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Climate Change Impacting Small Island Developing States

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The **United Nation (UN)** in its report on **World Population Prospects 2019** has warned that many Small Island Developing States (SIDS) may fail to achieve several **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030** because of increasing population and climate change risks.

Small Island Developing States

- Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are islands of the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- The SIDS were recognized as a distinct group of developing countries in June 1992, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development. Total number of SIDS are 39.
- SIDS' unique and particular vulnerabilities are highlighted in "The Future We Want", adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (also known as Rio+20) that took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012
- Their small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base, and exposure to global environmental challenges and external economic shocks, including to a large range of impacts from climate change and potentially more frequent and intense natural disasters SIDS continue to address those structural and external challenges to achieve their sustainable development.

Reasons for missing SDGs

- **Population:** Several SIDS, including Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, are experiencing a sharper population growth, higher than the global average rate of 1.07 per cent.

The total population of these countries is only 71 million, but growing fast: said to increase to 78 million by 2030 and 87 million by 2050, added the report.

- **Climate change:** The challenge is bigger for these small countries because of their vulnerability to climate change, climate variability and sea-level rise.

- **Geographical reasons:** One-third of the entire population of SIDS lives on lands that are less than five metres below the sea level. This makes them highly vulnerable to sea-level rise, storm surge and coastal destruction.

Impact of Climate Change on SIDS

These countries contribute only 1 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and yet are among the first to experience the worst impacts of climate change.

- **Agricultural production, fisheries, and related sectors** are declining as the climate changes, threatening livelihoods and economic growth.
- In addition, extreme weather spawned by climate change is destroying SIDS **land, real estate and infrastructure**, with economically catastrophic effects, highlighted UN Environment Programme in a report.
- **Tourism** forms the foundation of many SIDS economies, and climate change is impacting it. Tourists are being discouraged from travelling to SIDS in the fear of violent and life-threatening storms.