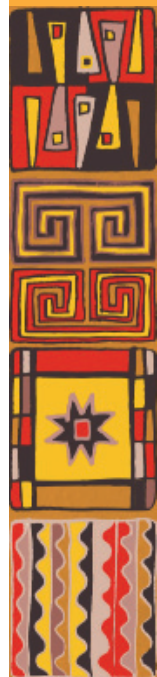


# Environmental Governance in Small Island Developing States



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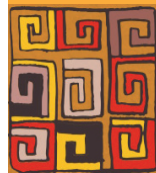
## Introduction

The increasing scale, magnitude and effects of environmental challenges in the form of climate change effects, loss of biological diversity and the degradation of ecosystems are already restricting the prospect of economic development in many countries and regions of the world. Numerous assessments and extensive examination of the state of the environment have continued to remind us, that the use of the planet's resources and environmental services being provided are far being outstripped and the planetary boundaries are being close to tipping if continued in a business as usual scenario (UN GEO 5, 2012). Some studies such as the UN Global Assessment<sup>1</sup>, The Millennium Assessment<sup>2</sup> and other reports from international development organisations have attempted to outline some of the scenarios within reasonable assumption of what to expect and simultaneously calls for greater resource management and protection to avoid such.

In general, environmental protection measures remain insufficient in spite of stark warnings from the scientific community. It is often argued that the changes required to address the declining resilience of the earth's ecosystems must be multi-faceted but in particular requiring collective responses from the international through to the regional and national levels. Among the measures touted and arguably one of the most sanctioned is organising sound environmental governance. This is needed if the global community of nations are to collectively deal with the environmental problems, policy challenges, policy vacuum and cooperation issues.

Small Island Developing States<sup>3</sup> (hereon SIDS) as a group are generally characterised by a combination of small size, limited natural resource capital, limited technological and human capacities, inherent vulnerabilities to natural disasters and small economies of scale. These inherent resource management challenges and issues therefore require strong and effective environment governance.

This paper therefore seeks to examine some of the issues and challenges that are influencing environmental governance in SIDS and to recommend areas for consideration in light of the upcoming review of the BPOA/MS Strategy in 2014 (BPOA/MS 20+).



## Environmental Governance: What it means for Small States

In the growing work on governance, it is evident that there is a redirection of its use and currently governance has a broader application. Such has resulted in many different meanings depending on the context and usage, many of which are somewhat removed from the original intention or meaning.<sup>4</sup> A review of the literature concludes that the term governance is used in a variety of ways and disciplines and has a variety of meanings, which include:

*"The exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage affairs...its comprises of mechanisms, processes and institutions through which stakeholders articulate their interests, exercise their rights, meet obligations and mediate differences."*<sup>5</sup>

*"(...) is the whole of public as well as private interactions taken to solve problems and create opportunities, and includes the formulation and application of principles guiding those interactions and care for institutions that enable them."*<sup>6</sup>

*"(...) constituted by institutions, formal and informal agreements and behaviours, how resources are used, how problems and changes are assessed, the actions permitted or prohibited and the regulation and sanctions applied as the means by which society defines goals and priorities and advances cooperation; be it globally, regionally, nationally or locally. The arrangements are expressed through legal and policy frameworks, strategies and action plans and monitoring performance."*<sup>7</sup>

*" (...) the development of governing styles in which boundaries between the sectors are blurred or in an effort to develop a more effective synergy."*<sup>8</sup>

In all attempts to define governance, no single definition is agreed and as evident with the examples provided above, the iterations are numerous. What has emerged however is that governance is multi-dimensional and its definition are based on other aspects, such as the situation to which it is applied.<sup>9</sup>

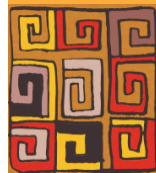
Given the many usages of governance, it therefore seems plausible to acknowledge that governance is a concept, which points to a structure or an order resulting from the interaction of the various components or mechanisms to achieve greater efficiency. In addition,



it is evident that governance is also being used to capture a shift in the sectoral thinking to one of holistic, linking components and extorting the inter-relationship and linkages. Therefore, perhaps the best way to convey its understanding is to give 'governance' an object. For example, *Fisheries governance* is the way in which the fishery is managed by whoever is managing it.<sup>10</sup> This 'object' concept has led to the use of governance in many aspects of management and over the last decade, governance has evolved into areas of resource management as a vehicle to respond to resource degradation and with the aim of achieving sustainable development.<sup>11</sup> Such notion was highly agreed by the international community and in a compelling manner governance has taken a place in issues regarding environment and development. Within the resource management area, the notion of environmental governance is being sanctioned at the international, regional and national levels as the way of dealing with the management of resource.<sup>12</sup>

