

## UNESCO progress report

### Addressing vulnerabilities of SIDS through Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation (MSI) of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA)

This report provides a brief overview of selected key UNESCO activities addressing the challenges faced by SIDS, implemented both by UNESCO's Headquarters and Field Offices. Rather than comprising the entirety of the Organization's contribution to the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the Mauritius Strategy, the report provides a brief description of a series of activities with emphasis on the most recent achievements. A full catalogue of activities is available on UNESCO's dedicated Mauritius Strategy website at [www.unesco.org/en/sids](http://www.unesco.org/en/sids).

For more detailed information on UNESCO activities implemented in particular during the 2005-2007 period, please see <http://www.unesco.org/csi/B10/mim2007.htm>

#### **Box: Intersectoral Platform on UNESCO's contribution to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

The *Intersectoral Platforms* are an innovation in the way UNESCO conceives, manages and implements its programme in an interdisciplinary manner. Many of today's complex challenges call for an intersectoral response – potentially one of UNESCO's comparative advantages in the multilateral arena. The platforms define a joint strategy and establish operational teams made up of colleagues working in various Sectors and, most importantly, in various regions and countries of the world.

Providing the framework for UNESCO's consolidated contribution to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, the *Intersectoral Platform on UNESCO's contribution to the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States* (the SIDS Platform) pursues an integrated approach to sustainable island living and development, emphasizing interregional linkages and cooperation. Reflecting the priority status assigned to SIDS in UNESCO's current medium-term strategy, the SIDS Platform is geographical in nature, allowing it to interact with other platforms focusing on specific themes, such as for example climate change.

Involving all five programme Sectors and field offices covering SIDS, the SIDS Platform ensures that UNESCO's unique multi-disciplinary expertise - in science; culture; climate change; education for sustainable development; natural, cultural and intangible heritage; the articulation of scientific and indigenous knowledge; and knowledge management and information for decision-making – is productively used in addressing the multiplicity of challenges facing SIDS.

## **Climate change and sea level rise**

### **On the Frontlines of Climate Change**

Launched in June 2008 in response to the outcry caused by the continuing absence of vulnerable groups from international debates on climate change, the Climate Frontlines Forum - available online in English, French and Spanish - promotes the sharing and exchange of community-level observations, concerns and innovations with respect to climate change: impacts, opportunities and adaptation. It invites inputs from small island, rural and indigenous communities living in environments vulnerable to climate change.

The Forum is managed in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In addition to the online discussions to which participants from SIDS regularly contribute, the Forum, with assistance from the Government of Denmark, is funding community-based small-scale projects on climate change impacts and adaptation.

While Climate Frontlines is distributed to a very large audience, it is often difficult to gauge the extent to which its postings – circulated to more than 40,000 email addresses approximately every three weeks) are read appreciated. While the need to ensure quality control and balance in terms of the content of the postings requires that the Climate Frontlines forum be moderated, this also has a tendency to limit spontaneous and direct discussion between contributors. As part of the further development of Climate Frontlines, parallel channels of information dissemination are being pursued, including social networking sites such as Facebook.

Full details on Climate Frontlines are available at [www.climatefrontlines.org](http://www.climatefrontlines.org)

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### **Climate change and migration in the Pacific SIDS**

A pattern of climate-related environmental change – increased temperatures, extreme high tides, as well as an increase in severity of tropical storms – is emerging in the Pacific. Many Pacific islanders live on low-lying atolls, some of which are already experiencing environmental changes that threaten health, food security and habitability. Populations living in large river deltas and coastal regions, which includes most of the Pacific's population outside the highlands of Papua New Guinea - could be severely affected by sea level rise. Communities have responded by moving: some island people are already relocating.

In May 2009, the *Asia-Pacific Migration Research Network*, with the support of the UNESCO Apia Office and the University of the South Pacific, hosted the Pacific's first workshop on climate change-related migration. The workshop identified several key areas for further research and policy development. The discussion centered on basic questions such as why people move – or alternatively, why they stay – as well as on how they access land in a new place, how they are received, and the social implications of migration on Pacific island societies?

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## **Climate change & the media**

UNESCO works with SIDS media organizations to increase the quality, frequency, and permanence of reporting on key sustainable development issues including climate change. Recent and ongoing activities include the organization of several regional training sessions at which Pacific journalists receive updates from Pacific scientists on regional and international climate change activities, as well as intensive media training to adapt the data and stories to Pacific audiences.

