Small States at the United Nations

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Statement of Authenticity

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my own personal work, and that the greater portion of the work has been done after the registration for the degree.

Stephanie Psaila
February 2010, Malta

Acknowledgements

To my husband, Patrick

Abstract

The proliferation of small states in the past few decades has brought small and larger states on the same playing field. Their increase in number triggered a wave of studies, raised concern by 'realists' and some powerful states, and an affirmation that at the United Nations, all states are equal, regardless of size.

The dissertation looks into the role small states have played – and continue to play – within the United Nations. It looks at definitions, characteristics and small states' behaviour within the General Assembly, and with regards to the Security Council. It also looks into some of the proposals initiated by small states which have eventually lead to the establishment of legally-binding norms, international agreements and initiatives, co-operation models, and some of today's well-known institutions. Finally, it highlights the lessons learnt from the role small states have played within the United Nations, which serve as potential strategies states – in particular, but not exclusively, small states – can continue to adopt.

Contents

Acronyms

AIMS – Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea

AOSIS – Alliance of Small Island States

BPoA – Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

CARICOM – Caribbean Community

COMSEC – Commonwealth Secretariat

EVI – Environmental Vulnerability Index

FOSS – Forum of Small States

G4 – Group of Four

ICC – International Criminal Court

ICRU – Icelandic Crisis Response Unit

ILC – International Law Commission

INC/FCCC – Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LDCs – Least Developed Countries

OEWG – Open-ended Working Group

S-5 – Small Five

SIDS – Small Island Developing States

SOPAC – South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission

SPF – South Pacific Forum

UfC – Uniting for Consensus

UN DESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNCED – United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNCLOS – United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNGASS-22 – 22nd Special Session of the General Assembly

UNITAR – The United Nations Institute for Training and Research UNITAR

WMO – World Meteorological Organisation

WTO – World Trade Organisation

Introduction

The United Nations is regarded as the institution where multilateralism achieves its full expression. It is the organisation which enjoys the largest number of sovereign member states, and which promotes the strongest element of equality through the one vote per sovereign state rule.

The United Nations system is itself a generator of diverse multilateral processes, generally taking the form of *ad hoc* conferences, sometimes leading to norm-laying agreements, which then take an independent institutional life of their own (Camilleri, 2007), such as the Convention on the Law of the Sea, a number of human rights conventions, and various disarmament agreements. Today, the international legal instruments cover wide-ranging sectors of international co-operation, from health and labour standards to maritime and meteorological co-operation, from aviation and fishing to postal services (Goff, 2004).

A major contribution of the United Nations has been to provide an arena through which small states could play a role in international relations in a way that has never before been possible.

Critics have often dismissed the role small states play as weak and almost insignificant. Small states have generally been viewed as too vulnerable, unable to defend themselves on their own, grossly reliant on bigger states for their every need, and hence, lacking power and influence. Critics (such as Vital, 1967) have also expressed scepticism about the survival of small states, opining that their survival as independent powers is precarious due to a multitude of factors over many of which they have little influence.

Yet, recent history – and recent studies – on diplomacy of small states disprove the critics. While the fact remains that small states are generally more vulnerable than other states, and while many small states are developing states, remote islands, low-lying coastal states, or a combination of these factors,

small states have nonetheless participated and contributed actively at the United Nations. Their active participation has often triggered the General Assembly to take up their proposals and to mandate further action, eventually leading to the establishment of legally-binding norms, international agreements and initiatives, co-operation models, and some of today's well-known institutions.

The dissertation will first trace the path of small states from the post-Second World War period to present day; it will highlight the various definitions of small states and the characteristics associated with "smallness"; it will also analyse the behaviour of small states at the United Nations.

It will then explore, through case studies based on three broad thematic areas – substantively, the Environment and Security (which are further subdivided into seven categories: sustainable development, climate change, Law of the Sea, vulnerability indices, International Criminal Court, protection and security, and peacekeeping missions), and procedurally concerning the United Nations reform – the role small states have played at the United Nations and highlight their successes, both on their own individual merit and as part of a coalition.

Finally, it will analyse the lessons learnt from the role small states have played at the United Nations, which also serve as potential strategies states – in particular, but not exclusively, small states – can adopt.

The main message that this dissertation aims to convey is that at the United Nations, small states may be vulnerable, but they have certainly shown that through their active, meaningful participation, they are certainly not powerless.

In the words of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (1998, p. 2):

"It is easy for small nations to feel daunted by the global forces at work in our lives today. The cumulative effect of the globalisation of trade, finance, labour and communications may seem to be as powerful as a force of nature, as inevitable as the ocean tides, or as unpredictable as the path of a tornado. Large countries with enormous labour forces, abundant natural resources, arsenals of high-tech weaponry and fleets of expert technicians and negotiators may seem to have all the advantages.

