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The United Nations currently classifies 38 countries (UN members) as Small Island Developing States (SIDS)¹. It is a diverse group with more than 67 million people, representing less than one percent of global population. It shares many similar features as their small size, large distance to major markets, narrow economic bases, limited natural resources and climate related disasters, which have a demonstrable effect on growth and often led to a high degree of economic volatility². This write-up analyses impact of natural disasters on SIDS.

Estimated Economic Damages in SIDS by Natural Disasters

SIDS are especially vulnerable to natural disasters due to a strong exposure to meteorological hazard and rising sea levels, their small size, the high density and concentration of population, and high per capita costs of roads, ports and airport infrastructure³. When a natural disaster occurs, the immediate effect is destruction of human and physical capital. According to the most widely used database on natural disasters (EM-DAT), the economic cost of natural disaster during the 1990-2022 was nearly USD 64 billion. The highest economic damages were in Cuba (USD 19.62 billion) followed by Haiti (USD 14.75 billion), Bahamas (USD 8.38 billion), Dominican Republic (USD 4.37 billion) and Dominica (USD 2.53 billion) etc over the time period 1990-2022 (see figure 1).

People Affected by the Natural Disasters in SIDS

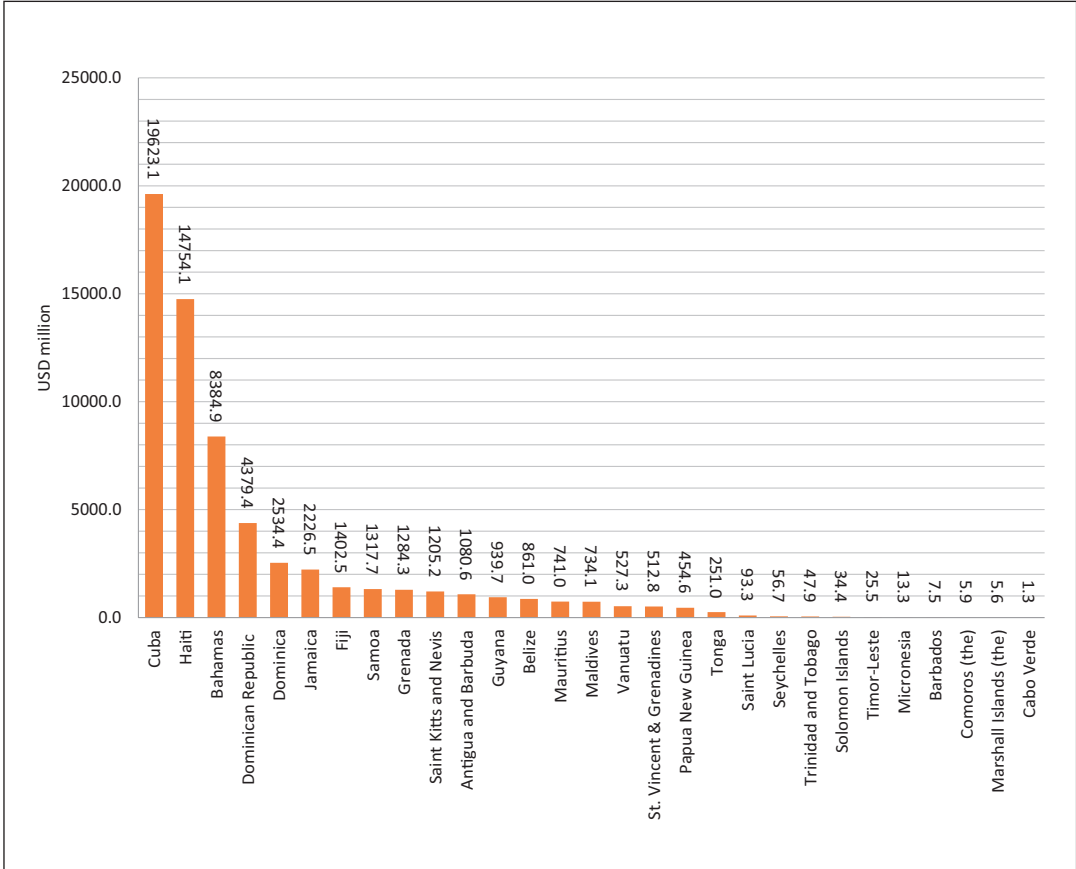
A total of 708 natural disasters event occurred in SIDS between 1990 and 2022. Among all these disasters, 313

