



MUNESCO

Forum: General Commission 4

Issue: Promoting cultural assets and industries in small island developing states

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Introduction

Culture has always been an important asset to not only the histories of countries as individuals, but to the world as a whole. Culture is a method of connecting citizens of various countries together, each linking them with a mutual aspect of their shared nationality. It gives us all an identity that is passed along families and generations, and will continue to do so for a long period of time. At such a critical point in time where there is a lack of security and peace along with an alarming increase in conflict, the importance of promoting and protecting this culture, heritage and history has become evermore crucial. Small Island Developing States are home to an array of vibrant cultures and heritages that must be preserved and promoted by more capable and developed member states who are a part of the United Nations. A

promotion of cultural assets and industries in small island developing states means that any tangible or intangible cultural aspects of these states are supported, developed and protected in a range of different ways in order to carry on these various, unique perspectives of culture throughout time and history. It is important to note that the promotion of cultural assets and industries in these SIDS are not the only thing that should be focused on whilst attempting to develop these member states. The menace of climate change and economic downfall are also two of the biggest threats that SIDS face today. Whilst formulating ways to promote their cultural assets and industries, it is also relevant to consider these bigger threats that they currently face. According to the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) can be defined as ‘a distinct group of developing countries facing specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities’.





Definition

of Key Terms

Small Island Developing States (SIDS): A distinct group of developing countries facing specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities.

UN-OHRLLS: UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing Countries.

UNCED: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Cultural Asset: Anything that is of physical or immaterial importance to a country, such as statues, art galleries or stories.

Industry: any general business activity or enterprise.

AOSIS: Alliance of Small Island States.

Background Information

According to the UN-OHRLLS, there are currently 58 member states that can be classified as SIDS – this figure includes 20 Small Island Developing States that are not members of the United Nations; however the following 38 States are all members of the United Nations:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Barbados
- Belize
- Cabo Verde
- Comoros
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Republic
- Fiji
- Grenada
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Kiribati
- Maldives
- Marshall Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Mauritius
- Nauru
- Palau
- Papua New Guinea
- Samoa
- Sao Tome and Principe
- Singapore
- St. Kitts and Nevis
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Seychelles
- Solomon Islands
- Suriname
- Timor-Leste
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu

Image: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201409081780.html> - the geographic classifications of SIDS including both UN member States and non-UN member states

These countries were first recognized as ‘a distinct group of developing countries facing social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities’ at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, but also known as the Earth Summit at the time) in 1992. These member states listed above have been given this classification due to the mutual issues that they face in developing; such as the threat of climate change and natural disasters, the lack of infrastructure, and difficulties in trading. They are represented through the UN-OHRLLS, a body of the United Nations



created in order to give these member states a sense of embodiment. The main aim of the UN-OHRLLS is to mobilize international support, give resources and develop these Small Island Developing States to their maximum potentials.

In 1994, the UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was held in Barbados. As a result of this conference, 14 priority areas that needed to be targeted in order to aid development of SIDS were formulated.

In relation to the promotion of cultural assets and industries, the main priority area that targeted this issue was tourism resources. The development of tourism means that SIDS are able to further promote their cultural assets and industries with an influx of tourists becoming more aware of the existence of various SIDS and choosing to travel to them. Alongside tourism resources, other important priority areas that were targeted were:

- Climate change and sea-level rise
- Natural and environmental disasters
- Transportation and communication
- Coastal and marine resources

These priority areas also have significance to the overall development and promotion of Small Island Developing States as they affect the rate of tourism. With low rates of tourism come less opportunities to promote their cultural assets and industries effectively.

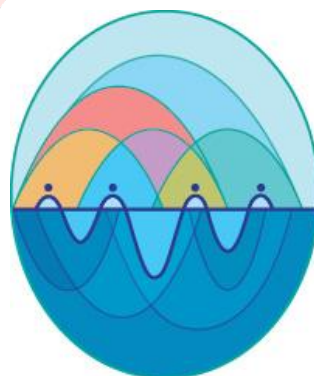
Small Island Developing States 58 SIDS in total



Timeline of Major Events

June 1992: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is also referred to as the Earth Summit. This is where Small Island Developing States were given an official, mutual classification for the first time.

April-May 1994: The United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS was held in



International Year of
Small Island
Developing States
— 2014 —

Barbados. Specific priority areas that were adopted from General Assembly resolution 47/189 were published in order to address the necessary actions in order to overcome challenges faced by Small



Island

Developing States.

2014: The International Year of Small Island Developing States celebrated the inputs that these countries have made to the world as a whole. Events were held throughout this year in various countries and SIDS in order to raise more awareness on them and celebrate them.

September 2014: The Third International Conference on SIDS was held in Samoa. Almost 300 partnerships were announced at this conference.