Small nations may feel so diminished alongside bigger powers that they fear being out-gunned and out-raced in the global economic sweepstakes, which is often portrayed – incorrectly – as a zero-sum game. Small nations may conclude that they have little or no role to play internationally, and that they should somehow stay away from the fray, see to their own needs and leave the playing field to those countries who are going to get their way anyway. I would like to sound the strongest possible note to the contrary. My long experience at the United Nations has shown me that the small states of the world… are more than capable of holding their own. I would even go so far as to say that their contributions are the very glue of progressive international co-operation for the common good."

Author's note: Although this study celebrates the achievements of small states at the United Nations, I must at this stage note my bias, and add a disclaimer.

My bias arises due to the fact that I am a Maltese citizen; more so because Malta is itself a small island state. I consider Malta to be solid proof that small states are meaningful at – and to – the United Nations. Malta's achievements at the United Nations are to the benefit of many states today, as are the many other achievements which can be credited to small states.

The case studies listed below are certainly not exhaustive. The aim is to highlight some of the successful case studies by way of example, in support of the argument that small states can participate actively and meaningfully at the United Nations. The fact that other successful case studies are not highlighted below certainly does not render them less meaningful.

Chapter I - The small state

1.   From negligible to sovereign

It was the relatively growing number of small states at the United Nations, particularly due to the process of decolonisation and the recent fragmentation of some larger states (Read, 2002), that special focus was laid on small states, small island states and micro-states at the turn of the century.

The decolonisation period brought close to 90 newly independent states to the fast-transforming political map. Prior to 1960, Iceland and Luxembourg were the only states of this size to enjoy all the prerogatives of sovereignty within the international system. Cyprus in that year would be the first of 26 very small Commonwealth territories to achieve independence (Bartman, 1998).

The disintegration of large states like the Soviet Union also added to the number of internationally recognised states and territories which by the end of the second millennium exceeded 200.

Today, the Commonwealth accounts for more than half of the world's 45 very small states, which is also why the Commonwealth has demonstrated a long-standing concern for the vulnerabilities and interests of small states.

Statistics aside, the increasing number of small states attracted concern at United Nations level. The growing micro-state phenomenon in the General Assembly prompted the United States and Great Britain to consider alternatives to full membership (United Nations Security Council, Committee of Experts, 1971), and later to abandon it (Bartman, 1998).

Bartman (1998) states that many observers were worried about the credibility of principles of international law which accorded the rights of sovereign equality to such palpably weak entities. There was concern too for the future of international organisations if equal voice in the General Assembly

were to be granted to the Maldives on one hand, and the United States and the Soviet Union on the other. With the admission of the Maldives to United Nations membership the tacit minimal size of 100,000 was breached. However it soon became apparent that there was no solution to this issue, because any attempt to introduce alternatives to full membership based on small size was bound to compromise the dignity of very small states and to offend a majority of members committed as they were to an unequivocal process of decolonisation. Bartman explains that 25 years had to pass before the European micro-states felt sufficiently emboldened to apply for membership. By then, it was clear that participation in the organised relations of the international system was open to even the tiniest of states. It also became evident that many of the initial fears and concerns about their membership were unfounded.

Studies on small states also went through periods of highs and lows in terms of cumulativeness and influences. Neumann and Gstohl (2006) trace the post-war development of small state studies and place it in the context of major historical events and mainstream International Relations theory. While in the wake of World War II, it was paradoxically realism (and later neo-realism) itself that spurred small state studies, it was also this period that nonetheless slammed small states as having no relevance at all. This negative wave was followed by a controversy in the 1980s, between neo-realism and neoliberal institutionalism, the latter of which focused more on economic co-operation and international institutions and absolute gains, which was however followed by a relative standstill in the study of small states. More recently, the 1990s saw once again a revival in the study of small states, characterised by new social constructivist and post-positive approaches which emphasised ideas, norms and national identities. The scholars say that recent contributions:

"...pay attention to the role of small states as norm entrepreneurs, actors in regional integration, or as sources of ethno-political conflicts. In the age of globalisation, not only have non-state actors acquired new meaning, but small states are also benefiting from taking part in efforts of global governance and from renewed scholarly attention."