In my opinion, environmental governance can be viewed as comprising of many components, of which some may precede others, but collectively they share a high degree of inter-linkage. In this regard, the components are as follows:

1. First and foremost, governance lies within a legal core in which the fundamental basis of environmental governance is to be given the **'right to govern the resources'**.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, some form of measures must be in place to codify these rights, which can be granted by way of **regulations, laws, legislation** through government or other authority. These legal instruments form the core of any governance mechanism. If this is absent, then there will be no impetus or reason to govern.
2. Secondly, in exercising the right to govern a particular space in this case a country, also means that there is an obligation to protect the resources found in that space. Therefore, there must be interventions, which will assist in executing the rights and meeting the obligations (responsibility). These interventions can be in the form of environmental **programmes, policies and guidelines** among others.
3. In order for the legal instruments and interventions to be effective, there must be institutions (implementing mechanisms), which are used to execute and facilitate the various mandates prescribed in the form of government agencies, NGOs, private sector etc.



4. The above three components can only be executed by taking into consideration the **multitude of stakeholders and the social, economic and cultural aspects of society.**
5. In SIDS there is a growing consensus that environmental governance is about optimising the natural attributes with a **more community and people-centred** approach. Inter-sectoral linkages must be forged, reducing poverty and create sustainable employment.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, environmental governance can be defined as:

*“the ability of a state to govern its resources as prescribed in forms of legal instruments and supplemented by policy, programme and institutional interventions, all operating in a holistic manner with effective synergies among and within the various entities, taking into consideration the social, cultural, environmental and economic factors.”*

## Evolution of Governance in SIDS

Environmental governance are generally shaped by a collections of by Multilateral environmental Agreements, political agreements, non-binding agreements, programmes, projects and national laws, which exists at various levels. Certain policies relating to the environment are determined at the international level while others are done at the regional and sub-regional levels. This governance mechanism is being supported by a multitude of stakeholders and a number of implementing agencies as shown in figure 1.<sup>15</sup>

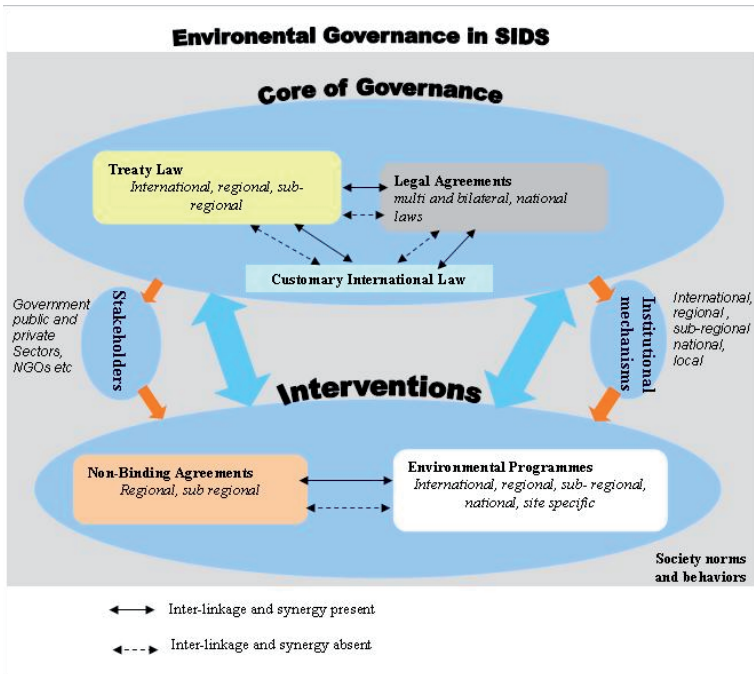
*Legal Instruments* is the major component in SIDS environmental governance in both the marine and terrestrial environment. This includes conventions such as the United Nations convention for the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB) for biodiversity, among others. These agreements sanction many obligations and some sets out rules, regulations and guidelines on how States can execute these obligations. These mechanisms fall under the jurisdiction of various international organisations and regional organisations, which have specific mandates such as MARPOL. In some regions there are also regional agreements which can augment the international one such as the Cartagena Convention for the Wider Caribbean region and its accompanying

protocols aimed at pollution prevention (Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol), biodiversity protection (specially Protected Area and Wildlife Protocol) and oil spills management (Oil Spills Protocol).

