

## **Integrating Fisheries into the National Development Plans of Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Ten Years on From Barbados**

**The Challenge:** The fisheries sector is of crucial socio-economic importance for many of the world's Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – see Table below - given their extensive maritime boundaries.

*States in which the Fisheries Sector is a Substantive Contributor to Employment, Exports or Domestic Protein Consumption (2000).*

<b>Employment (&gt;5%)</b>	<b>Exports (&gt;25%)</b>	<b>Protein Consumption (&gt;30%)</b>
<i>Cape Verde</i>	Antigua	Belize
Dominica	Bahamas	Comoros Islands
<b>Maldives</b>	<i>Cape Verde</i>	Guyana
<i>Marshall Islands</i>	Cook Islands	<i>Kiribati</i>
Micronesia	<i>Kiribati</i>	<b>Maldives</b>
Niue	<b>Maldives</b>	Papua New Guinea
Palau	<i>Marshall Islands</i>	<i>São Tomé and Príncipe</i>
St. Kitts	<i>Samoa</i>	<i>Seychelles</i>
St. Vincent	<i>São Tomé and Príncipe</i>	Solomon Islands
<i>Samoa</i>	<i>Seychelles</i>	<i>Vanuatu</i>
<i>Tonga</i>	<i>Tonga</i>	
Tuvalu		
<i>Vanuatu</i>		

(Countries in **bold** appear in all three categories, countries in *italics* appear in two of the categories).

The 1994 Barbados Programme of Action went some way to acknowledging this dependence, calling for: the development/strengthening of sustainable national harvesting capabilities, the design of comprehensive monitoring programmes for coastal and marine resources, the ratification of international fisheries conventions and agreements (where applicable) and the establishment/strengthening of institutional, administrative and legislative arrangements for developing coastal and marine fisheries development strategies ‘including integrating them within national development plans (BPoA: Art.26[i]).’ But just how have SIDS responded to this challenge?

**The Analysis:** We examine the extent to which national governments and two key donor organisations have responded to this challenge and (effectively) mainstreamed the fisheries sector into contemporary National Development Plans (NDPs) and accompanying donor support strategies. Applying an assessment methodology originally developed by the World Bank to analyse the manner and extent to which the environment had been integrated into Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, we analyse how the fisheries sector is represented in twelve NDPs, eight World Bank CAS and thirty-four European Union Country Support Strategies<sup>1</sup>. Four assessment criteria (mention of fisheries issues, linkages

<sup>1</sup> NDPs were obtained for The Bahamas, Cape Verde, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Saint Lucia, Samoa and São Tomé and Príncipe. CAS are in the public domain for Belize, Cape Verde, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica, the Maldives,

between fisheries and poverty, delineation of fisheries policy responses and the involvement of the sector in the development discourse) were deployed and a four-point measurement scale was applied in completing a content analysis of the accessed documents.

**The Findings:** The prominence accorded to fisheries in the Maldives and Seychelles documents was to some extent expected, given the substantive contribution of the sector to local employment, exports and protein consumption (see Table above). More surprising is the strong performance of Fiji and St. Lucia, despite their fisheries sectors being relatively less important in national terms. Equally, a further grouping of six SIDS - Cape Verde, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, São Tomé and Príncipe, Samoa, and Tonga - possess significant fisheries sectors on export and either employment/protein consumption grounds, but currently fail to translate this importance into effective sectoral mainstreaming in either national and/or donor support documents.

**Recommendations:** Fisheries is a key developmental component for many SIDS given their dependence upon coastal and marine resources, with the majority of the population and economic activity (cash and subsistence) being concentrated in the coastal zone (BPoA, 1994: Art.25). Our research findings suggest the potential worth of a comparative study that seeks to identify those local institutions and processes that appear to be critical in ensuring the integration of strategies for coastal watersheds within national development plans. Specifically: What factors have enabled SIDS with important (the Maldives and Seychelles) and not so important (Fiji and St. Lucia) fisheries sectors to mainstream fisheries so effectively into the development agenda? – and, moreover, what are the immediate prospects for raising the profile of fisheries in the national discourse of those SIDS where the sector is a substantive contributor to export earnings and/or domestic protein needs yet is presently under-represented in key domestic policy documents?

Equally, nation states that are heavily dependent on marine resources clearly necessitate strong fisheries management regimes, responsible legislative frameworks, and effective institutions entrusted with broader economic and social governance issues in general. Yet as many SIDS governments are impeded by financial constraints and a lack of capacity to develop their fisheries sector in a sustainable manner by themselves, regional mechanisms and south-south partnerships appear essential for most SIDS vis-à-vis effective marine resource management. Regional and SIDS-specific governing mechanisms should therefore contemplate developing an agenda that both supports and facilitates the mainstreaming of fisheries into national development plans and donor support strategies.

**Dr. Andy Thorpe and Dr. Chris Reid** (Department of Economics, University of Portsmouth).

**Dr. Raymon van Anrooy and Dr. Cecile Brugere** (Development Planning Service, Fisheries Department, FAO).

**December 2004** (An extended version of these findings will be published in the UN journal *Natural Resources Forum* early in 2005).