

Ocean and Climate Resilience Side Event Proposal

Lead Organization: U.S. Department of State, OECD, WRI, WEF

Event Title: Coastal resilience in the climate crisis: Supporting solutions for small island developing states

Event Description:

Small island developing states (“SIDS”), where the ocean is central to livelihoods, history, and culture, are particularly vulnerable to ocean-climate impacts. Both sudden-onset events, such as more intense storms and flash flooding, as well as slow-onset events such as sea level rise and shifting fisheries present existential risks, which are exacerbated by SIDS’ structural economic vulnerabilities (e.g., remoteness, heavy reliance on a small number of sectors). Yet, investment toward the ocean remains limited, only about 4% of total ODA commitments to SIDS in 2020-21. Where finance is available, it is often not clear how best to invest it to spur resilient development

Accelerating the implementation of solutions for coastal adaptation and resilience to these climate impacts and supporting SIDS in building sustainable ocean economies are critical to ensuring the continued well-being of vulnerable island communities.

This event will explore different strategies and partnership opportunities available to small island states in building ocean-climate resilience. The discussion will frame the challenges and opportunities that small island developing states face in adapting to a changing ocean, as well as the importance of innovative policies and partnerships that support resilience-building. Panelists will then highlight a variety of solutions-oriented initiatives, including sustainable ocean economic development projects working to build long-term economic resilience to climate change; innovative financing strategies and mechanisms; and tools that can help support climate-resilient infrastructure and spatial planning. In particular, Blue Recovery Hubs, the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance, and the Pacific Resilience Facility will be highlighted as solutions to help SIDS address their vulnerabilities, provide evidence-based policy support, and mobilize relevant stakeholders.

Proposed Speakers:

Opening remarks: Mary Beth Goodman, OECD Deputy Secretary General

Moderator: Sue Biniaz, Principal Deputy Special Envoy for Climate

Format: Moderated conversation with guiding questions

1. Karen Sack, ORRAA (Topic: Climate finance and support tools)
2. Tom Pickerell, WRI (Topic: Blue Recovery Hubs)
3. Taholo Kami,
4. Filimon Manoni, Pacific Ocean Commissioner
5. Lysi Wini, One Ocean Hub PhD Researcher at the Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance (Indigenous leadership in ocean-climate resilience)

Closing remarks: Jainey Bavishi, Deputy Administrator, NOAA