

SMALL STATES FORUM 2023

COMMUNIQUE

Marrakech, Morocco

October 13, 2023

Members of the Small States Forum (SSF) met on October 13, 2023.

1. Members discussed the range of challenges that are significantly impacting their economies and populations. While the global economy is gradually starting to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, conflicts and geopolitical tensions, the possibility of a global recession remains. In addition, climate change is taking a heavy toll. Despite being small carbon emitters, Small States are on the frontlines of this climate emergency.
2. Members welcomed the World Bank's new vision to create a world free of poverty on a livable planet and the progress to date to strengthen its operational and financial model under the Evolution Roadmap. They recognized this as an important opportunity for enhanced support for Small States. They voiced support for the Crisis Preparedness and Response Toolkit to respond to the increasing frequency and severity of climate events. Reconstruction efforts in the wake of natural disasters require massive financial resources, which exacerbates the debt challenge. Members urged the swift implementation and expansion of the toolkit and similar efforts. Members also discussed international efforts to promote debt sustainability for vulnerable countries. They called on development partners and other actors to provide continued capacity-building and technical support for debt management and transparency.
3. Members agreed that reducing extreme vulnerabilities and building resilience to climate and economic shocks is an urgent priority. While access to post-disaster financing options remains essential, pre-disaster financing is also critical to mitigate the human and physical costs of disasters. They recognized that domestic resource mobilization and private sector investment in new industries and infrastructure is a key driver of structural transformation and growth.

They welcomed the inclusion of digitalization as a Global Challenge Program pilot, which will have a positive impact, especially on remotely located Small States.

4. Members expressed appreciation for the international assistance to date, which allowed them to effectively address various crises. The Forum urged the international community and development partners for continued support with due consideration to the unique vulnerabilities that Small States face. Members noted the upcoming IDA20 Mid-term Review in December. They urged IDA Deputies to maintain their commitment to expanding access to concessional finance for Small States through the IDA Crisis Facility and strengthening the Small Island Economy (SIE) exception. This commitment will enable Small States to anticipate investment needs to build resilience against future crises and get back on track towards long-term development goals.