



*The Permanent Mission of Portugal
to the United Nations*

**Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index for
Small Island Developing States**

Interim Report by the High-Level Panel of Experts

Comments by the Delegation of Portugal

30 August 2022

General comments:

- Portugal welcomes the Interim Report provided on 5 August by the High-Level Panel of Experts on a Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which constitutes an important step towards the elaboration of an MVI.
- Since the inception of this process, Portugal has been a firm supporter of the development of the MVI, which we consider essential to adequately capture the notion of vulnerability, in its different dimensions. In line with what the United Nations Secretary-General urges us to, we need to “go beyond GDP”. In the case of SIDS, this is particularly necessary given their heightened exposure to exogenous shocks, and their need to adapt their development pathways to those circumstances.
- We therefore recognize the importance of an MVI to better assess development processes whose complexities cannot be captured by income measures alone.



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- We cannot afford to ignore the political momentum which is building up for the finalization of the MVI: after decades of hesitation, there is now a clear mandate for this index to be elaborated.
- We look forward to the list of selected indicators that will be presented in the final report.

Environmental and climate perspective:

- In order to go beyond Gross National Income (GNI) *per capita* and integrate other equally important factors in the metrics of sustainable development, environment and climate-related factors must be considered, given their exacerbated impacts on SIDS and LDCs.
- In this sense, we would suggest, before the finalization of the HLP's report, a greater interconnection with similar processes in the context of the so-called Rio Conventions. In particular, an interaction with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) regarding the studies made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the work of the "Nairobi Work Program on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change" (NWP) could be beneficial.
- Regarding environmental shocks, we consider that the document is too focused on the "exposure" factor (*para. 48*), to the detriment of other factors considered in terms of environmental vulnerability in the context of the NWP, namely the "sensitivity and ability to adapt". In *para. 37*, the loss of biodiversity should be mentioned together with the loss of usable land and sea-level rise.



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- Sea-level rise is critical for SIDS and therefore needs to be addressed more comprehensively in the final report. The same applies to other factors related to the ocean, seen both as a driver of vulnerability and of resilience. In the first category, ocean pollution, natural disasters or the loss of marine biodiversity are drivers of increased vulnerability. Conversely, the role of the blue economy or of Disaster Risk Reduction in building resilience should be taken into account in the final report.

Next steps:

- It is important that consultations on the MVI are all-inclusive, encompassing Member States but also International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other relevant international organizations. This will be important to create the pre-conditions for an appropriation of the MVI by all relevant stakeholders in the field of financing for development.
- The alignment of the MVI with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be key for its effectiveness.
- A calendar of proposed future steps (including on the update and review) of the MVI should be detailed in the final report.