2.   Defining "small"

Despite many definitions of "smallness" in relation to small states, there has never been a single definition that has managed to cut a line between small states and large states: no definition has managed to define what constitutes a small state, and when does a state cease to be small. Among volumes of research, one distinguishing study (Baehr, 1975) concluded on one hand that definitional problems were so great that they made the concept of smallness useless as an analytical tool. On the other hand, an opposing conclusion (Hey, 2003) argued that no strict definition was necessary to employ "smallness" as an analytical device or to glean findings about foreign policy behaviour from it.

Whether or not a definition of "smallness" could be used as an analytical tool, the arguments presented in this dissertation require an analysis into definitions which categorise small states and their characteristics.

Some definitions have focused on relative definitions which consider power to be more fungible (Mosser, 2001), such as the degree of influence a country would have had in international affairs (Keohane, 1969), or a psychological and material dimension which is that of a small state having a narrow margin of safety and requiring outside help, and where such weakness is recognisable by other states, or even the perception through which a small state is not seen as a danger to neighbouring countries (Goetschel, 1998).

Others have focused their definitions on absolute definitions which generally rely on thresholds, including geographical size and population (Mosser, 2001). Economic performance, especially a measure of the gross domestic product (GDP), is also a favoured threshold. Of the absolute definitions, it seems that population is the most widely used criterion for small states. The population criterion has also been defined as the one indicator common to all such definitions (Commonwealth, 1985). One must note that pre-1990s literature (Cooper and Shaw, 2009) which used population as a criteria tended to categorise the world in Large States or Great Powers, Medium States or Medium Powers, and Small States or Small Powers, the latter category as those states with a population of 10 to 15

million. States with a population below the one to 1.5 million were often referred to as Microstates.[1] More recently, the following have continued to use population as the absolute criterion but have varied the cut-off figure probably in view of the increasing number of small states following the decolonisation and disintegration of large states as stated in the previous sub-section:

- The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR, 1969) used population as a threshold. Although its report studies the *Status and Problems of Very Small States and Territories,* the one million population mark was the sole criterion to determine the number of countries falling within the category of "very small" states.

- In its reports, the Commonwealth established a quantitative figure. While the Commonwealth 1985 report, *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society* established a cut-off figure of one million, the Commonwealth 1997 report, *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability*, launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh in October 1997, increased the quantitative mark to a 1.5 million population test. At the time of the 1997 report, the number of countries falling within this new threshold increased to 49 independent states, 28 of which were Commonwealth countries and 42 were in the developing world, up from 44 independent states, 29 of whom which were Commonwealth countries.

- The Commonwealth Secretariat and World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States (2000) used the same threshold as a convenient yardstick for classifying small states, in its final report, *Small States: Meeting Challenges in the Global Economy*. It also concluded, however, that no definition, whether it be population, geographical size or GDP, is likely to be fully satisfactory.

- In 2007, the Commonwealth Secretariat (2007) stated that population was also appealing "from an economic point of view as it reflects the size of the labour force and therefore the constraints associated with human resources and the potential number of consumers."

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[1] Cooper, A.; Shaw, T. (2009). "The Diplomacies of Small States at the Start of the Twenty-first Century: How Vulnerable? How Resilient?" In: Cooper, A.; Shaw, T. (2009). (Eds.) *Small but smart: Small States in the Global System.* Palgrave MacMillan, p. 4

Admittedly, the population criterion begs the question: does a state cease to be small if it had an additional population of 10,000? Furthermore, as noted by the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC)/World Bank Task Force (2000), in practice, states regardless of size may be sharing the same or similar characteristics to those of small states.

More recently, a measure in terms of economy has also found its way in specific programmes, particularly in relation to trade issues. Thus, in parallel to the Commonwealth's 1985 and 1997 reports, as well as the 2000 report by the Commonwealth Secretariat and World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States which took a special interest in "small developing countries", the World Trade Organisation (WTO) tackled the problem of "small economies", leading to a special reference to "small economies"[2] in the Doha Ministerial Declaration in 2001. A similar declaration[3] was again stated in the Doha Work Programme adopted by WTO in 2004.

The recent use of the term has brought about a mix of reactions, especially among small island developing states. Hein (2004, pp. 6-7) notes that:

"On the one hand, it shows that some notice has been taken, in a major world forum, of trade-related problems associated with smallness, and it brings on board several non-island states, thereby making for a wider coalition. However, the focus of the plea for special consideration has tended to be diluted by the presence, in relevant discussions, of small continental states and states (islands or not) that are considerably larger than those in the core group of obvious small island developing states."