*Soft Laws* are used to further compliment the other legal instruments, a caveat of international declarations, policy guidance documents and programmes of actions, which set forth principles, guidelines and recommendations, were sanctioned in support of these agreements, for example Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy for Sustainable Development (BPOA/MS).

*Political/Diplomatic Agreements:* At the regional level and sub-regional levels, there are also a number of politically initiated agreements, which have bearings on the protection and use of the environment, such as the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community of which a significant number of its membership is SIDS. These agreements in turn influence sub-regional agreements and national laws<sup>16</sup> of its members.

Source: Created by the author, 2013.



**Figure 1:** A Conceptual Framework of Environmental Governance in SIDS. The core of governance shows the various legal agreements, which provide the legal basis/right to govern and the Interventions show the various instruments which support the core OF Governance. The core of governance and interventions collectively are affected by a large number of implementing mechanisms facilitated by various institutions and stakeholders. These take into account society norms and behaviours.

## Issues and Challenges in Small Island developing States and their implications for Environmental Governance

SIDS have made considerable strides in gaining greater international recognition of its 'specialness' and over the years have made numerous attempts *albeit* with mixed reviews to enhanced its governance. Arguably SIDS have recognised the importance of sound and holistic governance; however, these States continue to face enormous challenges in shaping its governance to suit its context given the economic, developmental needs and resource uniqueness.

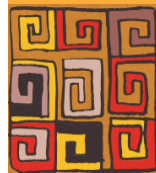
*Development Policies:* SIDS generally pursue the development-centric policy (Singh, 2008; World Bank, 2012), however, in the quest to aggressively pursue these policies, environmental degradation often occurs. Economic studies point to a close correlation between economic growth and environmental degradation, arguing instead for qualitative development as an alternative to growth. In particular, proponents of the alternative globalization movement, argues that it is feasible to change to a de-growth phase without losing social efficiency or lowering the quality of life<sup>17</sup>. In reality, many economic growth models proposed in SIDS still assumes the perspective in some degree, that we can draw on an inexhaustible supply of natural resources, and that man-made capital can invariably substitute for natural capital in improving human quality of life. This seems to ignore the realities of scare economic resources in SIDS to begin with and the reality that the world has shifted into an era where there are few or no substitutes for the *critical natural capital* which are being depleted according to Carly *et. al* (2000). This therefore necessitates a rethinking of this type of policy orientation to the extent where changes become evident on ground. A review of many of SIDS policies would show references to environmental management, therefore it is now necessary to translate their strides which over time will reorient the economic model to reflect the realities.



*Environmental Obligations:* Numerous multilateral agreements have been signed and ratified over the past 30 years, but implementing them poses a serious problem at the national, regional and international levels whilst environmental degradation continues. The obligations to be undertaken as part of MEAs at the national level are usually difficult to comply with due to the lack of capacity at many levels- inter *alia* technical, financial and human capital, often reflected through the inadequate application of MEAs and their obligations in resource management. For example, almost all the SIDS in the Caribbean have indeed ratified a number of MEAs, but for many the levels of implementation are significantly low (Singh *et al* 2008, Griffith *et. al* 2012). Some of the challenges do arise in part from the global governance mechanism, for example, many governments are overwhelmed by the proliferation of standards involved in presenting reports and the multiplication of international meetings. Perhaps, as the United Nations and its sister agencies move toward reforming to the 'one reporting', this may alleviate some of the bottlenecks faced by SIDS.

*Political Governance:* Lack of political will has identified times over, as one of the root causes of ineffective governance in SIDS. At all levels of major decision making, necessary compromises to the benefit of the environment are often not achieved. One of the underlying causes is the failure of policy makers to link development, economic growth and overall human wellbeing to general and intrinsic values of the environment. This problem is likely to become worse as developed economies are battling to ensure continued growth on one hand and SIDS grappling to push economic growth in an effort to expand their traditional economic base on the other hand. In all this, environmental policies are de-prioritised. In a climate of low political will for solving environmental problems coupled with a failure to develop policies in favour of the sustainable use of the resources will allow poor environmental governance to persist.

