:
 - to meet the JPOI 2005 target and to incorporate the guiding principles of sustainable development into nationally-owned poverty reduction strategies as well as all sectoral policies and strategies;
 - to develop appropriate national targets and indicators for sustainable development;
 - to improve legislative, administrative and institutional structures in order, inter alia, to develop sustainable development strategies, policies and plans, and to create and empower interdisciplinary and communally representative advisory bodies for sustainable development; and
 - to facilitate the participation of civil society in all sustainable development initiatives and to involve youth in envisioning sustainable island living.

11. In October 2005, States from the Pacific region met at the Pacific Regional Meeting to follow up on the Mauritius Strategy. The importance of a national sustainable development enabling environment was again stressed, and emphasis was given to the need for implementation to be driven and coordinated at the national level.
12. Later, on October 26, Pacific Island Forum Leaders adopted The Pacific Plan, in which Leaders agreed to develop and implement NSDS in all member countries by the end of 2008.

B. Objectives

13. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, (UN DESA/DSD) convened this Workshop in New York, 4-5 May 2006, to further the development of National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) among the fourteen Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Pacific. The Workshop was intended to provide a forum to assess the status of development and implementation of NSDS in these countries, share and discuss best practice, and work toward advancing the country work already begun. Designated National Focal Points from each country were asked to focus on the following key issues:
 - a. Current status with respect to a National Sustainable Development Strategy;
 - b. Expected goals and output of the NSDS;
 - c. Mechanism(s) in use for broad participation of stakeholders (including civil society representatives) in the NSDS and other national development planning and decision making processes;
 - d. Major achievements or best practices in planning, developing or implementing an NSDS;
 - e. Main challenges; and,
 - f. Recommendations for next steps.

C. Participants

14. A list of participants is attached as an Annex to the report. All presentations given at the Workshop, as well as the agenda and other meeting documents, are posted on the website of the UN Division for Sustainable Development, at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/workshop/pacificIslands.htm>

III. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

A. Opening session

15. The Workshop was opened by the Chair, H.E. Mr. Robert Guba Aisi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations, and was followed by welcoming statements from Ms. JoAnne DiSano, Director, Division for Sustainable Development,

United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, H.E. Mr. Aldo Mantovani, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Government of Italy to the United Nations and H.E. Mr. Aisi.

16. Ms. JoAnne DiSano welcomed the participants to the Workshop organized to take stock of NSDS development in Pacific Small Island Developing States and to discuss the next steps in implementation of the UN DESA project. She expressed her thanks both to the Government of Italy for its generous financial contribution to the project and to the distinguished Ambassadors and staff of the New York-based Missions for their keen interest and active participation in the Project. Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Mauritius Strategy and more recently, the Pacific Plan, all call upon countries to develop National Sustainable Development Strategies. Ms. DiSano congratulated those States that have completed such strategies. These strategies are good examples of how sustainable development planning is indeed both possible and desirable in Pacific Island States, and the Pacific SIDS play an important role in the sharing of experiences and good practice that can benefit other countries. She stressed that the ultimate success of the Project lies in the hands of the participating States, and the way that they choose to make use of the opportunities offered within the framework of the Project.
17. In his statement, H.E. Mr. Aldo Mantovani, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Government of Italy to the United Nations, expressed his thanks to the Division for Sustainable Development, and to Ms. DiSano in particular, for organizing the Workshop. This is the “kick-off event” for an ambitious programme, designed and implemented by DESA, for support to the formulation of sustainable development strategies in the South Pacific, with particular attention to the regional and sub-regional dimension. Mr. Mantovani emphasized the determination of Italy to play a proactive role in international processes to support the sustainable development of SIDS, and in particular of the Pacific countries. This is proven by Italy’s contributions towards the Mauritius conference and its follow-up as well as towards food security and the development of sustainable energy technologies adapted to the special conditions of SIDS. Given the vulnerability of SIDS to climate change and the close linkages between energy and sustainable development, the organization of this workshop during the CSD is indeed timely. The ambitious project on support for the formulation of sustainable development strategies in the Pacific is expected to make a significant contribution towards nationally owned and locally driven strategies that reflect the special needs and challenges of the countries in the region, including adaptation to climate change.
18. H.E. Mr. Robert Guba Aisi highlighted the importance of political leadership in achieving sustainable development and acknowledged, in this regard, the participation of Pacific Leaders at the workshop. All Pacific Island Countries (PICs) had made global and regional commitments to formulate NSDS, but only a few have done so, and strategy implementation is outstanding in most countries. In the development of an NSDS, equal importance must be given to all three pillars of sustainable development. As an NSDS is an integrated programme of development involving the whole country as well as

development partners, it should not be seen as a duplicative effort to conventional national development plans, which are often ‘top-down’ plans without clear inter-sectoral linkages. The Ambassador expressed his optimism that the UN DESA project will indeed be successful and called upon the commitment of UN DESA and other development partners to assist PICs in strengthening or developing NSDS.

19. In her presentation on the Characteristics of National Sustainable Development Strategies, Ms. Mary Pat Silveira, Division for Sustainable Development, noted that a national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) is integrative across economic, social and environmental pillars; syncretic, coordinated and balanced between sectors and thematic strategies as well as between central and decentralized levels; intergenerational; intragenerational; participatory and transparent. It should also be owned by the country, and should address the human and institutional capacity and enabling environment needed to implement it. Ms. Silveira emphasized that a national sustainable development strategy should not be a parallel or residual strategy. Where an overarching national strategy already exists, it should be used as the basis for the NSDS by incorporating the principles of sustainable development into it. She also stressed that an NSDS should not be viewed as a document or product; rather, it is one element in a continuous, cyclical policy-making process that involves not only development of the strategy but also monitoring, reporting, review and revision. Ms. Silveira noted that over the two days of the Workshop, participants would reflect on the extent to which their countries had developed or were planning to develop NSDS and the way in which the UNDESA project, funded by the Italian Government, could assist them in moving forward.

B. Status of NSDS in Pacific Island Developing States

Fiji

20. Fiji’s national strategy is the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the period 2003-2005. A new SDP for the period 2006-2008 is in draft form. The SDP contains many of the sustainable development principles and attempts to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development, sectoral policies and strategies in order to address poverty. It also links priorities with resource allocation. The environment pillar, however, has not yet been adequately covered.
21. The vision of the SDP 2003-2005 is “A Peaceful and prosperous Fiji”, and its mission, to “Develop and implement the best political, social and economic policies to advance the goals of peace and prosperity”. There are six guiding principles: good governance, environmental sustainability, respect for Fiji’s cultures and tradition, respect for law and order, respect for human rights, and honesty in public life.
22. With regard to stakeholder participation, a National Social and Economic Summit was held in 2002, and there is a National Economic Development Council, with nine working groups. The working groups meet quarterly and the Council, bi-annually. The Council reports to Cabinet.

23. Achievement towards SDP national goals is measured by key performance indicators (KPIs), and the MDGs are being incorporated into the revision of the SDP. It is intended to retain the existing monitoring process. The first SDP had 635 KPIs and the review indicated 60% had been achieved. The new draft SDP contains 490 KPIs, most of which are in fact outcomes and are measurable.
24. The representative of Fiji highlighted a number of challenges in moving ahead, including: the need for a comprehensive assessment of the SDP; lack of information from departments; avoiding duplication of efforts (SDP versus formulation of NSDS); and the need to integrate national plans with the new regional Pacific Plan. Fiji plans to hold a National Stakeholder Workshop, conduct further consultations within the country and improve integration of the SDP and NSDS. The presentation concluded by noting the timeliness of the NSDS/SDP process as the national election was to be held mid-May 2006.

