

FAST FACTS



Small Island Developing States

1. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are a group of [37 member countries and 20 other territories](#) that share similar social, economic, and environmental challenges and are particularly vulnerable to climate change.
2. Small Island Developing States contribute less than 1 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions but have the most to lose to the climate crisis. Rising sea level threatens some of the islands' very existence. Other climate impacts, such as extreme weather, coral bleaching, and biodiversity loss are causing widespread and lasting socio-economic, health and environmental damage.
3. The number of climate-related disasters that strike Small Island Developing States each year has doubled from 10 to 20 over the last two decades. On average, SIDS lose over 2 per cent of their GDP annually due to disasters. Between 1970 and 2020, SIDS lost \$153 billion due to weather and climate-related disasters – more than ten times their average GDP of \$13.7 billion.
4. To minimize damage and prevent the loss of lives and livelihoods, the UN Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All [action plan](#) aims to ensure that by 2027 everyone is covered by an early warning system predicting weather-related hazards. Only 15 Small Island Developing States, or just 39 per cent, currently have multi-hazard early warning systems to reduce disaster risk. This is three times as many as in 2015, but still far from 100 per cent.
5. Other actions to adapt to the climate crisis – such as strengthening coastlines, restoring mangroves, or planting drought-resistant crops – can make small islands more resilient to extreme weather, rising sea levels, and food and water insecurity. The cost of adapting to climate change in Small Island Developing States is estimated at between \$22 billion and \$26 billion per year, or roughly 4 to 5 per cent of their combined GDP.
6. More funding is needed for adaptation as well as for covering losses and damages suffered by Small Island Developing States. The UN Secretary-General's [Adaptation Pipeline Accelerator](#) initiative is accelerating investments in Tuvalu and the Dominican Republic, for instance. And the [Loss and Damage fund](#) was established to help compensate vulnerable countries that are least equipped to deal with the growing impacts of climate change.
7. Climate impacts are increasingly driving displacement in small islands, as populations and settlements tend to be concentrated along coastal zones. In the Pacific region, 320,000 people were displaced due to climate and weather-related disasters



between 2008 and 2017. In Tuvalu, it is estimated that half of the country's capital will be flooded by 2050.

8. Every fraction of a degree of global warming increases the risks to coral reefs and plant and animal species. Small Island Developing States are home to 40 per cent of the world's coral reefs, which provide valuable protection to coastlines and act as carbon sinks, and more than 20 per cent of the world's biodiversity, including many endemic species that are found nowhere else on Earth.

9. Small Island Developing States are not only at the frontlines of climate impacts, but they are also leaders in taking climate action. Many SIDS have goals to reach net zero emissions and be powered by 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030 or beyond.

10. Small Island Developing States have some of the highest electricity costs in the world, in part because they are and have historically been heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels for energy. For example, the Maldives spends over 10 per cent of its GDP annually to import diesel, and the Caribbean SIDS region as a whole spends nearly 40 per cent of its foreign exchange reserves on imported fuels.

11. Between 2014 and 2022, renewable energy capacity – based on natural sources of energy that are abundant in nature, such as wind, solar and water – more than doubled in Small Island Developing States, increasing from 3.5 GW to 7.6 GW, with solar energy accounting for over 40 per cent of this capacity.

12. Small Island Developing States have committed to a total installed renewable energy capacity of more than 13 GW by 2030. But more than half of it depends on international support. To meet their targets, SIDS will need a minimum of \$10.5 billion, almost half of which is in the form of financial assistance from international sources.

Sources: [UNDESA](#) (1, 7, 10, 11), [IPCC](#) (2, 8), [UNCTAD](#) (3), [UNDP](#) (3), [UNDESA & UNDRR](#) (3, 4), [EW4All](#) (4), [DESA](#) (5, 8), [UNFCCC](#) (6), [UNDP](#) (7, 9), [IOM](#) (7), [World Bank](#) (10), [IRENA](#) (10), [IRENA](#) (11, 12)