*Management of Natural Resource Capital:* The complexity of the world's ecosystems means that the loss of any species is worrying, because of the unknown and in some instances the unexpected consequences. Taking a cue from this, what is evident is that in many if not all the SIDS continues to be plagued by over-exploitation of many species, poor ecosystem management and significant pollution problems of differing magnitude (UNDP, 1998). For example in the over 2000 species of flora and fauna, spread across over 33 million square kilometres and covering numerous microstates, islands and atolls, the diversity of the ecosystems of the South Pacific region is very much unlike anywhere else in the world.<sup>18</sup> Customarily, South Pacific peoples, including those of Kiribati, had always observed



respect for the environment and recognition of the link between environmental preservation and human survival. This should not come as a surprise bearing in mind the geographical uniqueness of Kiribati. Regrettably, however, increasing populations, human migration and the exploitation of the ecosystems for commercial purposes are placing enormous constraints on the limited land and coastal marine ecosystems and the biodiversity they contain. Diverse development projects and extractive activities continue to take place without appropriate normative, structural or institutional frameworks to cater for the long term consequences of such activities. As a result, incidences of improper dumping of toxic wastes and hazardous products, water pollution, soil degradation, depletion in fish resources have become commonplace in the South Pacific region (Olowu, 2011). Although ecosystems do prove resilient, SIDS is no exception, what is evident is that these impacts do in both long and short term affect the environmental services derived. Therefore, the urgency to manage the resources in a more prudent manner is needed.

*Financial Resources:* Financial resources are limited in many if not all SIDS and direct investment in the environment remains hugely insufficient. Majority of core financing for environmental related projects are characterised as donor driven, short termed and largely dictated by the immediate programme area of the donor agency (Singh, 2005; Singh *et al* 2008). In national budgets, often the resources allocated are meagre thereby the implementation, enforcement and monitoring aspects of environmental management suffer once more. Although noteworthy successes are evident especially in the areas of climate change (Caribinvest *et. al*, 2011) and ecosystem monitoring, the lack of long-term stable financing hinders SIDS ability of tackle new, emerging and equally important environmental challenges.

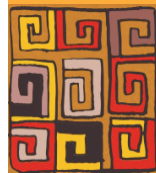
*Coordination and Integration:* Generally the pace of success by which resource management consideration is integrated into mainstream policies among key stakeholders is slow and one of the reasons arguably is the amount of organizations and the level of coordination among them. Many SIDS find it challenging to organize fewer, more strategic institutions to deal with 'integrated resource management issues'. This issue affects many parts of the policy system— for example initiatives to promote integrated watershed management or sustainable small-scale fisheries are seldom linked to wider policy, governance, economic or social development initiatives. This is a general trend in SIDS despite it is recognised that policy making objectives are unlikely to be achieved fully without taking into account such connections (Carly *et al*. 2000). What therefore is achieved is superficial progress with little policy and governance changes.

The lack of integration of sector policies, inadequate institutional capacities, ill-defined priorities and unclear operational objectives are common issues in SIDS. These deficiencies are not confined to a particular group, rather these exist in governments, the international systems that deal with environmental governance, private sector and civil society. Therefore improvements can only occur through constant re-evaluation of these bottlenecks and improving upon them, in an iterative manner.

*Science-Policy Interface:* Sound environmental governance requires an understanding of the complexities and dynamic interactions of the environment, its services and functions and resilience. In addition, the existing linkages and synergies must be appreciated and reflected in policy and decision making. Therefore, there must be an ever present effort at all level of governance to gather and use information. Very often, scientific advice and information are not incorporated much into environmental policies in the way that will bring about the required changes and policy shifts required.

Therefore, effective long term governance must consider the complexities and dynamic interactions of the environment, its services, functions and resilience. One of the ways of understanding this linkage is through scientific assessments. In SIDS, generally rather than the exception, policy making and policies are done with little or no scientific bases partly because of the unavailability of data, therefore there is a need for greater emphasis to be placed on information gathering through scientific studies. There are also instances where scientific information may exist but political and bureaucratic factors, vested interests and/or long-established practices can often win out, therefore decision makers need to make greater use of existing studies to resource management within reasonable means. The science base has a role to play in governance which must be recognized and fostered by the political, economic and social structures as well as by the scientists themselves. Advocating for greater scientific studies, by no means downplay the importance of the use of the precautionary approach to introduce changes to resource use especially where uncertainties and its wider usage should be encouraged across the environment and development spectrum.

