Leveraging ocean resources for sustainable development of small island developing States

Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2020

Agenda Item 3.
Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries

Oliver Paddison
Chief, Countries with Special Needs Section
Macroeconomic and Financing for Development Division

76th COMMISSION SESSION
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Ocean resources for sustainable development of small island developing States
Chapter I  Ocean resources for sustainable development of small island developing States

- This report focuses on how Asia-Pacific SIDS can leverage ocean resources for sustainable development

- Asia-Pacific SIDS are a diverse group which faces common development challenges; particularly economic, social and environmental

- They are on track to reach Goal 9 and have made good progress towards meeting Goal 3.

- However, insufficient progress has been made for most other Goals.

- They have regressed in terms of Goal 8.
Chapter I  Ocean resources for sustainable development of small island developing States

- The international community pays significant attention to the development challenges of SIDS and LDCs (SAMOA Pathway, Istanbul Programme of Action).

- Asia-Pacific SIDS have great potential to grow. The size of their Exclusive Economic Zones is significantly larger than their land area. In some countries by several thousand times.

- The abundance of ocean resources of SIDS should be leveraged more effectively to support their sustainable development.

- This report identifies **fisheries** and **tourism** as key drivers of sustainable development in Asia-Pacific SIDS. These sectors provide employment, government revenue, and food security and livelihoods (in the case of fisheries), thereby contributing to reducing household poverty.
Fisheries as a driver for sustainable development
Chapter II  Fisheries as a driver for sustainable development

**Value of fisheries production in Pacific SIDS, by category**

- Offshore - foreign-based
- Offshore - locally-based
- Coastal - subsistence
- Coastal - commercial
- Aquaculture
- Freshwater

**Offshore catches of the world’s main offshore fishing areas, 2018, in millions of metric tons**

- Western and Central Pacific
- Indian Ocean
- Eastern Pacific
- Atlantic

Chapter II  Fisheries as a driver for sustainable development

• **Challenges to Fisheries’ Sustainability**
  • Overfishing
  • Climate change and environmental degradation
  • Governance, particularly, the implementation of UNCLOS
  • Data availability

• **Experiences and lessons learned**
  • Fisheries conservation
  • Financing for conservation
  • Efficiency
  • Legal frameworks and multi-stakeholder engagement
  • Regional cooperation
Policy recommendations

- Overfishing can be addressed through adequate conservation efforts such as the creation of marine protected areas and the improved monitoring of IUU fishing
- The effective management of fisheries requires factual, transparent and harmonized data and information
- The improved governance must result in the effective implementation of global conventions such as UNCLOS and ensure multi-stakeholder engagement
- Regional cooperation should be enhanced to improve the effectiveness of policies, such as ongoing agreements between countries to monitor illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
Tourism as a driver for sustainable development
Chapter III  Tourism as a driver for sustainable development

- Tourism contributes to economic growth and the achieving of SDGs
- Tourism is a promising sector due to growing demand and unique character/variety of attractions offered by Asia-Pacific SIDS
- Tourism generates employment

Tourism employment, 2018

Percentage increase in visitor arrivals between 2008 and 2018

Sources: SPTO (2019) and Pratt (2019).
Tourism as a driver for sustainable development

Chapter III

Challenges to Tourism’s Sustainability

- Economic sustainability
- Environmental sustainability
- Sociocultural sustainability
- Other: competition, lack of resources, high cost of transportation, high vulnerability to external shocks, limited data availability

Experiences and lessons learned

- Blue and Green Economy
  - Marine-based tourism
  - Cruise tourism
  - Culture-based and sports tourism
- Green fee/tax initiatives
- Infrastructure
- Regional cooperation

Environment and climate adaptation levy utilization, by thematic area, Fiji

Chapter III  Tourism as a driver for sustainable development

Policy recommendations

• Links between local populations and the tourism sector should be strengthened so that local communities benefit more. This cannot be sustained by building backward and forward linkages only, but by developing “local content intensive” tourism types, e.g. marine tourism, culture-based tourism

• Asia-Pacific SIDS could consider generating additional revenues by introducing green taxes, fees and other special mechanisms, with an explicit objective of supporting environmental conservation as well as sustainable livelihood of the local populations. There are good examples to follow

• Regional cooperation should be enhanced to promote a common Pacific brand to raise the global profile, to improve connectivity and to enhance collaboration among the States to address gaps and loopholes in revenue generation
Conclusion
Chapter IV  Conclusion

• Asia-Pacific SIDS need to accelerate action to implement the 2030 Agenda

• To accelerate progress towards achieving these Goals, SIDS must take full advantage of their Blue Economy in a sustainable manner

• Fisheries and tourism are among the most promising sectors. However, challenges must be addressed

• The lack of data is a significant obstacle for SIDS Governments to formulate tailored and focused policies