



# Climate Change Impacting Small Island Developing States

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.

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