*Changing Mindset:* If environmental governance is to be truly achieved, not only better *scientific* knowledge to inform technical policy making is required, but also providing platforms to debate about fairness in allocating resources and the long-term effects of different approaches to resource management must be entertained in policy dialogue and making (GEO, 2012). Our current approach to resource consumption is not longer compatible and as such, new



and innovative approaches are needed to make the necessary shifts and to help kick start a global campaign aimed at changing mindset among the many generations. Approaches are also needed that will value environmental goods more effectively in both economic and intrinsic. Such a shared value set is a challenge to all human beings, not just policy makers, and the relative paucity of ways to develop and support such shared values is a major 'governance gap'.

*Economic Shocks and its relevance to environmental Governance:* Over 80% of the SIDS derive their major economic income from the tourism and tourism related services generally fulfilled by visitor arrivals from Europe, USA, Japan, Australia and other more developed countries (Singh, 2008). However, the fall in disposable incomes in these countries due to the current economic downturn are witnessing a decline in visitors' arrivals, therefore affecting economies across the bloc. The effort to curb impacts emanating from climate change have also witnessed many countries especially those within Europe to implement airline taxes, mandating consumers to pay more on air travels. What this translates into for SIDS, is a fall in visitors arrival, as tourists are opting for cheaper destinations closer to home. This also seems to be contributing to the drop in airline schedules and routes in many destinations due to the decrease in demands.

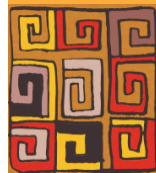
This era of globalization and rapid changes in the international economy often translate into the redirection of investment flows away from primary producing activities and the quick outflow of capital from troubled markets. Therefore, to remain relevant, SIDS needs to quickly adjust to external shocks by finding innovative ways to attract and keep investment flows and simultaneously build greater environmental, economic and social resilience. This is no means easy, but it is urgently needed and would require engagement at all levels to ensure their sustainability and viability for economic development and environmental protection within the global system.

SIDS as a community of nation must recognise its vulnerabilities to these external economic shocks and therefore must seek to develop and implement the appropriate strategies to diversify and differentiate their economies taking into consideration their human and natural resources capital. This must be accompanied by innovative ways to market its resources and environmental services, utilizing the many existing trade agreements for example The Economic Partnership Agreement between CARICOM and the European Commission. However, this initiative must be done in such a manner that it's the natural resources and critical ecosystems are guarded from negative unintended consequences and where environmental governance remain a priority.

*Social Shocks within the context of environmental Governance:* Larger countries have long recognized that maintaining a healthy and progressive economy requires skilled workforce. Over the last few decades, many large economies including Canada, USA, Australia and the United Kingdom have legislated programme to attract skilled migrants to the detriment of many less developed countries including SIDS. These programmes have triggered a movement of skills away from SIDS, as the latter cannot compete with the economic and other incentives offered<sup>18</sup> (Singh, 2005). However, the higher salaries offered may not be the only reason for this outward migration pattern but rather other factors such as the low level of opportunities, strong political and bureaucratic interference and an unwillingness to address these governance issues by successive governments. This '*brain drain*' translates into limited capacity in the workforce and limited speciality skills which ultimately contribute to poor environmental governance. However, in some parts of the SIDS block efforts are being made to stem the outward flow of skills and one notable effort is the introduction of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy which is a mechanism in the CARICOM group of Nations in the Caribbean akin to the European Union which allows for the free movement of goods and services by its nationals. Such mechanism could help in addressing some of the capacity issues if properly implemented.

*Natural Events Shocks:* Small States are vulnerable to the effects of climate change in the form of sea level rise and increased temperature and flooding. Given the potential effects on human health and the economy, and their impact on the environment, global warming is a subject of major concern. Additionally there is also the ever presence risk of tropical storms, cyclones and hurricanes which have the potential to decimate economies in a single event.