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## **Climate Change Education**

Over the past 30 years, UNESCO has actively contributed to building the global knowledge base on climate change. Primarily through its contribution to climate science (global ocean observation systems, assessments and monitoring) and secondarily by promoting education, capacity development, public awareness and access to information.

As Task Manager of Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 – which relates to the promotion of education, public awareness and training - and lead agency for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD, 2005-2014), the Organization plays a lead role in promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Climate change is one of the key action themes of the Decade, as was reaffirmed at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development held in Bonn in April 2009.

Climate change education was most recently the topic of a three-day expert seminar organized by UNESCO with financial support from Denmark at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, 27-29 July 2009. With special focus on SIDS and designed to reach and involve key stakeholders involved in climate change education, the event brought together a multidisciplinary and diverse group of more than 60 educators, scientists, educational planners, and representatives as well as multilateral and non-governmental organizations. Participants discussed, identified challenges and made recommendations on the role and potential for education in addressing global climate change by delving into 3 themes:

- Educational policies, programmes and curricula;
- The identification of climate change education tools, materials and good practices; and
- The mobilization and engagement of networks and partnerships in support of climate change education.

Further details on the outcomes of the seminar are provided in the section on Sustainable Capacity Development and Education for Sustainable Development below.

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## **Culture**

### **World Heritage in SIDS**

The World Heritage Programme for SIDS coordinates the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy within the context of the World Heritage Convention, with assistance from a number of donors. As of 2009, all but a handful of SIDS had ratified the Convention. The number of SIDS properties inscribed on the World Heritage list continues to increase, with four new sites

admitted in 2008 - Historic Centre of Camaguey (Cuba), Le Morne Cultural Landscape (Mauritius), Kuk Early Agricultural Site (Papua New Guinea), and Chief Roi Mata's Domain (Vanuatu). Furthermore, Cidade Velha (Cape Verde) was inscribed in 2009.

Targeted World Heritage programmes have been established in both the Caribbean and Pacific SIDS in order to assist member states in their work with the Convention. The Caribbean Capacity-Building Programme (CCBP) Manual was finalized in 2008 and consists of training modules on the Implementation of the Convention as well as on tourism, risk preparedness, cultural landscapes and historic cities. A range of capacity development and awareness raising activities were also undertaken in the African SIDS.

In the Pacific, four World Heritage nominations were submitted in 2009, while a thematic study - *Cultural Landscapes of the Pacific Islands* - was conducted by the International Council on Monuments and Sites. Moreover, a feasibility study on the establishment of a Pacific World Heritage Fund was initiated through UNESCO Apia Office.

Detailed information on the World Heritage Convention in SIDS is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/42/>.

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## **Intangible Heritage in SIDS**

UNESCO takes an interdisciplinary approach to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in SIDS. The safeguarding of this heritage is important as it gives communities a sense of identity that is fundamental to their self-respect, social cohesion and active involvement in their development.

Several safeguarding projects address intangible cultural heritage in SIDS. A project aimed at safeguarding the *taarab*, a traditional form of Swahili music, was implemented by facilitating exchange visits between musicians from Comoros and Zanzibar (Tanzania), allowing them to share their musical experience and to revitalize their historical cultural relationship, and resulting in a DVD documentary and the building of a school or a music center.

In Cuba, a project for safeguarding Cacao culture has been implemented since November 2007 in close cooperation with other Member States in the region. While researching the basic aspects of the cocoa culture and cultivation in the region of Baracoa, Cuba, the project has contributed to developing cultural industries regarding the different local expressions of the Cocoa culture. The Cacao Route will remain a priority of UNESCO for strengthening capacities of local producers and enhance promotional and marketing strategies.

