

Concept Paper
Sri Lanka joining Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Sri Lanka is a party to a large number of international conventions including United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol. Most countries who are parties to these international conventions meet in groups to deliberate issues, and accordingly are in a strong position during the negotiations. Sri Lanka is a developing country and belongs to the group of G77 and China. G77 + China as a larger group, their priorities are different. Therefore it is very difficult to bring into the common agenda.

Small Island Developing States was initiated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit / Rio Conference) in June 1992. SIDS comprised with distinct group of developing low lying coastal countries and is a group of countries that are very vulnerable to climate change, even though their contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions is minimal. The Global Conference on Sustainable Development of SIDS was held in 1994 at Barbados. Declaration of Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) for SIDS was adopted by this conference. The BPOA was formulated as a blue print for action on sustainable development that should be undertaken by SIDS with the cooperation and assistance of the international community.

According to the part one of the Declaration of Barbados, main uniqueness & challenges of SIDS are shown by following table & Annex 01.

	Main category of Uniqueness/Challenges	Distinct obstacles that hinder the Sustainable Development
1	Distinguish characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Biodiversity is among most threatened in the world ➤ Ecosystems provide ecological corridors linking major areas of biodiversity around the world ➤ Bear responsibility for a significant portion of the world's oceans and seas ➤ Contribute least to global climate change and sea level rise ➤ Suffer most from the adverse effect of climate change ➤ Interest in the protection of coastal zone and oceans
2	Key Environment Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Vulnerable to natural as well as environmental disasters and have a limited capacity to respond to and recover from such disasters
3	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited natural resources – fresh water, land, iron, fossil fuels
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fragile environment ➤ Susceptibility to natural disasters
4	Socio- Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Growing Population ➤ Low per capita income ➤ Limited resources for economic development

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Susceptibility to natural disasters ➤ Remoteness ➤ Little or no opportunity to create economies of large scale ➤ Urgent need to address the constraints to sustainable development
5	International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Excessive dependence on international trade ➤ Irregular International Transport Volume ➤ Need support form international community to enhance national capacities
6	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High cost – energy, transportation and communication

The report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS reaffirmed the challenges of small islands that recognized in the Agenda 21. Main challenges of Small Island can be summarized into few categories;

- a. Climate Change
- b. Natural Hazards
- c. Influence of international trade
- d. Limited resources
- e. Growing population
- f. Fragile economy (Agriculture based)
- g. Concentration of human activities into low- lying coastal areas.

The United nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs lists 52 small island developing states at present. These states have divided into three geographical regions as;

1. The Caribbean
2. The Pacific
3. Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS)

SIDS members face similar sustainable development challenges and pledge to share experiences and resources required for sustainable development. Socio economic, environmental and other issues that hinder the development process of island of Sri Lanka are similar to SIDS members. Therefore, Sri Lanka fits with the Barbados declaration adopted by SIDS.

Due reputation of the international community on SIDS was established at its birth. Therefore, the voice of the SIDS will be sound to obtain international attention. And also, the resources required to solve many problems related to climate change have already accumulated around the SIDS. It seems that Small Island Development States (SIDS) has already success in many steps of achieving its goal. This background would benefit Sri Lanka if join with SIDS in several ways as follows,

1. Can analysis the challenges of Sustainable Development of Sri Lanka through the light of climate change impacts
2. Impacts and issues of climate change particularly to Sri Lanka can be recognized
3. International experience of climate change particularly to SIDS can be shared.
4. Open a platform to demonstrate relevant experiences of Sri Lanka to get international attention.