Over the years, these countries have made attempts at reducing their vulnerability through new policies and legislation, and others may have attracted meaningful levels of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs)<sup>19</sup> to help reduce environmental vulnerability. However, the fact remains that these are inherent vulnerability which they have to deal with in monetary terms - some countries more than others by virtue of location and other characteristics. As a result, many small states are force to divert resources intended for social investment to addressing these vulnerabilities. For example, in 2000, Maldives plagued by rising sea level divert assistance originally intended to support educational infrastructure (building schools, ICT) into the building of coastal defence structures around the capital, Mahlee (2010)<sup>20</sup>.



## Policies Failures in SIDS and their implications for Environmental Governance

No doubt Small States have made considerable policy strides in the manner in which they regard their resources, recognise the fragility of important ecosystems and environment/economic interdependence. However, despite this recognition, some persistent policies continue to be propagated in small states which are viewed as impediments to sound governance and therefore require urgent re-evaluation. These are as follows:

1. *Failure to attract and keep skills human resources:* SIDS across the world are suffering from a 'braindrain' in many professions. Migration caused by a multiple of economic and social factors (low wages, crime, poor security, and limited opportunities for intellectual growth) is not an emerging issue, however, to date, many States seem unable to develop any workable policy to stem this outward migration. This 'braindrain' does affect the ability of States to develop and implement policies, programmes and initiatives for sound governance including those needed for environmental protection. Inadequate skills in resources management can lead to have a number of indirect and direct consequences including resource misuse.
2. *Non Systemic Policy Reforms:* Generally, attempts at reform seem to focus on strategic planning, performance and resources oriented management focusing mainly at organisational development with limited impact on system-wide capacities. Generally, reforms are usually done at organisational, ministerial, or departmental level, without the wider systemic impact required to move countries towards transformation. Reforms done in this manner certainly is not geared with the many capacity issues, thereby impede resource management.<sup>21</sup>

## Pathways in Support of Environmental Governance in SIDS

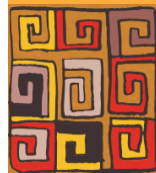
*Policy Framework at the National Level:* More coherent national policy frameworks are needed to institutionalize horizontal linkages across sectors, targeted resources and institutions. Partnership

arrangements that encourage the private sector participation in national and sectoral sustainable development strategies need to be encouraged to the extent possible. However, this must be grounded in workable and legitimate policies which are not prone to change based on political agenda and national elections. Better coordination between national and regional/local governments can assist, not only to empower local actions by citizens and local authorities but to redefine the strategic role of national governments in promoting intelligent cross-disciplinary perspectives on critical issues.

*Indicators:* New economic indicators of 'sustainability' are needed to better signal the state of key resources and the environment in general and perhaps a 'suite of indicators' especially developed for SIDS could help tremendously in improving governance. These tools include better indicators of resource stocks and flows and validation techniques and ways to assess natural capital and assets. Incentives for conservation as a government action could be an avenue to improve resource management over time.

*Eco-options:* This is a crucial feature of the economic development shift proposed in the earlier section. Governments should be encouraged to subsidize technological improvements and product substitution for scarce resources. This can promote cleaner production and more efficient use of energy and materials. This route in the long term could be hugely beneficial for SIDS given their current high demands and reliance on imported energy sources. By diversifying the traditional economies to a low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive green growth options will invariably ensure greater level of sustainable development. Green economic policies will provide resilience to external shocks, reduces environmental risks, enhances natural resource base (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, and forestry) and provide renewable energy options using local resources. Green growth policies are already having an uptake in SIDS for example; Transformation to an environmentally-sound organic island (Dominica), Low-carbon development strategy (Guyana), Transformation to a green economy (Barbados), Renewable energy approaches (Mauritius), Blue economy (Pacific). However this must be encouraged at a wider scale.

*Diversification:* Most SIDS face a risk of increased marginalization in the context of trade liberalization and globalization. This risk closely relates to the difficulties face in competitive terms, either in existing activities, or vis-à-vis new trading opportunities. For products that involve global markets, increasing or only maintaining international competitiveness is generally difficult for small economies because of the intrinsic disadvantages they incur. Arguably, only the international



services (with tourism as the dominant service sector) do many SIDS maintain a competitive advantage, even though competition has dramatically increased from other destinations. Therefore diversification is seen as the only option to ensure economic survival in an increasingly globalised environment.