Papua New Guinea

25. The current Medium Term Development Strategy (MTDS) (2005-2010) is Papua New Guinea's overarching development plan for economic and social development. It is firmly based on the Government's Program for Recovery and Development and focused on good governance, export-driven economic growth, rural development, poverty reduction and empowerment through human resource development. It provides the guiding framework to ensure that Government policy has the greatest impact on its goals for economic growth and development
26. The MTDS was approved by the National Executive Council in November, 2005, and began to be implemented in 2006. While the Government has adopted the MTDS as a vehicle to strengthen its "Program for Reconstruction and Development", it has also developed a draft National Poverty Reduction Strategy with support from the Asian Development Bank. In line with the requirements that all sector policies be aligned to the MTDS, Papua New Guinea (PNG) has produced a draft national energy policy to provide the policy and legal framework for PNG to utilize and address its energy resources and needs
27. In 1990 Papua New Guinea endorsed the Brundtland definition of sustainable development, and, following the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, held a seminar on environment and development in Waigani, November 1993, on "From Rio to Rai". In 1994, the Government both adopted an NSDS and established an NSDS Task Force. Unfortunately, other factors intervened, and the Strategy was not completed. The current MTDS, however, integrates the themes and considerations originally intended for the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) and the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS).
28. The aim of the MTDS is to lay out the road map for government to "facilitate private sector driven economic growth, which is critical to improving the living standards and

quality of life of ordinary Papua New Guineans”. The vision is to “ Foster sustainable improvement in the quality of life of Papua New Guineans through broad-based economic growth and social development.

29. The development plan for economic and social development is also in harmony with environmental considerations approved by the National Executive Council in 2004. The MTDS incorporates the MDG targets as they are consistent with the MTDS goals. It employs UN MDGs as result –based performance assessment.
30. As part of stakeholder consultation, and to ensure ownership of and commitment to the MTDS, extensive consultation was undertaken among three levels of government, with donor partners and through the Development Fora of the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC). The CIMC Development Fora are the mechanism which the government uses to ensure that the views of the private sector, NGOs, churches and civil society are taken into consideration in the formulation and development of policies and other major development-related issues. The CIMC process has been institutionalized within the government process. There are four regional development fora and one national development forum.
31. Corporate developers exercise participation in decision-making as part of their corporate social responsibility, and legislation for stakeholder participation includes the Mining Act 1991, the Environment Act 2000, and the Provincial and Local-Level Government Act 1995 where partnership and strategic alliance are promoted. There is currently limited horizontal and vertical coordination between key agencies.
32. Many challenges remain, including: improving good governance; strengthening law and order; aligning all sectoral policies with the MTDS 2005-2010 and financing the MTDS priorities; reducing poverty; empowering women and youth; improving dysfunctional delivery systems, implementing sustainable rural development; and protecting biodiversity and conservation. Papua New Guinea needs also to address constraints posed by impediments to land utilization; HIV-AIDS; high population growth and unemployment; adult illiteracy and unplanned urbanization.
33. Papua New Guinea would like to move forward by completing and institutionalizing a new NSDS, improving stakeholder participation in policy-making and implementation, enhancing inter-agency collaboration and improving monitoring, assessment and implementation. One important part of this is to develop national targets and indicators to achieve national goals, including the MDGs and the goals set by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). It is also important that the country maximize its use of scarce resources and mobilize new resources; improve collaboration among the three tiers of government; and strengthen its institutions.

Solomon Islands

34. The National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan (NERRDP) is the national strategy. The three pillars of NSDS are covered in the NERRDP; however, there

are still areas that need to be addressed and improved, particularly in the area of environment. The NERRDP is currently being reviewed and key issues and concerns identified will be addressed in the new national strategy. The National Assessment Report (NAR) now being undertaken should also assist in identifying some of the key issues.

35. There are extensive mechanisms for broad involvement and participation of all stakeholders in decision-making in Solomon Islands, through a process of working groups, national consultations, a public forum, awareness-raising, and media and education programmes. These mechanisms were used in developing the NERRDP. In addition to create the Plan, these processes also yielded national ownership; best practices in national planning, development and implementation; a people-centred and focused NERRDP, and strategies shaped and measured according to available resources (human and financial).
36. There remains a need for increasing availability of resources, especially for implementation, monitoring and evaluation; improving ownership and understanding of the importance of an NSDS and reflecting within it the country's rich cultural diversity, and improving the level of commitment and coordination by stakeholders to support strategy implementation. Solomon Islands also needs to address concerns of security, political stability and good governance; high population growth; unequal distribution of development activities throughout the country and opening up opportunities for the rural population.

Vanuatu

37. Vanuatu does not have a national sustainable development strategy, but it has reflected the issue of sustainable development in its national development strategy, known as "Priorities and Action Agenda (PAA) 2006-2015," which has also incorporated most of the millennium development indicators. The PAA contains an overview of development, identification of development needs and challenges, strategic priorities, sector strategies, and policy development and implementation.
38. Achieving the PAA Vision of an educated, healthy and wealthy Vanuatu by 2015 requires that resources of both Government and development partners are used efficiently and wisely. The Medium Term Strategic Framework based on this PAA describes how policies are developed and subsequently implemented through the annual budget and through aid donor programmes. The Framework also proposes how policy implementation and its impact on the development outcome can be monitored. The Vision and Strategic Priorities guide the content and overall direction of sector strategies or plans. Some major sectors already have sector strategies; others remain to be developed. Sector strategies are the detailed road maps for each sector. The policy objectives and priorities in each sector strategy provide more detail of the actions and activities necessary to achieve the Strategic Priorities.

39. Similar to many of the other Pacific islands, Vanuatu is constrained by the fact that it is a widely scattered island, vulnerable to natural disasters, with a small domestic market. There are increasingly competitive international markets for tourism and investment, a high cost of providing an enabling environment for domestic business and a public sector characterized by low productivity and lack of focus on customer service. The financial system is underdeveloped, especially in rural areas, and the labour force requires better technical and managerial education and training. Problems also arise in land and capital market developed as a result of social values and traditions.
40. Vanuatu has participated in a large number of regional programmes of relevance to sustainable development, education, information, agro-forestry, and biodiversity, among others. It has also worked in partnership with the private sector and NGOs on a range of projects dealing with forest conservation and food security, urban waste management, natural resource management, vocational training and renewable energy.
41. With all of its experience and background, Vanuatu could adapt its PAA to meet all the criteria of an NSDS. The PAA is currently under revision and will be finalized in late May 2006 and sent to those of Vanuatu's partners that may wish to joint in its sustainable development endeavours.

Palau

42. The Palau NSDS process is currently in progress. However, there is an urgent need to adapt or modify the structure of the Government to have a single national working group to specifically address and implement government development policies relating to all three pillars of sustainable development.
43. The Palau 2020 National Master Development Plan (PNMDP) was developed in 1996 and approved by Palau National Congress the following year as the Republic's long-term developmental planning document. The plan is designed to articulate economic and social development priorities for Palau, including capital improvement projects. The Plan's vision is "to substantially enhance the quality of life of Palauan citizens in both long and short terms".
44. The Economic Development Plan (EDP) was prepared in 1994 and established a fifteen-year political relationship with the United States. Palau has also adopted a National Environmental Management Strategy, a Presidential Management Action Plan that integrates the PNMDP and the EDP, a Public Sector Investment Programme 2003-2007, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, along with the Micronesian Challenge, which is a joint challenge of the Northern Pacific to the rest of the world to support conservation and protect biodiversity.
45. Although there is not yet a national sustainable development strategy, one of the key elements of the Presidential Management Action Plan was to integrate environmental planning into socio-economic development planning efforts in order to create cohesively integrated programmes for sustainable development.

46. An NSDS will help to achieve sustainable development for the people and ensure their self-reliance, cultural preservation and sufficiency for now and the generations to come. Palau is planning to recommend to the President that the existing Office of Planning and Statistics be moved from the Bureau of Finance to the Office of the President. The Office would then be headed by an overall National Planner and assisted by Deputy National Planners for Economic, Social and Environmental Sectors. The centralized Planning Office would be redesigned and upgraded, to coordinate foreign grant aid and project funds from organizations of the UN system and other donor organizations. The same Office would also be responsible for overseeing implementation of Palau's NSDS once it has been finalized. If possible, this Office would be staffed by technical experts and consultants from various specialized UN Agencies, donor organizations or countries, working closely with national counterparts to strengthen national capacity.
47. There are mechanisms in Palau to support broad-based representation in the policies and decision-making processes. One recent example was the National Leadership Symposium for Compact of Free Association Review, held in February this year. This included participants from all sectors of the community, including officials of the Executive Branch, the Palau National Congress, the Republic Judiciary, sixteen state governments, the council of traditional leaders, religious organizations, and NGOs, who met in separate focus groups to discuss a range of issues of national importance.
48. Palau continues to face a number of challenges, including a shortage of trained personnel and the heavy demands placed on an inadequate number of public sector employees. The country needs a national capacity building programme and improved harmonization and coordination of foreign assistance.

