



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES

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**Written Comments on the Interim Report of the High Level Panel on the Development of a
Multidimensional Vulnerability Index**

- SIDS are a heterogeneous group of countries, spread across the world, with very distinct, and context-specific, needs, opportunities and challenges. Development indicators (like income) can disguise the unique challenges faced by different SIDS. The unique vulnerabilities of SIDS are not adequately captured through the use of the GNI per capita as a measurement and therefore places SIDS with other groups of countries that do not share those unique vulnerabilities and the categorization of countries in special circumstances.
- The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) should ensure that the final product fully addresses the need and specificities of SIDS which current indices have not been able to do. The MVI should therefore comprise a set of indicators that reflect the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS.
- The term vulnerability results from the inherent, structural handicap of our islands which with the effects of climate change, our remoteness, limited natural resources, isolation, small internal markets and lack of economies of scale, remoteness from global markets and dependence on non-renewable sources of energy and these factors should feature prominently in any index aimed at contributing to the support needed by SIDS. Appropriate weightage should be given to these handicaps and their resulting effects. These are vulnerabilities against which we cannot build resilience.
- SIDS may not be the poorest, yet they are still the most vulnerable, and suffer the worst consequences of climate change, global economic fallout and other external global shocks. The MVI must therefore contribute to finding lasting solutions to SIDS in particular those which have graduated. The MVI should open the door to development, climate and other financing.
- The availability of reliable data is one of the challenges we will face in operationalising the MVI. Quality data must be collected in a structured way and they should come from credible sources. To this end, national and official sources of data should be prioritised.

- We have noted that the report mentions that the MVI framework has two components: structural vulnerability and structural resilience and each of the aforementioned components have their own economic, environmental and social dimensions which will have their own range of indicators. There remains tremendous scope to develop policy consensus on the choice of vulnerability metrics, the operationalisation of such metrics, and the agreement on weighting and aggregation.
- SIDS are unable to achieve sustained high levels of economic growth because of the negative impacts arising from the vulnerabilities. We should ensure that those indicators reflect challenges emanating from our small country size, remoteness from markets, lower economies of scale, higher costs for the provision of state services, economic openness which makes the SIDS particularly vulnerable to external economic conditions, lack of economic diversification, dependency on strategic imports along with climate vulnerabilities. The indices should be built around these factors.
- By incorporating the above criteria, it will demonstrate that SIDS have a special case in comparison with other developing countries.
- The MVI should be open to revisions since evidence suggests that today, SIDS are far more vulnerable than they were 30 years ago. The shock caused by the COVID 19 pandemic is an example of a factor we did not foresee. These have effects on the indebtedness of SIDS. It is therefore important to consider debt as an indicator.