



Title: Small Island States Demand Accountability and Climate Action at SIDS4 Conference

Antigua and Barbuda - June 2, 2024. The Fourth International Conference of Small Island Developing States (SIDS4), held from May 27 to 30, 2024, in Antigua and Barbuda, brought together world leaders, civil society, and youth activists to address the pressing challenges faced by these vulnerable nations. Under the theme of "Charting the course toward resilient prosperity," the conference aimed to forge new partnerships and secure commitments for sustainable development and climate resilience.

President Gaston Alfonso Browne of Antigua and Barbuda delivered a powerful address, criticizing developed nations for failing to fulfill their environmental pledges. He emphasized the lack of financial support and inadequate carbon reduction efforts, urging for an end to fossil fuel subsidies and greater accountability from oil-producing countries. Browne highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate change on SIDS, which are highly vulnerable to environmental crises.

At the "How Maritime Decarbonization Can Contribute to Resilient Blue-Green Economies in SIDS" side event, Ambassador Albon Ishoda referenced a recent UNOPS report, stating, "SIDS face higher levels of debt distress than other developing countries, with over 40% grappling with unsustainable debt levels. Between 2016 and 2020, SIDS paid 18 times more in debt service than they received in climate finance." He endorsed the proposed \$150/CO₂e levy by RMI, Pacific SIDS, and Belize, anticipated to generate revenue for a just and equitable transition, with funds primarily directed to the Global South .

Ambassador Ishoda and his team from the Micronesia Center for Sustainable Transport (MCST) had the pleasure of touring the redeveloped port facility in Antigua and Barbuda with port manager Darwin Telemark. Ambassador Ishoda shared his impressions "We



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have been absolutely impressed by the work at hand, and future developments, and also the way operations are simplified yet efficient.” The Ambassador considers this model will be beneficial for the Pacific and expressed his intent to seek Telemark's guidance on improving Pacific processes.. Telemark emphasized the need for alliances among ports in small island developing states, saying, “To have the delegation here, come to our port, speaks to a need for closer collaboration among SIDS ports globally. If we don't have the framework to build out the capacity within ourselves, and the big guys will not share with us because we're just too small for them, then I think we should integrate ourselves together, start sharing more, start collaborating more.”

The conference culminated in the adoption of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), a new plan to guide the sustainable development of SIDS over the next decade. This agenda focuses on building resilient economies, fostering safe and healthy societies, achieving water, food, and energy security, conserving biodiversity, and mitigating the impacts of climate change. The ABAS outlines the need for increased access to concessional finance and international support to manage debt levels sustainably .

In a joint statement, UN Secretary-General António Guterres and Prime Minister Gaston Browne emphasized the urgent need for concerted action to support SIDS. They called on international financial institutions, development banks, UN entities, the private sector, and donor partners to address the multifaceted challenges confronting SIDS. Key priorities include increasing SIDS' representation in international financial governance, reforming the financial architecture to be more inclusive, scaling up climate finance, and implementing tailored solutions such as debt-for-climate swaps to enhance resilience and sustainable development .

The SIDS4 conference emphasized the urgency of climate action, the necessity of international cooperation, and the importance of innovative financing to ensure the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States.



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About MCST

The Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport (MCST) is dedicated to promoting sustainable transport solutions in the Pacific region. MCST collaborates with various stakeholders to address the challenges of climate change and support the transition to a low-carbon future.

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