Federated States of Micronesia

49. The Federated States of Micronesia does not have an NSDS, but it would like to develop one should sufficient resources become available to support the process. Among other benefits, the NSDS would be able to integrate the existing policies and strategies into a more coherent framework. Along with NSDS development, the country would also like to establish a mechanism that could oversee implementation of the strategy.
50. At present, the main national strategy is the Strategic Development Plan (2000-2015), which is supplemented by a number of implementation strategies for international conventions.
51. Stakeholders are involved in strategy formulation. Their views, expressed through community-level discussions, are taken into account in drafting a strategy, and they are called upon to endorse the draft strategy before it is submitted to Government for approval. The Federated States of Micronesia has also developed good practice in cross sectoral involvement, leadership and local capacity building, monitoring and partnerships.

52. Challenges include: scattered islands; four highly autonomous states; need for coordination; lack of technical expertise and lack of information access and availability. Next steps include the need to secure funds and develop an NSDS incorporating existing strategies and at the same time implement projects based on existing strategies.

Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI)

53. While the Republic of Marshall Islands was not able to complete its assessment phase under the NSDS project due to difficulties of arrangement for a local consultant satisfactory to requirements of DESA, the RMI indicated at the NSDS meetings in New York, held from 4-5 May, that it would still appreciate the opportunity to complete the NSDS assessment phase in June.
54. In this regard, the RMI Vision 2018 document would be used to set the stage for an NSDS process as it comprises country data and information necessary to help guide national sustainable development. The Vision 2018 is in a position for further development and enhancement as the official National Strategic Plan for the RMI. Thus, the NSDS process would provide an opportunity for the RMI to assess the current country situation on development plans and help augment a way forward towards a completed official National Development Strategic Plan or Vision 2018.

Nauru

55. Nauru completed its NSDS in November 2005 with the vision, “A future where individual, community, business and government partnerships contribute to a sustainable quality of life for all Nauruans”. The NSDS includes clear national priorities, goals and strategies, reflects issues and concerns of community, and is consistent with the MDGs. Shortly after completion of its NSDS, Nauru organized a donors’ meeting to discuss its implementation.
56. Before development of the NSDS, public participation in decision-making was ad hoc and ineffective. Careful planning for the NSDS, however, led to a highly effective participatory process, involving community leaders, NGOs, CSOs, Churches, the Cabinet and Caucus, Heads of Departments, and CEOs of state-owned enterprises. The NSDS process also was successful in linking the Strategy to the budgeting process, and a 2006/07 Budget Screening Committee was established. In addition, Nauru set up a Development Planning and Policy Division to coordinate, formulate, monitor and review the Strategy and a Development Planning Framework to ensure that all projects funded under the budget or by external assistance are consistent with and support NSDS priority areas.
57. Nauru expects that its NSDS will provide the country with greater clarity of direction; increased opportunities for government/community partnership; a higher level of commitment to national development, and improved coherence.
58. In implementing its NSDS, Nauru will have to address inadequate financial and human resources, and the need to strengthen management, planning and aid coordination

capacity. Among the first steps to be taken is capacity strengthening in corporate management and project design, for which Nauru requested assistance. Other challenges include governance issues and political instability, which hampers reform and constrains institutional and policy continuity.

Cook Islands

59. The Cook Islands National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) development began with preparations for the National Development Forum held in November 2003. Less than three years later, it has been completed and is scheduled for adoption by Cabinet in July.
60. The vision of the NSDP is “to enjoy the highest quality of life consistent with the aspirations of our people and in the harmony with our culture and the environment.” It contains nine national development goals identified through an exhaustive consultation process and on the basis of international commitments, and these are supported by medium-term strategies and targets. As a part of the preparatory process, Cook Islands reviewed all existing sectoral strategies to ensure coherence, and it drafted new sectoral plans to support the NSDP in environment, education, marine resources and industry, waste management, tourism, health and infrastructure. Together, these serve as detailed road maps for implementation by each of the stakeholders. Cook Islands also reviewed and introduced new legislation and strengthened partnership arrangements among Government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The budget policy statement provides the macroeconomic policy framework for the implementation.
61. The NSDP is important because Cook Islands needs to pursue policy options that produce the most optimal results given the various challenges that it faces, both internal (e.g., political, economic, social, environmental) and external (e.g., trade liberalization, rising fuel prices). The NSDP provides a tool that allows more effective guidance to resource allocation. In the short-term, the NSDP will enhance stability in decision making and improve guidance in resource allocation. In the medium to long-term, the NSDP will ensure that development in the future is more consistent, coherent and better coordinated. These are all important given the very fluid political situation in the Cook Islands and its history with development assistance.
62. Cook Islands also established the institutional support needed for NSDP preparation, coordination and implementation, including a National Planning Task Force and Executive Committee, an NSDP Process Management Unit, a National Policy Coordination Unit, Sector Working Groups, and an NSDP Advisory Committee.
63. The difficulty of maintaining a high level of participation and engagement in the strategy process was underlined. Interest peaked during the 2003 National Development Forum, but, a few months later, people started to lose interest. The problem was further exacerbated by political interference and successive changes in government. Funding through the national budgetary appropriations was also disappointing and limited the effectiveness of engaging outer island communities in the consultative process. The lack of a National Planning Office and the high turnover of planning staff in the Office of the

Prime Minister did not help matters. Institutional memory was lost, and it was difficult to find records and documents on earlier processes.

64. Difficulties were also experienced in engaging with some international and regional organizations, many of whom had come in with set ideas on what the NSDS was about and what the national role was in the process.
65. Nonetheless, the country has succeeded in developing its Strategy, which, after adoption in July 2006, will be followed by a National Development Forum. The next step is to promote and raise awareness of the NSDP and the implementation process, including familiarizing Heads of Ministries and Departments with their roles and responsibilities under the NSDP by building on existing structures, systems and processes.

Samoa

66. Between 1962 and 1992, Samoa produced seven sequential comprehensive development plans, but this was done with minimal consultation and national ownership. Since 1996, the country has approved an additional five two-year Strategic Plans that have been both comprehensive and cross-sectoral. The most recent Strategic Plan is called “Enhancing Peoples’ Choices,” set for the period 2005-2007, with a vision for “Samoa to lead the region in structural and public sector reform, good governance and increasing per capita incomes, growth in employment and improved health and education standards while incorporating social and cultural values and environmental sustainability” This Strategy will be reviewed at the end of 2006.
67. During the 1990s, Samoa reformed its economy. The combination of improved strategic direction and the new economic programme led to significant improvements in economic performance. Among the relevant key areas of reform implemented in the early 1990’s were development of a comprehensive planning framework; taking a partnership approach to planning; linking planning to resource allocation, that is, to the budget and to external assistance; developing an environment conducive to private sector growth; improving public sector efficiency; and strengthening areas of potential comparative advantages.
68. Greater emphasis was also given to social issues, including distribution of wealth, to development of a tourism industry, to acknowledging the importance of culture and exploiting it for implementation, and to making good use of established networks, such as health services, village councils and Churches, for output delivery.
69. The development of the current Strategy was largely participatory. There were sectoral consultations on key issues, as well as focussed consultations with such influential stakeholders as church leaders, and village leaders. The Government also sent a development matrix to all Government Departments and a survey to all stakeholders).
70. The Strategy itself sets the broad economic scenario and contains both sector Plans, that detail key priority areas for each sector, and Corporate Plans that identify how each body

contributes to the achievements of sector targets. All these levels of planning are interlinked. The Cabinet Development Committee ensures that projects and programs are in line with strategic priorities, and the Aid Coordination Committee harmonises efforts of development partners. The Planning and Budgeting Committee links financial resources to Strategy implementation.