Another project to preserve and revitalize languages without written forms has been carried out since 1996 in three Melanesian countries (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). In the Pacific, a great number of Melanesian languages are in danger of disappearing due to a gradual decrease in use. Through the project, students in linguistics and community fieldworkers were trained to conduct field survey and to analyze the collected linguistic data. Based on the data, teaching materials to be used in schools are being developed. UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger raises awareness about language endangerment and the need to safeguard the world's linguistic diversity. The free Internet-based version of the Atlas is available at: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?pg=00206>

SIDS Member States are also supported in safeguarding their cultural heritage through institutional capacity building. In the Pacific, a series of national consultation meetings were held in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu, aiming at reinforcing their capacities in developing and implementing national safeguarding measures and policies, and raising awareness about the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Before the adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the first international instrument to provide a legal, administrative and financial framework to protect living heritage, many SIDS countries (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Tonga, Vanuatu) already started national safeguarding projects.

As of November 2009, 12 SIDS Member States (Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Santa Lucia, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Papua New Guinea) have ratified the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and some SIDS Member States, Mauritius and Seychelles, could already benefit from the international assistance that this Convention provides to initiate intangible cultural heritage inventorying projects.

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### **Creole Women's Knowledge of Medicinal Plants in the Mascarene SIDS, Indian Ocean**

Women's knowledge of medicinal plants and traditional medicine in the Mascarenes (Reunion, Mauritius, Rodrigues) is rooted in the elaborate synergies developed amongst African, Chinese, European and Indian knowledge systems and worldviews. These creole medicinal practices that continue to provide for local health needs have been recorded in the framework of the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme and are soon to be published in a richly-illustrated volume.

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### **Knowledge management and information for decision-making**

#### **IPDC and SIDS**

UNESCO's International Programme for the development of Communications (IPDC) plays an active role in the development of media in SIDS. IPDC has provided funding for more than 170 media SIDS-based development projects - 46 national projects in the Caribbean, 45 in the Pacific, and 25 in other regions - altogether covering 32 SIDS and amounting to a total of 3.5 million US\$ dollars. Areas addressed by the most recently approved projects include media capacity-building in modern news, media technology, community television, participatory video-making, communication arts, programme scheduling, radio programme production techniques, community radio, independent printing process, and prison community television network.

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#### **FREE FM: Community Multimedia Centre Action Research Project**

The *FREE (Facilitating Rehabilitation, Education and Entertainment) FM Community Multimedia Centre Action Research Project* is a joint initiative of the Jamaica Department of Correctional Services (DCS) and UNESCO. The project has been piloted at Jamaica's Tower Street Adult Correctional Center,

a maximum security prison, and was implemented in collaboration with Students Expressing Truth (SET) – an organization involved in prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration.

FREE FM creates a positive interactive multimedia environment throughout the DCS, involving correctional officers, administrators, inmates and families. It functions as a vehicle to advance DCS's Life Skills Programme, providing a significant opportunity for positive change in education and communication within the prisons. The programmes were designed and developed to educate the inmate population, to share information on events across the penal system, and to create a learning atmosphere that will benefit both inmates and staff.

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## **Sustainable Capacity Development and Education for Sustainable Development**

### **Box: The Intersectoral Platform on Education for Sustainable Development (ED/DESD)**

Education is a key dimension of the international response to the current global challenges, and can encourage changes in behavior to promote a more sustainable society. UNESCO, as the lead agency in the coordination and mobilization of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), promotes the integration of the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning.

UNESCO's Intersectoral Platform on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) coordinates UNESCO's work in support of DESD, focusing on such areas as policy, capacity development, knowledge enhancement and awareness-raising.

SIDS member states define those elements of ESD of most critical significance to the local context. For instance, in May 2005, Pacific Ministers of Education identified quality technical and vocational education as critical for increasing economic independence and creating a sustainable society with a skilled workforce. With its holistic approach, DESD is essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and also contributes to the objectives of the Mauritius Strategy.

Visit the DESD website: [www.unesco.org/education/desd](http://www.unesco.org/education/desd)

### **Sandwatch**

Sandwatch provides a framework for children, youth and adults in schools and local communities to work together to critically evaluate the problems and conflicts facing their beach environments and to develop sustainable approaches to address these issues, whilst also stimulating local climate change adaptation measures.

Launched by UNESCO a decade ago, Sandwatch is today active in more than 20 SIDS worldwide, and is coordinated by the non-profit Sandwatch Foundation. With support from the Government of Denmark, UNESCO works with the Sandwatch Foundation on the implementation of Sandwatch activities worldwide. A series of training events held during 2009

and 2010 are serving to test new climate change-related materials developed for a new edition of the Sandwatch Manual, and will allow new countries to work directly with Sandwatch. A global Sandwatch database is also under development to allow the data collected by Sandwatch teams around the world to be shared with the wider community.