Economies in these countries could be enhanced through diversification. In the Caribbean, for example, the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) signed between the Caribbean Community of Nations and the European Commission provides an opportunity to create niche markets, and these avenues should be utilised to their utmost potential (Wellington *et al*, 2010). New niches in tourism could also be an option, such as developing medical tourism such as currently being done in places like Cuba and 'Diaspora tourism' in the Caribbean. Important as well is that countries need to recognise the value of their own citizens to tourism and aggressively tailor a niche for this. For example, Tobago receives a significant visitors' arrival from Trinidad, yet in accounting this is not capture by any reasonable means. The face of a "tourist" is changing and SIDS need to acknowledge this "cultural and geographic shift" and make every effort to capture those markets with on par hospitality.

*Optimising the Potential of Marine Resources:* SIDS are distinguished by the abundance of marine resources, and many of the states have many times more marine area than land. For example, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has currently embarked on delimiting its maritime boundaries and upon completion will have 13 times more marine space than land. However, the policies prescriptions are still very much towards the terrestrial areas to which the marine resources remain largely untapped except for well exploited fisheries. One of the contributing factors to this poor policy recognition of the marine areas in SIDS is the lack of information on the extent of the resources present. Therefore, an approach to changing this shift would be to place more emphasis on conducting marine inventories. This will foster a greater appreciation of the economic, social and cultural importance and potential of the area and over time policies will evolved to more meaningfully manage said. The marine environment is seemingly the last frontier for development with the potential in pharmaceuticals among others and therefore the space should be viewed as a viable economic good. Policies need to be supportive of this fact and

*Mainstreaming BPOA/MS:* Over the last few decades, a number of non-binding guidance documents were developed by the global community of nations to assist in redirecting our use and management of the planet's natural resources and environmental

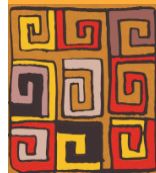




services such as Agenda 21. Regarding SIDS, there are also similar guidance document in recognition of its unique island characteristics. One such is the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development (BPOA).

Since 2005, the assistance from the international community has flowed to many countries and regional bodies to assist in the implementation, however, subsequent review of the MSI has revealed that implementation is still lagging and required the redoubling of efforts by both the international and SIDS themselves in ensuring that MSI remains at the forefront of development and priority policies for the sustainable development of the environment. While, the international community has demonstrated leadership in recognizing SIDS and its specialness as it relates to climate change-effects<sup>22</sup>, impacts, contribution and responses, the other areas of MSI still require support. In this regard, the international community need to continue to support the MSI so as to encourage change. These areas of proposed support are identify in broad terms

1. Continue its support to SIDS in the implementation of MSI in the short, medium and long term. More resources should be made available to SIDS through agencies such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
2. Advocate and support greater linkages and synergy between the MSI, programme activities at the national, regional, UN, developmental and donor agencies, and MEAs commitments.
3. Support and Promote policies aimed at changing mindsets and behaviours of sound resource management. This ought to be done in developed countries as well as developing countries including SIDS.
4. Support and encourage scientific studies, training and recruitment in an effort to build capacities in both public and private sector institutions in various areas as needed.
5. Make accessing of technology transfer to SIDS easier especially in areas such as green energy.
6. Financial Support.
7. Reduce barriers to trade and exports in an effort to build economic resilience in SID.



8. Support, advocate and promote greater transparency in resource use and management and sound governance structure.

## Conclusion

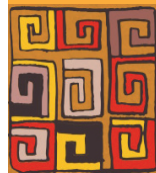
Over the years numerous attempts were made by SIDS *albeit* with mixed reviews to enhance their governance. Arguably these states have recognised the importance of sound and holistic governance and have continue to make strides; but the reality is that the pace of environmental reform is not occurring at the desired level where environmental degradation is halted to the level as to allow for recovery. While this is not solely a SIDS problem, rather a global one, SIDS as a group of nations and with inherent characteristics of resources scarcity is likely to be at the greatest disadvantage.

Also, SIDS in general and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in particular, are less resilient to global shocks and risks owing to their small economic footprint. Globalization forces, besides bringing new trading opportunities, translate into competitive challenges that may entail a risk of marginalization from the global economy. Remedies to alleviate the vulnerability to external shocks involve the development of policies to reduce competitive disadvantages and facilitate evolutions in the economic structures, toward less severe external dependence.