71. As a result of its long experience in strategy preparation, Samoa has learned that greater ownership of the strategy leads to greater commitment and participation, especially during implementation. Action plans need to be formulated as a part of strategy preparation, sequencing is very important, and short term demand and political pressures need to be mitigated. An important outcome of developing a national sustainable development strategy, or its equivalent, is the flexibility to mainstream sustainability issues at the national as well as sectoral levels, to be more action oriented, and to lay a better foundation for regional and global cooperation.
72. Scarcity of resources remains a challenge to implementation. Ways need also to be found to engage and satisfy the needs of marginalized groups and to monitor and measure achievements.

Niue

73. Niue is planning to develop an NSDS as it reviews its Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP) 2003-2008 at the end of May 2006 in a Summit-type consultation. The intention is to integrate all existing sectoral strategies into a single strategy and to review Niue's progress following the 2004 cyclone.
74. Strategic objectives of the current NISP are economic, social, governance, financial stability and environment, as well as a set of guiding principles that enshrine sustainable development in a broad sense. By adopting an NSDS, Niue hopes to have a strategy that is more beneficial and conducive to the level and pace of development; is specific to the number of people in the country; simple to implement and translate at local levels; integrates priority issues across sectors; maximizes benefits and minimizes impacts and promotes development in a sustainable manner.
75. A broad participatory approach will be taken in reviewing the NISP. The summit-type consultation should result in a first draft that will be sent back to stakeholders for comments. A second draft will then be prepared and submitted to cabinet for endorsement and presentation to the House of Assembly. Once it has been passed in the House, it becomes a public document.
76. The biggest challenge will come in implementation, due to the lack of both human and financial capacity in the country.

Tonga

77. Tonga's National Strategic Development Plan 8, which was recently adopted, is consistent with a national sustainable development strategy. It is integrative and participatory, and embraces Tonga's commitment to the Mauritius Strategy, Agenda 21, the MDGs, the JPoI and various regional commitments to sustainable development. For Tonga the pursuit of sustainable development requires coherence and complementary policies across a wide range of sectors, to respond to the complex development challenges facing the Kingdom.
78. Promoting the spirit of partnership in achieving sustainable development, the theme of Tonga's SDP8 is "Looking to the future, building on the past..." with a commitment towards implementing pro-poor strategies.
79. At the outset, Tonga prepared a plan for broad participation and political support that involved extensive national consultations, regional and national summits, and the development of regional plans and priorities. This was the first time that Government had made a proactive effort to encourage dialogue at the national level and to invite a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including disadvantaged groups and CSOs, to discuss national development priorities and development challenges. Ninety-five percent of the villages were engaged in the consultation process.
80. In this way, Tonga was also able to design an implementation plan through a PSIP and link it to the medium term fiscal framework. The agency spearheading this exercise was the Planning Department under the direction of the National Development Coordination Committee, in close collaboration with various regional committees and taskforces, such as the MDG Taskforce and sectoral level committees.
81. The SDP8 has adopted a pragmatic vision, realistic goals, and an agreed set of strategies for achieving the goals. Through this process, Tonga hopes to attain its Vision of "Creating a better society in which all Tongans enjoy higher living standards and a better quality of life through good governance, equitable and environmentally sustainable private sector led economic growth, improved education and health standards, and cultural development".
82. Among other achievements, Tonga established a new Ministry of Planning and Finance to link the two processes and a national political reform committee to address good governance. Tonga obtained strong political leadership and commitment to the Strategy, including a commitment to align budgetary and strategic priorities and to link the Strategy and corporate plans to annual management plans to form the basis for departmental budget submissions.
83. Tonga was successful in communicating with and engaging 95 percent of the villages in the country. This was a difficult process, since the very act of consultation was not always clearly understood. The national representatives met at times with suspicion from the villagers, and, at other times, with attempts to unduly influence them. It was also difficult to convey to the stakeholders the need to prioritize and to be selective, and it was

important to take into account the cross cultural and spiritual dimension of the participation. These were important lessons, and they will be reflected in future consultations.

84. Tonga still needs to mobilize sufficient resources to finance its Strategy. It is constrained by inadequate data and access to information. Strategies should integrate economic, social and environmental objectives through a mutually supportive manner, but this requires hard choices in prioritization which should be negotiated in a transparent and participatory manner. Next steps include translating the concept of sustainable development into working practices, financing and capacity building, as well as invigorating the grassroots commitment to sustainable development with realistic but flexible targets... Monitoring should stress the process rather than outcomes.

Tuvalu

85. The Tuvalu NSDS is well spelled out in the vision of Te Kakeega II, that “By 2015, guided by strong spiritual values enshrined in its motto – Tuvalu Mote Atua, we will have to achieve a healthy, educated, peaceful and prosperous Tuvalu”.
86. The Strategy includes eight strategic areas, for each of which key policy objectives, priorities and sectoral strategies are identified. The Strategy takes into account not only the priorities that were identified through broad consultation but also the MDGs and other commitments to international goals and targets. On the basis of the NSDS, each Department should prepare sector master plans, detailing specific initiatives linked to the national budget, its multi-year framework and the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP). The first such Sector Plan, the Education Master Plan, has already been completed. In addition, short-term, three-year corporate plans are to be prepared, including detailed description of the Department’s roles, responsibilities and contributions and how they link to the sector master plans.
87. Coordination is undertaken by a Development Coordinating Committee and a National Task Force, still to be established. One of the roles of this National Task Force will be the construction of an Action Plan for the next three-to-five years.
88. In preparation for the NSDS, pre-consultations were held with people at the grassroots level in all island communities in early 2004. This was followed by a two-week National Summit on Sustainable Development in June 2004, which included participation from all sectors, Government, NGOs, churches, and island communities (youth, women and island Chiefs).
89. Performance indicators were included for monitoring implementation, and the NSDS foresees annual Government progress reports with the intention to begin review and revision of the Strategy in 2007 at a new national summit. Challenges remain, however, in strengthening capacity for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on a timely basis. Funds are also needed to implement the NSDS. For this purpose, Tuvalu is organizing a Donor Round Table Meeting in Suva mid-May.

C. Regional Perspectives

90. The UNDP Pacific Subregional Centre (UNDP PSRC) supports countries in aligning their NSDS/NDPs with the MDGs, in line with the 2005 World Summit outcome for developing countries to have a plan on how they will reach the MDGs in the next ten years. In this context, the UNDP PSRC works collaboratively with other regional partners such as other United Nations organizations, the Pacific Island Forum and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, to ensure coherent and integrated support to countries. The focus is very much on integrating the MDG goals, targets and indicators in national planning instruments, while addressing cross-cutting issues such as capacity strengthening, data sharing and coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Countries are encouraged to localize the MDGs to make them more relevant to their national priorities, bearing in mind that, in order to ensure comparability, not everything should be localized. For this year, UNDP PSRC is focusing on integrating MDGs into NSDS/NDPs in at least three countries -- Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In addition, as part of its support to the MDGs and poverty reduction, UNDP PSRC will take the lead on a regional workshop tentatively planned for October 2006 for ministry officials from planning and finance departments, in collaboration with its regional partners. The provisional focus of the workshop will be on data use, linking this to evidence-based pro-poor policy planning, aligning this with pro-poor budgeting framework, and in that context, the workshop will address how to estimate the cost of meeting the MDGs.
91. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is actively involved with the Pacific SIDS in a number of activities. In addition to the GEF full-sized and medium-sized projects already available to the Pacific SIDS, GEF supports National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA), whereby GEF funding is provided to assist countries in preparing self assessments of their capacity needs and priorities to manage global environmental issues. Once countries identify gaps in capacity building, they are encouraged to develop a plan of action for overcoming the gaps and to develop medium-sized projects to address the gaps. Enabling Activities as GEF grants help countries to prepare national inventories, strategies, and action plans for the conventions to which the GEF serves as financial mechanism. The objective of the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) is to identify and promote activities that address urgent and immediate needs for adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change, and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) was established to support adaptation activities. The Small Grants Program (SGP) is targeted to providing financing for NGO and community-based projects while supporting local actions that address global environmental problems. The Country Support Program (CSP) provides GEF national focal points with financial support for country coordination and outreach activities, knowledge management tools and annual training and information exchange workshops. The National Dialogue Initiative, through UNDP-GEF, organizes national dialogues in a number of the Pacific SIDS, ensuring proper linkages and mainstreaming of GEF at the national level. In September 2006, GEF will organize a sub-regional workshop in the Pacific region to engage the Pacific States in understanding the current strategic priorities and operational modalities of the GEF.

92. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat noted that, in line with Initiative 5.1 of the Pacific Plan, it considers strengthening of national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) or equivalent as one of its high priorities, as it assists member countries to achieve their national goals, as well as international commitments such as the MDGs, and make effective use of their own limited national and development partner resources. A strengthened NSDS process linked to sectoral strategies and priorities and budgetary process, is expected to provide countries the necessary platform for the government to better engage with national stakeholders. The NSDS, particularly if developed adopting a participatory stakeholder approach, will have the local level ownership and will help forge appropriate partnerships; in addition, an NSDS, with clear national vision statement, clearly articulated development goals, and time bound measurable targets, can also help government better engage with development partners more effectively. The PIFS strongly believes that a credible NSDS process will help development partners, too, to meet their international commitment under the Paris Declaration. On the basis of these key principles, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat is providing advice and technical assistance to PICS on demand to help strengthen their NSDS processes, linked to national budgetary processes and sector strategies. Amongst the countries recently assisted include Nauru, Cook Islands and Tuvalu. PIFS is currently having discussions with Niue and Vanuatu to identify the nature of assistance required by them. In conclusion, the PIFS is committed to providing country focused assistance on demand under the Initiative 5.1 to help strengthen their NSDS processes, including the country engagement with donors.
93. Australia advised that a new White Paper on AID for the next decade, "Promoting Growth and Stability," has just been released and is available on the AusAID website). By 2010 Australia intends to double its annual aid to AUD\$4billion. Support will come with an expectation of reciprocity, for example, by improving governance and fighting corruption. Primary focus areas are education, health, women and children and major diseases. Aid will be fully untied. National Sustainable Development Strategies would be very helpful to donors for understanding national priorities and should facilitate financing implementation. The next step might be to develop guidelines for adopting or introducing the key principles of NSDS into existing overarching national strategies and for putting together best practices. Countries could consider submitting their NSDS, or equivalent, to a group, such as the UN, for a "seal of approval". Such a practice would help donors harmonize and align their support according to the Strategy.
94. The Commonwealth Secretariat is committed to supporting its member States in implementing the outcomes of the Mauritius International Meeting. It was participating in the workshop to hear the experiences of Pacific SIDS with national sustainable development planning, and to explore whether there were ways in which the Commonwealth could support them in sharing their experiences and accessing appropriate tools and approaches."

D. Monitoring Sustainable Development Strategies and the Role of Indicators

95. In his presentation, Mr. Matthias Bruckner of the UN Division for Sustainable Development pointed out that most countries select and organize their indicators in a thematic framework, in which chosen themes often correspond to thematic or sectoral areas from an NSDS. These frameworks cover indicators that measure the effects, or impact, of the NSDS ; they can also be extended to include indicators that measure implementation of specific actions contained in the Strategy.
96. Useful points of departure for national indicator sets include: global indicator sets such as the CSD Indicators of Sustainable Development (CSD-ISD) and MDG indicators; indicator sets used by other countries; national and regional indicator sets designed for other purposes (for example statistical yearbooks). However, all these indicator sets should not simply be adopted for national sustainable development strategies as not all of these indicators may be relevant or feasible for national sustainable development strategies. Therefore, these indicator sets provide a useful basis, but require ‘tailoring’ in order to be relevant.
97. Whereas indicators for monitoring the effects of an NSDS are typically those used to monitor sustainable development progress, indicators measuring implementation of NSDS actions often follow directly from the strategy or associated action plan. There are beneficial interactions between indicator selection and strategy development, as a high degree of specificity of the strategy simplifies indicator selection, and the indicator selection helps to clarify priorities and strengthen the focus of the NSDS. These indicators are also crucial for NSDS evaluations, which are undertaken periodically and are of critical importance for strategy revisions.
98. The intensive discussion covered a wide range of issues. In general, the importance of continuing monitoring and evaluation was underscored. At the same time, it was observed that, on the global level, performance based on indicators has not resulted in commensurate resource flows to the Pacific needed to make progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
99. In the region, the lack of reliable baseline data as well as ineffective coordination of existing data sources, both nationally and regionally, are important challenges to develop meaningful and reliable indicators. However, the lack of data should not prevent the development of strategies to develop indicators. In this regard, top-level political commitment plays an important role. In cases where baseline information is lacking, the use of proxy indicators may be appropriate. Indicators on a sectoral level are very important, as this is the level on which implementation is undertaken. Linking indicators to the budgetary process is also crucial.
100. Capacity-building within statistical offices and other entities is crucial to improve the situation. In this regard, international agencies could be instrumental to build capacity by limiting the role of international consultants and engaging local or regional persons. Given the intra-regional disparities, the development of a database containing indicators

used by countries in the region as well as by regional agencies may be helpful to facilitate South-South cooperation on indicators. Capacity-building should also include the integration of traditional knowledge into data-driven information systems.

101. Global indicators must be localized in order to be relevant. The uncritical use of global indicators for local situations contains the danger of providing misleading information. This is especially important because many international and bilateral donors base their funding decision on global indicators such as the MDG indicators. Donors are therefore requested to be sensitive on this issue and to align external indicators with local needs. Frequent changes of global indicators and of monitoring practices pose additional burden for Pacific islands.
102. As one unified strategy should guide a country towards sustainable development, there should also be a single national set of sustainable development indicators. The CSD indicators of sustainable development, which are currently under revision, are explicitly designed to be adapted to local circumstances. The national MDG reports also allow for local target setting, even though international comparability remains an important aspect of MDG monitoring. The development of regional indicator sets could serve as bridge between national and global indicator sets.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

103. A National Sustainable Development Strategy must be integrative, intergenerational, intragenerational and participatory, ensuring that all stakeholders are identified and engaged both in developing the strategy and in implementing it. An NSDS is not a document. It is a continuous and cyclical process of participation, development, implementation, monitoring, assessment and revision with an articulated national vision, clear goals, objectives and targets. To be effective, the NSDS must be set within a time frame and linked both to the national budget and external assistance. Objectives and actions may be short-, medium- and long-term, but they must always be set within the framework of the long-term vision of sustainable development. This is true for all countries but may be an especially important challenge for countries that have to contend with political instability and frequently changing administrations.
104. An NSDS is not a parallel or residual strategy. Where an overarching national strategy already exists – often the national development strategy – it may be transformed into an NSDS through the regular reviewing process by embedding sustainable development principles within it.
105. As an overarching, integrative strategy, the NSDS, or its equivalent, should ensure policy coherence. Sectoral strategies will likely be needed to implement an NSDS, but these must be consistent with the NSDS and with each other. The NSDS should also incorporate the Millennium Development Goals, where relevant, and should address issues of gender as an integral part of sustainable development.

106. Both as a strategy and as a process, an NSDS will not be successful unless there is good horizontal cooperation -- coordination across sectors --and vertical integration -- coordination between the central Government and local authorities and communities as well as between the central Government and the international community.
107. A National Sustainable Development Strategy is an outcome-focused process, and clearly identified linkages are needed at many levels particularly from the overarching plan to the sector plans and to international commitments made by countries. Nonetheless, outcomes will not be achieved if resources are not secured, noting that sustainability is in the implementation rather than in the strategy itself. Similarly, there is a need to strengthen sectoral strategic planning to support implementation.
108. Development planning, including the setting of targets and indicators, changes over time, and the plans must be flexible enough to accommodate any such changes while remaining comprehensive and coherent.
109. Broad stakeholder participation is a key element of sustainable development. At the outset of the process to develop or revise an NSDS, it is useful to develop a communication strategy. This requires careful consideration: if it is to be engaged, the public needs to be assured that its views will really be taken into account. It is equally important that people understand this is a consensus-building process across a broad spectrum of stakeholders, and they need to be prepared to accommodate many points of view. Communication may also be constrained both by cultural differences and the multiplicity of languages within some countries. The persons chosen to communicate need to be able to find the right cultural approach to consultation and know how to reach the right people. Training courses for the communicators may be extremely helpful. Training enough persons to communicate, in consultations or in reporting, in all languages requires a great deal of resources for which assistance may be required.
110. Pacific SIDS have the skills and ability to manage and implement strategies, but the high migration rates and small populations produce capacity difficulties. In many instances, though, the issue is not capacity-building, but capacity-strengthening, especially in more technical areas such as development of strategic sectoral plans. The demands of donors may pose some capacity problems as well. The costs and time required to carry out donor-required assessments may compete with time needed for planning and implementation. Both donors and private companies doing business in the Pacific SIDS may also diminish existing capacity by insisting on bringing in external consultants, managers and technical persons. While external expertise may be valuable, it is important that it be teamed up with local persons in order to nurture and strengthen their capacity.
111. Related to capacity is the cultural heritage of each of the countries. There is value in traditional know-how, and this needs to be both respected and harnessed to today's needs. The challenge is, how can the islands link back to look forward?