Sandwatch is one of the key flagship projects for UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPNet). Commonly referred to as UNESCO Associated Schools, ASPNet is a global network of more than 8.500 educational institutions in 178 countries, founded in 1953. Member institutions range from pre-schools, primary, secondary and vocational schools to teacher training institutions.

As a programme largely dependent on local initiatives by active and committed teachers and students, Sandwatch requires constant and effective coordination efforts in order to remain an active and strong network. UNESCO works closely with the Sandwatch Foundation, which manages the programme's very active webpage, Facebook page, and YouTube channel, in order to keep all contributors to the network connected and engaged.

Visit the Sandwatch website at [www.sandwatch.org](http://www.sandwatch.org)

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### **University Consortium of Small Island States**

The University Consortium of Small Island States (UCSIS) is composed of the Universities of Malta, Mauritius, South Pacific, Virgin Islands, and West Indies. UCSIS' principal objective is to promote an integrated system of research, training, information and documentation activities for implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy and to cooperate with all participating countries to: (a) develop and implement a graduate programme in SIDS; (b) design training programmes for capacity-building to implement the BPOA and the Mauritius Strategy; (c) develop visions, values and skills that will equip participants to become actively involved in advocacy; (d) develop methods for research programmes; and (e) enable Consortium members to convene a core committee of educators and administrators from the participating universities to further develop the substantive and procedural agenda. Since its inception in 2006, UNESCO has supported UCSIS through its status as a UNITWIN network.

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### **Establishment of a university in Seychelles**

At the request of the Ministry for Education in the Seychelles, UNESCO is – along with other partners - providing assistance for the establishment of a university in the Seychelles in order to (a) meet the demands for higher education; (b) reverse the trend of secondary school graduates leaving the Seychelles to study abroad; (c) ensure high standards and quality; (d) attract students from abroad, especially neighboring islands; (e) expand the current disciplines for post-secondary education to include environmental management courses; (f) establish a full degree program for teacher training; (g) assist in needs assessment to identify the most appropriate higher education modality (face-to-face, overseas, distance, franchise, etc.) for the Seychelles. The University of Seychelles will open its doors to students in late 2009, with a more formal opening in 2010. An

existing post-secondary school is being converted to host the first students of the University of Seychelles, ahead of the construction of new facilities.

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### **Constraints and challenges: UNESCO future action on climate change education**

Climate change education is a key element of Education for Sustainable Development. This was brought to the fore at the expert seminar held at UNESCO in July 2009 (see above). Among other issues discussed, the seminar concluded that in order for climate change education to be effective, there is a need for demystifying scientific language – especially in SIDS. An example of the challenges this entails is the Pacific, where science is not taught in local/indigenous languages. It was felt that teaching and learning climate change in a foreign language, in this case English, prevents students from really comprehending that it is also a local issue - and not just something that belongs in text books or is only happening elsewhere in the world. There is a lack of materials in other languages than English and with little or no framework for establishing quality or appropriateness for a given context

Thus, pedagogy on climate change in a foreign language is seen as a very serious issue. One way to address this is through developing literacy strategies around climate change. Another alternative is to translate material into local/indigenous languages, even though the difficulty of choosing the correct translation of technical terms in these languages remains. In addition, it was felt that understanding climate change requires other basic transferable skills such as interpretation and comprehension, not just basic science. Interpreting a graph, for example, should not be addressed only in climate change education, but should be taught to children in biology, chemistry, geography, etc.

There is a particular need for materials to address the ethics of climate change and the social dimensions of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Another key problem identified relates to the sharing of information coming from different sources and locations between many and diverse networks. Sharing such information is difficult for a number of reasons, among which are: the lack of co-ordination between groups or executive bodies, complexities in working across sectors and agencies, problems in fostering and supporting national and regional networking, and the lack of access to modern communication technologies in developing countries.