December 2015: The SIDS Partnership Framework was created.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

UN-OHRLLS (United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States):

The UN-OHRLLS was founded in 2001 as a body of the United Nations to give a voice to not only Small Island Developing States, but Landlocked Developing Countries and Least Developed Countries as well. According to the UN-OHRLLS, their main aims are:

- (a) 'To assist the Secretary-General in ensuring the full mobilization and coordination of all parts of the United Nations system, with a view to facilitating the coordinated implementation of and coherence in the follow-up and monitoring of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries at the country, regional and global levels;
- (b) To provide coordinated support to the Economic and Social Council as well as the General Assembly in assessing progress and in conducting the annual review of the implementation of the Programme of Action;
- (c) To support, as appropriate, the coordinated follow-up of the implementation of the Global Framework. This Global Framework has now been replaced by the Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action, 2003 for Transit Transport Cooperation between Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and the Donor Community and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;
- (d) To undertake appropriate advocacy work in favour of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in partnership with the relevant parts of the United Nations as well as with the civil society, media, academia and foundations;
- (e) To assist in mobilizing international support and resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and other programmes and initiatives for landlocked developing countries and small island developing States;
- (f) To provide appropriate support to group consultations of Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.' – Taken from <http://unohrlls.org/about-un-ohrlls/what-we-do/>

UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – also known as the Earth Summit):

Held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, the UNCED was the first time that Small Island Developing States were given an official title and definition. This was a significant development for these countries as it was the first time that they were officially recognized as a group, could be referred to more easily and were able to be represented properly.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue



As aforementioned,
the Barbados Plan of Action and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development were two major parties in the promotion and recognition of Small Island Developing States in general, rather than the specific promotion of their cultural assets and industries. The International Year of Small Island Developing States funded by UNESCO in 2014 was also a step taken in order to promote the states in general. There have been no previous pursuits to attempt to specifically promote the cultural assets and industries of Small Island Developing States. This is one of the major reasons why it is very important to formulate United Nations resolutions upon this issue.

Possible Solutions

Due to the limited amount of work that has been done over time in order to promote Small Island Developing States in general and almost no work has been done to promote their cultural assets and industries specifically, there are a few potential solutions that could help to achieve this:

1. Encourage Small Island Developing States to join the WTO (World Trade Organisation):

The aim of the WTO is to promote free trade for easier access to a wider range of global markets in order to further promote and increase awareness on the concept of globalisation. Allowing Small Island Developing States to join would allow

lower tariffs and trade barriers that would usually make trade between countries from a global point of view more expensive with countries that are already members. Lower tariffs and trade barriers means that importing and exporting becomes cheaper, easier and more accessible for Small Island Developing States, allowing them to further promote their culture and industries their own way through trading and building external, international relationships with other countries.



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

2. Encourage Small Island Developing States to join the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) or any other trading blocs that involve the respective geographical area of the Small Island Developing State:

Like the WTO (World Trade Organisation), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an organisation that allows for free trade or lower tariffs imposed on importing and exporting. This would be beneficial for Small Island Developing States located in the Caribbean to join due to their given geographical location, creating external relationships with members that are already a part of

CARICOM and with other Small Island Developing States. Besides CARICOM, Small Island Developing States that are not located in the Caribbean should consider joining other trading blocs according to their geographical region such as Small Island Developing States in the Pacific Ocean. Another idea to consider could be to create a new trading bloc solely for the benefit of Small Island Developing States in order to promote their cultural assets and industries within each other.



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Delegations that are located in the same locations as Small Island Developing States could consider this solution.

3. Create an international event funded by the United Nations to be held in a different Small Island Developing State every year:

This event could specifically involve the promotion of the cultural assets and industries of each Small Island Developing State in order to increase awareness and further develop global relationships between bigger countries and Small Island Developing States. The UN-OHRLLS as a United Nations body specialising in the work on Small Island Developing States could fund this event. A list of Small Island Developing States could be formulated in order to decide on the host Small Island Developing State for each year that the international event is funded. Promotion of this event could also be funded through the 'unlimited fund' that is provided by the United Nations that is a general assumption in a MUNESCO conference.



Useful Links for Further Research

Small Island Developing States – Small Island Big(ger) Stakes:

<http://unohrlls.org/custom-content/uploads/2013/08/SIDS-Small-Islands-Bigger-Stakes.pdf>

About Small Island Developing States:

<http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?menu=1496>

Small Island Developing States:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/small-island-developing-states>

Small Island Developing States Programme:

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/sids/>

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Small Island Developing States (SIDS):

<http://unctad.org/en/Pages/ALDC/Small%20Island%20Developing%20States/UN-recognition-of-the-problems-of-small-island-developing-States.aspx>

The Caribbean Development Portal:

<http://caribbean.cepal.org/t/small-island-developing-states>

OECD – Small Island Developing States

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/small-island-developing-states.htm>

Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States:



<http://sdg.iisd.org/events/third-international-conference-for-small-island-developing-states/>

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