112. Key for all countries is implementation and the mobilization of necessary resources, including donors aligning their resource allocation to the national strategy. Implementation will also be strengthened through partnerships among Government, public sector and civil society and through the establishment of networks of, for example, non-governmental organizations, village councils and churches.
113. Implementation is supported by monitoring and assessment, for which purpose indicators are important. These indicators should be identified at the beginning of the process, during the consultation process. Drafters should ask, “What does success look like to the stakeholders?” Lack of baseline data or, in some cases, any data, pose a challenge to being able actually to use indicators. This is also a capacity issue that needs to be addressed. (See also section III D).
114. Cooperation among the Pacific SIDS supports implementation. It might be useful to develop a model sustainable development indicator set at the regional level, using as reference the indicators for sustainable development (ISD) developed under the auspices of the Commission on Sustainable Development and various national sets of ISD. Exchange of information among the Pacific SIDS on their experience with ISD could be particularly helpful.
115. There is also a need to harmonize aid requirements among the Pacific SIDS and reach agreement on what they would like donors to focus on.
116. Setting up a regional mechanism for peer review of national sustainable development strategies, or their equivalent, would offer an opportunity for capacity-building and exchange of best practices and experience.
117. Finally, implementing an NSDS should change and refine the way Pacific SIDS do business, and in particular improve their coordination and communication.

V. THE WAY FORWARD

118. The Pacific Island States have development plans (as reflected in the table below) and many have a long-term vision, with goals, guiding principles and strategic areas. However, participants agreed that there was a need in many countries to mainstream sustainable development principles and processes into the national development planning frameworks and ensure that they are embedded in institutional structures and way of doing business.

Existing Strategies		
Country	Title	Timeframe
Cook Islands	National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP)	2006-2010
Fiji	Strategic Development Plan (SDP)	2006-2008
Kiribati ¹	National Development Strategy	2004-2007
Marshall Islands	Vision 2018	2006-2018
Micronesia, Federated States of	Strategic Development Plan	2000-2015
Nauru	National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS)	2006-2008
Niue	Integrated Strategic Plan (NISP)	2003-2008
Palau	2020 National Master Development Plan	2006-2020
Papua New Guinea	Medium-Term Development Strategy (MTDS)	2005-2010
Samoa	National Development Strategy	2005-2007
Solomon Islands	National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan (NERRDP)	2003-2006
Tonga	National Strategic Development Plan 8	2006-2009
Tuvalu	National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSDS)	2006-2015
Vanuatu	Priorities and Action Agenda	2006-2015

119. Based on discussions over the two days of the Workshop, and subsequent further consultations among the PIF group, countries agreed to a common approach to next steps in the implementation of the Project, where everyone would benefit while taking into account differences in NSDS development and honoring the principle of “caring and sharing”.

120. Countries agreed that the National Assessment Reports (NARs) play an important role in identifying the current stage of NSDS development in each country. It was therefore decided that all NARs should be completed no later than 30 June 2006. The development of the NARs must be drafted in accordance with the detailed guidance document prepared by UNDESA and attached in Annex B to this report. The guidance document outlines and explains the key elements to be addressed in the NAR, including priorities and targets, the strategies, public participation, enabling environment, outcomes and means of implementation.

121. Of the eleven national consultants that have been contracted by UNDESA and tasked with preparation of the NARs, five have completed a first draft for review. It is expected that these five will need further revisions before they are completed but six consultants still have to submit draft NARs. It was agreed that governments may choose to complete the NARs themselves, at no cost to the project,² if acceptable national consultants cannot be identified within the necessary time frame.

¹ Kiribati was not present in the Workshop. The information is taken from other sources.

² According to United Nations rules.

122. On the basis of the NARs and further consultations in Capitals as needed, each country will identify its priority needs. This needs identification will form the basis for developing an Action Plan to mainstream sustainable development principles and processes into national development planning frameworks and for accessing project funds. It is therefore important that it be specific with regard to both cost and activities. In order to move expeditiously toward the second phase of project implementation, the Action Plan to be completed by each government must be finalized and transmitted to UNDESA no later than 31 July 2006.
123. The following elements should be included in the Action Plan:
- i. A clearly identified programme of activities that would result in an NSDS, or its equivalent³;
 - ii. A prioritized list of activities to be implemented, with first priority given to the formulation of NSDS for those who do not have an NSDS or its equivalent, and second priority to those in transition in order to mainstream sustainable development into their development plans, with clearly defined timelines;
 - iii. An indicative financial and technical resource envelope needed for each country, for the implementation of the Action Plan.
124. With a focus on completing NSDS, or its equivalent, that enables governments to concentrate on implementation, the UNDESA project will support a selected activity, for each of the eligible countries⁴, identified in the Action Plans, according to priority and within available resources. Every effort will be made to complete these activities by end December 2006.

³ An equivalent strategy is understood to incorporate all of the principles of an NSDS; that is, it should be country-owned; integrative across economic, social and environmental pillars; syncretic, coordinated and balanced between sectors and thematic strategies as well as between central and decentralized levels; intergenerational; intragenerational; participatory and transparent. It should be linked to means of implementation, financial, institutional and human, and it should be viewed as one element in a continuous, cyclical policy-making process that includes development, monitoring, reporting, review and revision.

⁴ Eligibility is understood to refer to those countries that meet all deadlines, including the submission of an NAR that fulfills the specified criteria.

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ANNEX 2

Support for the Formulation of National Sustainable Development Strategies in Pacific Small Island Developing States

Framework for the National Assessments

1. General context and Partnership

Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States⁵ all call upon countries to develop national sustainable development strategies. Strategy development is not a simple, one-off activity. It is a cyclical process that ranges from national vision through formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; it is a process that engages a broad range of stakeholders; and it is a process that relies on an institutional capacity that is both adaptive and integrative. All of these demand, then, over time, a number of activities to guide the process and to strengthen the enabling environment.

These activities are first and foremost the right and responsibility of each individual State. It is understood, however, that many countries, and among them, the Pacific Small Island Developing States, may require assistance. For this purpose, a Partnership has been formed initially among a number of organizations, including the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). Other organizations are also expected to join the Partnership.

2. Purpose of this paper

This paper is intended to do the following:

- Provide information for all partners and stakeholders at national and regional levels;
- Identify the contributions of the UNDESA Project;
- Specify the terms of reference for the preparation of national assessment reports, which comprise the first activities of the Project.

3. UNDESA Project⁶

Fourteen small island developing States have been invited to participate in the UNDESA Project. These include: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Relevant regional and international organizations, including those involved in the overall Partnership, may also participate.

⁵ See Section 3.

⁶ This UNDESA Project is fully funded by a generous contribution from the Government of Italy.

This Project is being executed in two phases. Phase 1 focuses on country specific assessments for interested countries preliminary to formulating, implementing or strengthening national sustainable development strategies. These assessments are to be prepared by national consultants nominated by the fourteen countries and contracted by UNDESA. The key issues identified in these assessments will be presented to a meeting of the official National Focal Points of the fourteen Pacific SIDS, and partners, which is scheduled to take place in New York, 4-5 May 2006.

Following this meeting, it is expected that the assessments will be further refined and finalized. The New York meeting will also help to clarify the next steps to be taken in Project implementation.

At the conclusion of Phase 1, it is anticipated that agreement will be reached on a selection of pilot countries, funds permitting, to participate in the next phase. In Phase 2, support will be provided to assist the pilot countries to develop, strengthen or implement their National Sustainable Development Strategies.