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were caused by the storm, with the highest frequency, accounting 44 per cent of total; 186 caused by floods accounting for 26 per cent; 65 caused by epidemics, accounting for 9 per cent; 47 by droughts accounting for 7 per cent, 44 by earthquakes, accounting for 6 per cent, 30 by volcanic activities accounting for 4 per cent; 16 caused by landslides, accounting for 2 per cent and 1 per cent by other.

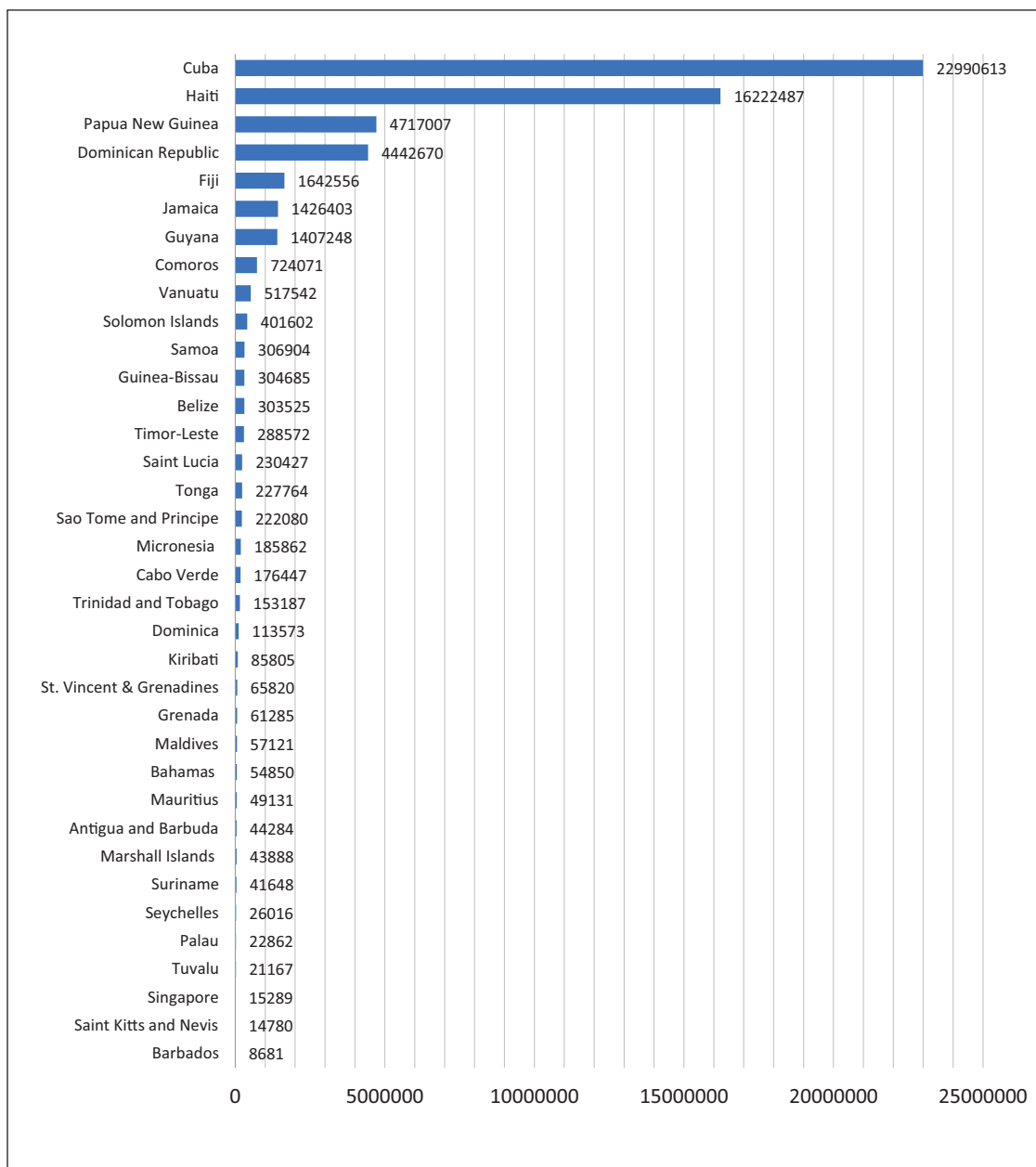
A total of 58 million people were affected by natural disasters in SIDS over the time period 1990-2022 (see figure 2). EM-DAT statistics show that in the past 32 years 22.99 million people were affected in Cuba due to natural disasters followed by the Haiti (16.22 million people), Papua New Guinea (4.71 million people), Dominican Republic (4.44. million people) and Fiji (1.64 million people), see figure 2.

