UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente
Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة
联合国环境规划署
UNEP

Reference: DEWA/OD/JMG Date: 5 April 2014

Dear Colleagues,

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) attaches high priority to the special concerns of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), among other reasons because of the strong links between their economies and the environment, and their vulnerability to the changing climate, environment and economic patterns. In this landmark International Year of SIDS, during which the Third International Conference on SIDS will be held in Samoa on 1-4 September 2014, countries have called for "dedicated support by UNEP to produce a dedicated SIDS GEO (Environment Outlook) Report within the context of future Global Environment Outlook Reports" (ref. para 148 of the Report of the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting, Bridgetown, Barbados).

In response to this request, UNEP is starting the preparation of a GEO for SIDS, aiming to develop short, focused reports or e-books in time to inform the International Conference in Samoa. In light of the short timescale, and to encourage broad participation in the process, UNEP will pilot the preparation of the report through the new UNEP Live dynamic state of the environment platform (www.unep.org/uneplive).

The process will be organized through an online, moderated "Community of Practice" (CoP) that will identify data, develop content for the report, and participate in its review. Among other themes, the report aims to cover climate trends; natural disasters; chemicals, land-based pollution and marine litter; ecosystem health (e.g., terrestrial, coral reefs, mangroves, marine and terrestrial protected areas, threatened species, alien invasive species); fish productivity; freshwaters; sea bed and coastal mining; and renewable energy.

I would like to encourage you, your colleagues and your networks to participate in this CoP if you are an expert in SIDS-related aspects of any of the above fields, or in additional areas of science or policy of importance to SIDS. The attached note provides more detailed information on how the CoP approach will work, and guidelines on who should join.

Experts should register directly to the CoP, before Friday 18 April 2014, through the UNEP Live page at http://www.uneplive.org/community/

Thank you in advance, and please do not hesitate to contact the team at email: SIDS.uneplive@unep.org with any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Kaveh Zahedi
Regional Director and Representative
for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Environment Programme

Jacqueline McGlade
ai Director
Division of Early Warning and
Assessment
United Nations Environment
Programme

Attachment: Communities of Practice – GEO-SIDS

DIVISION OF EARLY WARNING AND ASSESSMENT
P.O. Box 30552, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya Tel: (254 20) 762 3433/23267
E-mail: jacqueline.mcglade@unep.org
www.unep.org

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OUR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: PLACE BY PLACE

Generate and discover knowledge, network and share your expertise

What is a Community of Practice (CoP)?

A CoP is a group of people who are active practitioners in a topic or domain of human endeavor. The purpose of a CoP is for practitioners to actively participate, share knowledge, best practices, ask/answer questions of their colleagues and peers.

CoP connects people from different countries, affiliations and disciplines – who might otherwise not have an opportunity to interact – on common issues of concern. This helps to build dialogue and insights, stimulate learning and collaboration and deliver tangible results, knowledge and products.

Membership is usually based on expertise and experience performing in the role or subject area of the CoP.

What opportunities do CoPs create?

*Learning***:** best practices, ideas, solutions to problems, data collection, generation and sharing and through this, encouraging innovation in the field

*Knowledge Sharing***:** sharing of data and knowledge to support the community

Networking and professional development: the CoP provides a professional support system for practitioners. It helps build professional networks through collaboration with experts from different countries and disciplines

Products delivery: an opportunity to contribute to delivery of products and be recognized eg authoring An assessment on SIDS

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UNEP Live Communities of Practice

UNEP Live Communities of Practice (CoP) aim to strengthen the science-policy interface by providing experts and practitioners opportunities to contribute their knowledge and experience. It is envisioned that through UNEP Live CoP's, new knowledge - that is geographically and epistemologically more robust - could emerge.

The first UNEP Live CoP will contribute to the development of an Environment Outlook for Small Island Development States (GEO SIDS). This is an activity carried out in the context of the International Year of SIDS. The assessment will be made available at the 3rd International Conference for SIDS in Apia, Samoa in September 2014.

To join the UNEP Live Community of Practice for SIDS, register from the MyUNEPLive page @ www.unep.org/uneplive

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GEO-SIDS Community of Practice

Who should join?

Professionals working in the area of environment and development, with specific expertise in SIDS, data providers, data users, governments and the academia.

Context

Some immediate key issues for the Third Conference on SIDS in 2014 include the need to:

- assess progress to date agreed goals and the remaining gaps in the implementation;
- seek a renewed political commitment by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for further implementation;
- identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of SIDS and means of addressing them; and
- identify priorities for the sustainable development of SIDS to be considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 UN development agenda.

What will the GEO SIDS CoP do?

- Review SIDS priority challenges (for AIMS, Caribbean and Pacific regions) – based on agreed priorities – see Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) integrated and enabling cooperation framework for the Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation
- Review available data on these priority issues
- Agree on a set of core indicators that can help track progress of these priorities and work with UNEP to facilitate access to national level data through UNEP Live
- Identifying gaps in data and how they can be overcome
- Undertake an analysis of needs and solutions to address gaps
- Peer-review

How will the GEO SIDS CoP work?

- UNEP will identify a person/s to assume a leadership role as moderator/s who will be supported by UNEP staff
- A reliable mode of regular communication will be established with the group (remotely via webinars, live broadcasting, phone conferencing, real time chat, etc.)
- The group will determine how often members with communicate

- There will be discussions on the needs of the group members and the workload will be distributed amongst members

How can practitioners register?

- Go to the UNEP Live platform – www.unep.org/uneplive and click on the MyUNEPLive button (top right side).
- REGISTER to **Communities of Practice** button and complete the form
- Once you Register, you can Select an existing Community of Practice (CoP) – in this case, select the GEO-SIDS CoP