Priority areas for future action:

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1. undertaking a review of existing educational policies and curricula, in order to initiate the development of guidelines to facilitate the inclusion of climate change issues into educational programmes, policies and curricula;
  2. undertaking a comprehensive review and inventory of existing tools, materials and practices in teaching and learning climate change;
  3. addressing quality assurance and standard setting in climate change education
  4. developing ways for supporting a ‘community of practice’ around climate change education;
  5. enhancing networking and cooperation for action on climate change education among all stakeholders, in particular through actively engaging communities and youth;
  6. enhancing action-research in social and human sciences, ethics and adaptable teaching materials to suit specific situations in relation to climate change issues.
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## **National and Regional Enabling Environments**

### **Sustainable Development in SIDS reports**

In partnership with regional academic organizations, UNESCO has undertaken two studies to map the state-of-the-art of approaches to sustainable development in the Pacific and the Caribbean. The studies include an outline of Pacific/Caribbean perceptions of sustainable development at local, national and regional levels; an overview of ongoing activities and Pacific/Caribbean island responses to sustainable development at all levels, and an assessment of UNESCO's potential role in addressing these challenges.

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### **Youth Visioning for Island Living (YV)**

UNESCO's YV initiative promotes capacity building and involvement of youth in sustainable development in SIDS. Young people articulate how they want their islands to develop in the future and undertake projects that encompass the environment, health, socio-economic and cultural issues. YV was initiated in 2004, and is supported by many organizations at the national, regional and inter-regional level.

Following the Youth Visioning for Island Living special event in Mauritius (9-13 January 2005), when youth met to discuss their perspectives on sustainable development, and with the support of the Lighthouse Foundation and other partners, youth in 31 SIDS and six island territories designed and implement projects ranging from inter-generational exchange of culture and traditions to strengthening local languages, and from environmental awareness to youth entrepreneurship

Since 2006, YV has benefited from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), to sponsor actions (as it was, I think it gives too much attention to our HIV-AIDS activities) on helping island youth combat HIV/AIDS. A request for proposals from young people directly in 2008 led to the granting of support for 11 projects from the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean SIDS. The projects are being implemented and will be completed by November 2009.

Results show that simple and enjoyable methods such as drama and sports are a popular and effective means by which important messages relating to HIV and AIDS can be transmitted. Youth are enthusiastic, dynamic and willing to learn. They gain enormous experience and skills, and rapidly enhance their capacities. The main challenge to working with islands scattered across the world is effective communication. Radio remains one of the best media to increase outreach. Within islands, particularly archipelagos, transport is another challenge. A considerable amount of guidance and encouragement is necessary with inexperienced youth, but these efforts nevertheless build capacities and contribute to the development of a youth population that is informed and aware.

Visit the Youth Visioning for Island Living website at: [www.youthvisioning.org](http://www.youthvisioning.org)

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## **UNESCO helps draft democratic legislation in the Maldives**

UNESCO, in collaboration with ARTICLE 19, is providing technical assistance to the Maldivian People's Majlis (Parliament) to draft legislation to create an enabling environment for freedom of expression. Two draft laws – on broadcasting and freedom of expression – were provided to the Social Affairs Committee of the outgoing Parliament in April 2009. The draft bills have been forwarded to the new Majlis, elected on 8 May, with the recommendation of the outgoing Social Affairs Committee. A draft Broadcasting Law had already been considered by the Parliament earlier this year but it failed to conform in important ways to international standards, in particular by leaving key regulatory functions, including licensing, in the hands of the State.

Efforts are underway to bring several pieces of legislation – a Freedom of Press Bill, a Freedom of Publication Bill and a Freedom of Expression Bill – which were all closely related under one law, on freedom of expression, which could cover all of the relevant issues.

The technical assistance also involved an Assessment of media development in the Maldives, based on UNESCO's Media development indicators: a framework for assessing media development. The Assessment identifies a number of important legislative reform needs in the country. A Defamation Bill is being considered and a proper legal framework for the public broadcaster, the Maldives National Broadcasting Corporation, is needed. A right to information law was rejected by the last Majlis but this remains an important need in the country. UNESCO will continue to work with the Maldivian authorities on these issues.

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## **Coastal and Marine Resources**

### **Biosphere Reserves in SIDS**

In 2006, UNESCO Jakarta Office, UNESCO Korean National commission for UNESCO, and the Jeju Special Self-Governing Provincial Government, Republic of Korea established a new regional initiative of cooperation entitled the "Jeju Initiative aiming to bring together Asia-Pacific countries, including SIDS, to strengthen the role of island and coastal biosphere reserves in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts, and promote sustainable development. The Jeju Initiative is working with other such initiatives to build a World Network of Island and Coastal Biosphere Reserves.