Enormous challenges in shaping governance to suit SIDS context given the economic, developmental needs and resource uniqueness remains. In view of this, environmental governance can only be improved by understanding and recognising the problems, challenges and functionality issues and using this information to build/create a mechanism that will encourage and promote sound resource management in the context of sustainable development. There is a need to invent and apply permanent mechanisms for inter-sector cooperation from the holistic viewpoint of sustainability. Cooperation is necessary between actors (*inter-alia* citizens, international community) and institutions, working on environmental issues including those working in trade, economic growth, sustainable development, poverty alleviation and security. There must be a policy shift which will warrant Governments avoid focusing on short term expediency and by and large sacrificing sustainability. Rethinking the manner in which Small states govern its environment is now needed more than ever, as the environmental challenges continue to stack against them.

## Notes

1. UN Geo global Assessment: <http://www.geo5.org>
2. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2006) *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment*. UNEP 600 <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/subglobal.caribbean.aspx>.
3. SIDS are the following countries: Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada, Guyana, Suriname, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Pacific: Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Fiji, New Calendonia, Nieu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu. Indian Ocean: Mauritius, Comoros, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Maldives. Atlantic Ocean: Cape Verde.
4. Adams, T. (1996). "Governance of fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific Islands region". *Review Paper for the 3rd Dialogue on the ACP-EU Research Initiative* Belize, South Pacific Commission: 16.
5. UNDP (1998) *Sharing Knowledge for Good Governance* UNDP 11., cited on page 1.
6. Kooiman, J. and M. Bavinck (2005). "Governance: A new perspective for fisheries", in *Fish for Life: Interactive governance for fisheries*. J. Kooiman, S. Jentoft, R. Pullin and M. Bavinck. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press: 400.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. These authors gave notion to governance complexity "Governance is multi-dimensional and is not easily defined"; Rothwell, D. and D. VanderZwaag (2008). "The Sea Change Towards Principled Ocean Governance" in *Towards Principled Ocean Governance: Australian and Canadian Approaches and Challenges*. London, Routledge Press: 179.
10. Adams, T. (1996). "Governance of fisheries and aquaculture in the Pacific Islands region" *Review Paper for the 3rd Dialogue on the ACP-EU Research Initiative* Belize, South Pacific Commission: 16.
11. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation viewed governance as the vehicle for achieving sustainable development. It also noted that governance at all levels is essential for sustainable development. UNCED (1994) *Plan of Implementation of the World summit on Sustainable Development*. UNEP 62.
12. Singh, A. 2008, *Ocean Governance in the Caribbean sea and implications for sustainable development*, UN/Nippon Fellowship, 135 pgs.
13. Govern is defined in the Webster Dictionary as 'exercise authority over'; Anonymous (2007). *Mariam-Webster*, Mariam-Webster



14. John Roberts, Advisor on Sustainable Development, Indian Ocean Commission, Mauritius
15. Stakeholder participation and the implementing agencies play a significant role in governance. However, this paper focuses on the governance from the legal, diplomatic and political perspective. Wherever, it is deemed important, reference to institutional mechanism and stakeholders will be incorporated into the analysis.
16. In this paper, the national laws of the 36 States will not be discussed. However, their implications and significance for ocean governance where necessary will be examined.
17. The anti-globalization movement is critical of the globalization of corporate capitalism. What is shared is that participants oppose what they see as large, multi-national corporations having unregulated political power, exercised through trade agreements and deregulated financial markets which have contributed in part, to many of the environmental problems experienced presently.
18. Meeting of experts on growth and Development in small States, Commonwealth Secretariat.
19. Data from the World Bank is showing a low level of FDI, refer to Appendix 1.
20. SIDS (2010) Issues and Challenges.
21. Phillip Osei, Senior Fellow, Sir Authur Lewis, Institute of Social and Economic Studies. Meeting of Experts on growth and Development in Small States
22. Refer to Singh. A and Caribinvest (W.I) Ltd, 2012 ' Overview of climate change in Small States, Commonwealth Secretariat, 25 pgs. For the financing provided for climate change related projects. Refer to Caribinvest (W.I) Ltd AND A. Singh, 2012 'Fast Start financing in Small States, commonwealth Secretariat, 25 pgs. For the financing provided by the international community on related projects.

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