Figure 1: Total Damages by natural disasters in SIDS, USD million (1990-2022)



Source: Author’s calculation using data from EM-DAT⁴

Figure 2: No. of People Affected by natural disasters in SIDS (1990-2022)



Source: Author's calculation using data from EM-DAT

The analysis shows that SIDS are prone to be most disaster affected countries in the world. Estimated data shows that on average, SIDS suffer an

annual damage of USD 2.13 billion over the period 1990-2022. The most disaster-prone island is the Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Fiji,

Vanuatu and Jamaica. The cumulative cost of disasters to SIDS' economies over the past one and half decades till 2014 has been as high as 90 per cent of GDP, reversing years of development gains (UNEP, 2014).

Endnotes

- ¹ <https://www.un.org/ohrlls/content/list-sids>
- ² <https://www.unido.org/sids>
- ³ [ser-rp-2020d14_en.pdf](https://www.un.org/ohrlls/content/list-ser-rp-2020d14_en.pdf)
- ⁴ <https://public.emdat.be/data> (EM-DAT,CRED/UCLouvain,Brussels,Belgium-www.emdat.be)

References

- United Nations Environment Programme (2014). *Our Planet*, UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1693UNEP.pdf>
- Anja Slany (2020). Multiple disasters and debt sustainability in Small Island Developing States, UNCTAD Research Paper No 55, UNCTAD. https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ser-rp-2020d14_en.pdf.

GLOBAL SOUTH-SOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPO 2022

The eleventh Global South-South Development Expo (GSSD Expo) is scheduled to be held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok, Thailand, from September 12 to 14, 2022, in conjunction with the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation. The overarching theme of the GSSD Expo 2022 is "Advancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable COVID-19 Recovery: Towards a smart and resilient future".

GSSD Expo, which began in 2008, is UNOSSC's flagship event, held in its role as the UN system-wide and global coordinator and champion for South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTrC). This is done in accordance of UN General Assembly's mandate to systematically exhibit Southern development solutions and advance sustainable development. The Nairobi Outcome Document, adopted at the High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation in Nairobi, Kenya in 2009, endorsed the annual GSSD Expo.

Key subthemes of the GSSD Expo 2022 is decided as follows: Digitalization and Smart Future, SDG aligned South-South Approaches and Practices, Trade and Investment, Role of Youth and Women, Volunteerism and Entrepreneurship, and Public-Private Partnership, Creative Economy and Sustainable Tourism, Green Recovery, Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action, Food Security and Supply Chain, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change, and Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response.

"The GSSD Expo is an UN system and world-wide platform for showcasing development solutions at national and the only Expo solely for South-South and triangular cooperation offered by the United Nations. The 11th GSSD Expo will be the first ever to be held in the Asia and Pacific region; First one after the BAPA+40, and the first Expo in hybrid formats (both in-person and virtual) leveraging digital technology." said Mr. Adel Abdellatif, Director a.i, UNOSSC. International cooperation is more crucial than ever as we build back from the crisis.

Source: UNESCAP. (2021, November 22). Pre-Launch of the Global South-South Development Expo 2022 [Press Release]. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/search?q=escap+75&oq=escap+75&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i22i30l2j0i10i22i30j0i390l3.2616j0j9&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>