*The 5th Itinerary Training Seminar for Biosphere Reserve Managers and MAB National Committees* was co-organised by MAB-Jamaica, the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO and UNESCO with financial support from the Government of Spain. The seminar focused on island and coastal biosphere reserves, and was perceived as very important for Jamaica, which is currently nominating its first biosphere reserve. The seminar also promoted the creation of networking structures for biosphere reserves in the English-speaking Caribbean. It may open the way to the creation of biosphere reserves in Caribbean countries, which have not established sites so far.

In the Pacific, the Pacific Biosphere Reserve Network (PacMAB) – founded in 2006 - brings together new and emerging biosphere reserves in the small islands of the Pacific for discussion and mutual assistance. PacMAB will hold its third meeting in December 2009.

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## **Freshwater resources**

### **Water resources in the Indian Ocean region**

UNESCO Dar-es-Salaam Office supports training on integrated water resources management in the Indian Ocean SIDS. During a recent training session in the Seychelles attended by water managers from Mauritius, Madagascar and Seychelles, a number of issues of particular concern to SIDS were raised. While countries like Seychelles are faced with limited resources and droughts each year, others have an abundance of water resources but encounter difficulties in accessing or developing these resources. Madagascar and Mauritius noted that a lack of proper planning for development has led to water resources being affected, increasing the costs of providing water.

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### **Hydrological Sciences in the Pacific SIDS**

The Pacific SIDS participate actively in UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) through the region's membership of the Asia-Pacific Regional Steering Committee. Throughout the past decade, Pacific SIDS have helped shape priority-setting and plan activities in the hydrological sciences for the region, with logistical and technical support provided by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC). Several IHP projects have been undertaken in the Pacific during this period, on issues such as catchment management and community engagement in hydrological monitoring.

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## **Natural and Environmental Disasters**

### **UNESCO-IOC**

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2010. Beginning with the International Indian Ocean Expedition in 1960 the IOC has worked to promote international cooperation in researching and protecting the ocean. Today the IOC is instrumental in monitoring the ocean through the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and developing tsunami warning systems in vulnerable regions. Below are listed two of UNESCO-IOC's recent SIDS-specific activities. Full details of IOC's work is available at <http://ioc.unesco.org>.

### **Emergency Response to Ocean-Based Extreme Events in the Indian Ocean**

In many tsunami-affected countries, one of the main impediments to accurate calculation of tsunami inundation and run-up is the lack of adequate coastal bathymetric (ocean depth) data, which is a key input data for tsunami modeling. Since bathymetric surveys are expensive, it is

important to raise awareness that bathymetry results from both natural and man-made causes, and therefore must be continuously updated. Embedded within UNESCO-IOC's Integrated Coastal Area Management programme, COAST-MAP-IO is contributing to develop this capacity in 12 countries including four SIDS - Comoros, Maldives, Mauritius, and the Seychelles.

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### **Caribbean tsunami and coastal hazards preparedness**

UNESCO-IOC coordinates the establishment of early warning systems (EWS) for tsunami and other ocean-related hazards in the Caribbean (CARIBE-EWS), under development by countries in the region since 1990. Associated with its work on strengthening Caribbean preparedness with regard to coastal and ocean hazards, UNESCO-IOC also contributes regularly to regional training courses and events. UNESCO-IOC's engagement with such events is a key component of its continuing support for SIDS coastal and oceans hazards preparedness in the Caribbean region.

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#### **Box: SIDS Committee of Representatives**

The *SIDS Committee of Representatives to UNESCO* was created by the Organization's SIDS member states in 2006, with the purpose of strengthening UNESCO's support for - and ensuring more targeted outcomes associated with - the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy. The Committee works closely with the UNESCO Secretariat in order to:

- galvanize the rich information and expertise within UNESCO of relevance to SIDS Member States;
- examine, disseminate and share this information with all relevant stakeholders in islands;
- provide a more informed position on policies and matters relevant to SIDS and UNESCO;
- increase the leveraging position of SIDS to ensure that they speak with one voice across UNESCO on their core concerns.