4. Commitment to National Sustainable Development Strategies

The first call for governments to adopt national sustainable development strategies appears in Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio Conference in 1992.⁷ The target year of 2002 was added by the General Assembly, at its 19th Special Session in 1997. In the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), governments reiterated the importance of NSDS, and called upon all States to take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of such strategies and to start their implementation by 2005.⁸

In 2005, four meetings addressed the concerns of small island developing States in moving toward sustainable development and in using resources for this purpose most effectively.

The first of these took place in January 2005, in Mauritius. At the Mauritius International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States⁹, governments stressed that further action is required by SIDS, with the necessary support of the international community, to formulate and implement national sustainable development strategies by 2005, as agreed to in the JPOI.

Specifically, the Mauritius Strategy¹⁰ in paragraph 74, reflecting closely the position of the Pacific SIDS, elaborates on this further. It calls for small island developing States:

⁷ Agenda 21: The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio, Para 8.7.

⁸ JPOI, Chapter XI, para 162 (b)

⁹ Mauritius Strategy, para 74 (a)

¹⁰ Mauritius Strategy, para 74 (b) – (h)

- to meet the JPOI 2005 target and to incorporate the guiding principles of sustainable development into nationally-owned poverty reduction strategies as well as all sectoral policies and strategies;
- to develop appropriate national targets and indicators for sustainable development;
- to improve legislative, administrative and institutional structures in order, inter alia, to develop sustainable development strategies, policies and plans, and to create and empower interdisciplinary and communally representative advisory bodies for sustainable development; and
- to facilitate the participation of civil society in all sustainable development initiatives and to involve youth in envisioning sustainable island living.

From 17-19 October, in Samoa, the States of the region met for the Pacific Regional Meeting to follow up on the Mauritius Strategy. The importance of a national sustainable development enabling environment was again stressed, and emphasis was given to the need for implementation to be driven and coordinated at the national level.

Later in October, on the 26th, Pacific Island Forum Leaders adopted The Pacific Plan, which is directed toward enhancing and stimulating economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security for Pacific countries through regionalism. The Leaders agreed¹¹ to develop and implement NSDS in all member countries by the end of 2008, using appropriate cross-cutting and Pacific relevant indicators. In this regard, the DESA Project clearly contributes to the Pacific Plan. In return, NSDS development and implementation assists in achieving other elements of the Pacific Plan especially in the area of sustainable development.

The fourth meeting took place on 2 March and resulted in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (“The Paris Declaration”). Approximately 100 developed and developing countries, including Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, as well as 26 international organizations, including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, and 15 civil society organizations committed their countries and organizations both to continue and to increase efforts to harmonize, align and manage aid for more effective results. Twelve indicators of aid effectiveness were developed as a way of monitoring progress. The DESA Project attempts to operationalize the spirit of the Paris Declaration.

5. Critical Areas for Pacific SIDS in Relation to NSDS

Pacific SIDS between 2001 and 2004 carried out National Assessment Reports (NARs) in preparation for both the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Mauritius meeting. A Regional Synopsis derived from these NARs was prepared in late 2004.¹² In summary, the Regional Synopsis highlighted a number of issues related to national frameworks for sustainable development:

¹¹The Pacific Plan, Initiative 5.1

¹² Pacific Regional Synopsis (Final Draft Nov 2004) for Mauritius International Meeting (copy available at www.pacificsidsnet.org).

- A sound and stable political climate and improved economic situation, continued clear vision, strong leadership and good governance are central to an enabling environment for sustainable development.
- There is a need to ensure integration and cross-sectoral consideration of social, economic and environmental issues. This should include bringing strategies that support Multilateral Environment Agreement's (MEAs) and other international agreements together at the national level under the umbrella of national development policy. The Pacific-SIDS identified the need for assistance with the administrative and institutional mechanisms to enable such integrated planning.
- The preparations for the WSSD and similarly for the Mauritius meeting have initiated some important national processes that need to be built upon to institutionalize the integrated consultation and decision making mechanisms that are central to the enabling environment of sustainable development. The National Taskforces that were established to gather information for NARs, which were well representative of all stakeholders, should be institutionalized.
- Coordination between non-government organizations (NGOs) and governments is also steadily increasing and is an extremely important trend in small islands. Governments in the Pacific have recognized the role NGOs can play and, in general, they have encouraged NGO engagement in the delivery of programmes that relate to community development. This Partnership utilizes the range of skills available to communities and avoids duplication.

At the same time, the Pacific SIDS face a number of challenges in moving forward. Sustainable development has not been treated as a priority by Governments, and there has been insufficient support for developing national sustainable development strategies. Strategic development plans need to integrate all three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and the national frameworks to support this have to be put into place. Similarly, decision-makers and all stakeholders need to recognize the interrelationships among issues, such as climate change, land degradation (e.g., coastal and soil erosion), the status of the reefs, pollution, tourism and exploitation of natural resources, upon which the countries are largely dependent. Partnering in-country and national-regional actions are required.

The UNDESA Project, as well as the Partnership as a whole, is directed toward meeting these challenges. However, before concrete proposals for country-specific activities can be offered, it is necessary to assess the decision-making framework within each of the Pacific SIDS, focusing on the following elements: national vision and priorities; the strategic framework; the enabling environment; monitoring; participation; budgeting and aid effectiveness.

6. Suggested Outline for the National Assessments

In preparing the national assessment reports the national consultants are expected to consult widely with key actors from government and international organizations as well as civil

society representatives, in order to collect information, analyze and present findings in key areas of sustainable development strategy elaboration, including those described below.

The report, to be submitted in electronic copy, is expected to be about 30 pages long and include an executive summary. A draft should be completed by **27 April 2006**, in order to feed into the meeting of National Focal Points, 4 to 5 May. Following that meeting, the report will be refined and finalized by no later than the **end of June 2006**. All other relevant national reports and strategies should also be submitted electronically, if possible, or, if not, in hard copy.

I. Priorities and targets

Identify national priorities, goals and targets for sustainable development and the main challenges to achieve these.

To be effective, the NSDS must be based on a shared strategic vision for the future at the national level. Such vision must be translated into national priorities, goals and targets as a part of the national planning process. The vision will guide the NSDS, and the priorities will form its basis. It is important to keep in mind that the vision should be attainable and backed by the actors responsible for its achievement.

A number of regional priorities are identified in the Mauritius Strategy and the Pacific Plan. These may all, or in part, mirror national priorities. What is important here is to focus on **national** priorities.

The priorities should also be consistent with regional and global commitments of relevance to sustainable development for the State.

Key Questions:

- Does the country have a clearly-stated national vision with respect to sustainable development? If yes, please quote it.
- If the vision cannot be quoted, please broadly identify the goals, targets and means of achieving these?
- Where is this vision stated – in a strategy, policy document, or speech? Please identify.
- Does the vision include a set of clearly-defined “higher level” strategic outcomes to be achieved? If so, list them.
- How were these priorities, goals and targets formulated (e.g., as a result of negotiations, public consultation, analytical assessments, event driven or other)?

II. Strategies

- a. Identify existing strategies and reflect how these strategies relate to the sustainable development priorities, goals and targets identified above.**

A national sustainable development strategy is not envisioned as a separate planning process parallel to existing strategies and processes. Rather it should build upon and incorporate processes already in place in order to ensure that they comply with sustainable development principles as outlined in the 27 Rio Principles¹³ adopted in Agenda 21.

The JPOI, for example, was explicit in noting that NSDS, where applicable, could be formulated as poverty reduction strategies that integrate economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.¹⁴ The same may be true of national development strategies, for example, as long as all three pillars of sustainable development are reflected in an integrated manner.

The assessment should therefore specify and analyze which plans and strategies are already in place, including national sustainable development strategies, national development strategies and poverty reduction strategies. National development strategies and poverty reduction strategies should be analyzed to suggest the extent to which they already substitute for or may be adjusted to become national sustainable development strategies. For this purpose, reference should be made to the internationally-accepted guidelines for preparing an NSDS¹⁵.

According to these guidelines, NSDS should include the following principles: (1) country ownership and commitment; (2) integrated economic, social and environmental policy across sectors, territories and generations (intergenerational); (3) broad participation and effective partnerships; (4) development of the necessary capacity and enabling environment; (5) a focus on outcomes and means of implementation.

