

**Briefing Note #2B: Similarities and Differences between SIDS and the Arctic**

Common Features	SIDS Features	Arctic Features
<p><b>Biophysical Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly productive coastal areas</li> <li>- Geography and location which directly expose them to climate change impacts</li> <li>- extensive coastlines and low-lying areas</li> <li>- Relative geographic isolation</li> <li>- Complex, sensitive, and specialized ecosystems, occupying a narrow geographical range</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inter-annual variability in temperature, rainfall and sea level related to the ENSO phenomenon</li> <li>- Susceptibility to extreme weather events</li> <li>- High biodiversity</li> <li>- Tropical/Sub-tropical/temperate climate</li> <li>- Limited and seasonal availability of freshwater</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extreme annual climate fluctuations</li> <li>- Seasonal and permanent permafrost</li> <li>- Vast tundra regions</li> <li>- Fluctuations in sea ice extent, thickness, compactness</li> <li>- Long winters and short summers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Socio-economic Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Predominantly coastal societies and infrastructure</li> <li>- High reliance on natural resources</li> <li>- Narrow economic bases sensitive to external forces</li> <li>- Limited infrastructure and weak institutional and human resources</li> <li>- Indigenous societies relying on a mix of traditional and modern ways of life that include subsistence harvesting methods</li> <li>- Low incomes,</li> <li>- economic vulnerability</li> <li>- Compromised health status - changes in traditional diet, exposure to contaminants</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High population growth rates and densities</li> <li>- High levels of intra- and inter-island migration and rapid changes in social structure</li> <li>- Extreme economic openness and dependence that is sensitive to external shocks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sparse, concentrated and unevenly distributed human population with a skewed demographic structure (age and gender dimensions)</li> <li>- Isolated, rural communities with high levels of substance abuse, violence, and suicide rates in some cases;</li> <li>- Compromised socioeconomic status of many indigenous peoples</li> <li>- Social transformations associated with self-determination, technological innovation, global trade and urbanization</li> <li>- Centre-periphery tensions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Non-climate stresses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local, regional and long-range pollution issues</li> <li>- Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources</li> <li>- Challenges for trade and maintaining a balance between economic independence and integration</li> <li>- Challenges facing coastal regions</li> <li>- Human development challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management of household and industrial waste</li> <li>- Coastal erosion through coral/sand mining and coastal development</li> <li>- Rapid urbanization</li> <li>- Undiversified economies and unsustainable tourism development</li> <li>- Low human development indices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Challenges to human and ecosystem health from persistent pollutants/ industrial activities</li> <li>- Pressures on traditional knowledge and ways of life</li> <li>- Low human development indices</li> <li>- Piecemeal development, tourism pressures</li> <li>- Ozone depletion</li> </ul>