Principles number one and two will be addressed in the following section. Principle 3 is taken up in section III; Principle 4, in section IV; and Principle 5, in section V.

If there are any existing strategies that either are or may substitute for an NSDS, they should be appended to the national assessment paper.

Key Questions:

- Does the country have a current national development strategy document? What is it called: national development strategy, national sustainable development strategy, poverty reduction strategy, or something else? If there is more than one overall national strategy document, please identify all of them. Include both titles and time-frames.
- What are the focus areas for these strategies or plans and how do they relate to the sustainable development priorities, goals and targets identified above?
- Do the strategies include a ranking of priorities? If so, please identify the ranking.
- Is the NSDS prepared by local staff?
- Is there a sense of national ownership of the NSDS?

¹³ Agenda 21, Programme of Action Sustainable Development, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992.

¹⁴ JPOI, para 162(b)

¹⁵ UNDESA (2002) Guidance In Preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy: Managing Sustainable Development in a new Millennium. DESA/DSD/PC2/BP13

b. Coherence among strategies and related policies and legislation.

1. Horizontal coherence

In reviewing strategies and related policies and plans for their relationship to a national sustainable development strategy, it is important to reflect on the degree to which they are consistent with each other and with the overall vision and goals of the country. These strategies would include not only those mentioned above, but also sectoral strategies (e.g., for environment, desertification, climate change, energy, water, fishing, education and so forth).

In addition, it should be noted, where they are interdependent, if this interdependence is specified in the respective strategies.

Key Questions:

- Are there prioritized sector strategic plans? What process was used to achieve this prioritization?
- Do the sectoral department or ministry heads know what is the link between their own sector priorities and the NSDS or other national development strategy?
- Are sectoral strategies consistent with the overarching national development strategy?
- Are there any intersectoral strategies that address issues that are interdependent, such as water, agriculture energy and education, or water, land degradation, fisheries tourism, and infrastructure? Does the NSDS clearly reflect these (or any other) interdependencies?

In addition to the question of whether or not these strategies, policies and laws are consistent with each other, it is also important to evaluate the extent to which they are consistent with sustainable development. Identify any that are inconsistent or that could impede progress toward sustainable development.

2. Vertical coherence

Vertical coherence may be assessed in two “directions.” One refers to the consistency of national strategies and policies with local community policies and concerns. The other assesses the extent to which the national priorities and strategies are consistent with and fully address commitment at the regional and international levels.

Key Questions:

- What is the relationship between the key national strategies or plans and local/community level plans? Are they consistent? If not, in what way are they inconsistent?
- Who are the main local actors responsible for actions and implementation identified in the national strategies or plans?
- What is the relationship between the key national strategies or plans and international commitments (i.e., conventions, global or regional strategies or agreements)?

III. Public participation

Public participation in decision-making is one of the key principles of sustainable development and should be extended to all nine Major Groups identified in Agenda 21.¹⁶ This should be ensured through formal channels, such as the stakeholder councils, commissions or other mechanism. In addition, there may be other means of public participation.

For example, in the preparations for WSSD, the consultation processes that involved extensive NGO, civil society and private sector stakeholders enabled not only a wide discussion of issues for consideration, but also a sense of ownership and awareness amongst all stakeholders of the issues that need to be taken into consideration in the strive for sustainable development.

The assessment should indicate the extent to which civil society has been involved in decision-making at national and local levels. Identify any specific mechanisms for this purpose or other modalities for their participation. Consistent with the Mauritius Strategy, the consultant may wish to pay particular attention to the involvement of youth in decision-making.

Key Questions:

- Is there a formal consulting mechanism with CSOs and the private sector? If so, specify its title, who participates and how often it meets. When was it established? What have been the results of this mechanism? (In identifying the participants, please use as reference the list of Major Groups identified in Agenda 21 and enumerated in footnote 12.)
- Are there any other consultative processes in place? Who participates and what have been the results?
- What is the perception among stakeholders and civil society representatives of the effectiveness of these consultations?
- Have any proposals for improvements been tabled? By whom and in what context?
- Have consultative processes been established as part of compliance requirements from donors? Are they effective?

IV. Enabling Environment

a. Institutional actors

This section should include a brief description of the administrative structure and mechanisms of governance at the national level. Strong institutional leadership with a clearly identified coordinating role is essential to sustaining the NSDS process. In the assessment phase, it is necessary to identify key institutions and how they may contribute to the NSDS process. This should include specifying who they are, their mandates, their institutional relationships with each other and the degree to which they work together.

¹⁶ These include women, non-governmental organizations, business and industry, children and youth, local authorities, scientific and technological communities, indigenous people, workers and trade unions, and farmers.

Key Questions:

- Which are the key ministries and institutions involved in strategy development and implementation? Describe their major functions, mandates and constituency. Use graphic presentation such as an organigram, if helpful.
- Which entity has been mandated to coordinate implementation of the NSDS or equivalent national strategy?
- Which entity or person assigns responsibility for actions and implementation as determined by the national strategies and plans?
- What are the modalities for cooperation among government entities? Have any challenges been identified?

b. Interagency mechanisms

Sustainable development touches on every ministry and government department within a country. In order to ensure that strategies, policies and plans are not prepared in a discrete manner, without reference to interlinkages and consistency among them, it is important that countries establish some kind of coordination mechanism. There are many kinds of such mechanisms, and countries may choose that which best fits their needs. In some countries, there is a single council or commission that fulfills two functions: coordination among government entities and broad stakeholder involvement. Other countries may prefer to have two entities: one that is intra-governmental only (e.g., subsets of Councils of Ministers or issue-specific task forces), and another that provides an opportunity for civil society to influence decision-making.

The national assessment should identify any inter-agency mechanisms for sustainable development, such as national councils or task forces, ad hoc expert groups, functional commissions, and so forth, which currently exist or have existed in the recent past. Their functions, scope and membership should be described and their effectiveness evaluated.

Key Questions:

- What mechanisms exist for official, inter-agency cooperation and how are they working?
- What agencies/ministries are members? Who chairs the meetings? Which agencies/ministries actively participate?
- What is the perception among participating entities of the effectiveness of these mechanism(s)? Are there suggestions for improvement and by whom?

V. Outcomes and means of implementation

a. Indicators and monitoring

The Mauritius Strategy calls upon States to develop appropriate national targets and indicators for sustainable development that can be incorporated into existing national data-collection and reporting systems (para 74c). One of the key applications of indicators is to monitor implementation of national sustainable development strategies or other strategies and plans.

Key Questions:

- Is the country currently using any set of indicators for decision-making. If so, for what purpose are these used: for example, for decision-making, for reporting (to whom?), or for tracking implementation?
- Which indicators are used? Do they include the indicators for sustainable development that have been adopted by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development? Or the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators?
- What is the data coverage for these indicators?
- Does the NSDS or other national strategy include any measure targets of indicators?
- Have indicators been identified for monitoring of national progress towards the MDGs? If so, which are they, and what is the data coverage?

b. Budgeting and aid effectiveness

The success of an NSDS depends on the ability to link its implementation to financial (as well as human and capital) resources. Therefore, in the development process, consideration must be made to making goals and objectives feasible and the institutional environment conducive for resource mobilization.

Any initiatives or processes that impede resource mobilization should be given visibility and confronted through targeted interventions within the NSDS. Proper integration and priority setting within the NSDS enhances the effective use of resources.

The national assessment should indicate whether the NSDS, national development strategy or poverty reduction strategy is linked to specific and guaranteed domestic resources through the budgeting process or special funds. What percentage of funding is made available domestically and what percentage is provided through external resources? It is also useful to reflect on the extent, if any, to which external funding responds to national priority setting or to concerns of donors at international, regional and bilateral levels.

Key Questions:

- What is the national budgeting process and timeframe?
- What is the relationship between the NSDS and the policy implementation process, including the setting of budgetary policies and priorities?
- How does the government decide on the budget priorities and on any proportion of budget to be allocated to the NSDS?
- What mechanisms exist for monitoring budget implementation?
- What are the percentages of ODA in relation to GDP?
- What is the relationship between aid (and aid coordination) and the budget process?
- Is there a PIP process and what criteria are used for project selection.