However, it is also important to note a lack of clarity that has been said to surround the interchangeable use of terms "small island developing states" (Barbados, 1994), or "small economies", or "small and vulnerable economies" (Doha, 2001), or "structurally weak, vulnerable, and small

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[2] Para. 35. "We agree to a work programme, under the auspices of the General Council, to examine issues relating to the trade of small economies. The objective of this work is to frame responses to the trade-related issues identified for the fuller integration of small, vulnerable economies into the multilateral trading system, and not to create a sub-category of WTO Members. The General Council shall review the work programme and make recommendations for action to the Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference."

[3] "The trade-related issues identified for the fuller integration of small, vulnerable economies into the multilateral trading system, should also be addressed, without creating a sub-category of Members, as part of a work programme, as mandated in paragraph 35 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration."

economies"[4] (São Paulo, 2004). Such lack of clarity may unfortunately be used as a pretext for decision-makers for inaction (Hein, 2004).

It is because of these difficulties that a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches can provide separate, but complementary, perspectives. Camilleri (2007) points out that categorisation based on quantitative definitions is often used in the context of development co-operation as it focuses on the identification of the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of small states and on those measures and programmes that can help them cushion or avoid their weaknesses and vulnerabilities. On the other hand, the qualitative approach considers a much larger number of states as small, as it conceptualises the whole community of states as a seamless and coherent spectrum – ranging from the extremely small and weak (microstate) to the most massive and powerful (superpower). Within this spectrum, the majority of states are "middle powers," whose sense of smallness is essentially circumstantial and subjective.

For this reason, all the case studies mentioned in this dissertation refer to sovereign small states that fall within the Commonwealth 1.5 million threshold, but also to small countries that share the characteristics of small countries. Likewise, the arguments and conclusions can be taken to apply to all these countries.

3. Characteristics of small states

Small states may be very different from each other for a number of reasons. An island state is different from a landlocked state; a small island state in the Pacific is different from a small country in Africa or Europe; a developed small state is different from a developing one.

Yet, small states share a number of characteristics. Perception often links small states to vulnerabilities and weaknesses. Paradoxically, the idea that small states – especially island states – are idyllic places full of by paradise-like surroundings is also a common perception.

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[4] Para. 33. "UNCTAD should enhance its work on the special problems of LDCs, small island developing states, and land-locked developing countries and the related special problems and challenges faced by transit developing countries as well as structurally weak, vulnerable, and small economies."

Indeed, some of these common characteristics do describe the challenges small states face, such as their being more vulnerable in the face of natural disasters, or the inability to be as competitive as larger states because of their limited capacity in the public and private sector. However, some of these characteristics also point to advantages that emanate from being small, such as being less prone to civil unrest and dictatorship.

Sutton and Payne (1993) identify five common characteristics, also referred to in the Commonwealth 1997 report, which are openness, islandness or insularity, resilience, weakness and dependence. All five have a bearing on small states' security.

Openness affects economy as much as it affects politics and culture. Openness in economics focuses on the importance of international trade and brings benefits to small states, which tend to rely on import duties. However, the high exposure to international markets is a marked disadvantage, as are situations in which small states have to reduce import tariffs.

On the other hand, the limited labour force vis-à-vis the state's political system may translate into external pressure, manipulation and penetration. Limited human resources, especially in managerial and technical areas, makes for higher levels of expatriate staffing. The reliance on expatriates to fill in positions which have a direct bearing on the stability of a state lead to vulnerabilities which foreign presence is not immune from.

With regards to the cultural nature of small states, the inclination to look outward is unavoidable. Although many might view this as a danger to personal identity and values, the positive attributes of adaption and innovation are of great importance. This stimulates competition and permits small states to exploit new opportunities in the emerging global economy.

Islandness – or insularity as the 1997 Commonwealth report refers to it – is another characteristic associated with and predominantly present in relation to small island states and physically isolated places. Individual identity is a main feature of this characteristic leaving limited room for co-operation between physically isolated states, mainly because the needs and circumstances may vary drastically. For example, the needs of small island states in the Caribbean may be very different to those of a small

island state in the Mediterranean. Sutton and Payne refer to Doumenge (1985, p. 584), who notes that "islanders are never happier with their insularity than when asserting they are completely different from their neighbours".

Remoteness is another feature of islandness, where the geographical distance from other countries places these small states with considerable economic and administrative challenges. Insularity also tends to leave small island states vulnerable to environmental dangers such as natural disasters or threats from the sea.

A very positive characteristic of small states is *resilience*. The political and social systems of small states thrive mainly because of (Sutton and Payne, 1993, p. 586) "institutional coherence... providing effective mechanisms for political participation and administration". The political regimes of small states are thus (Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997, p. 11) "pragmatic and robust, able to withstand significant challenges which larger states would find difficult to meet. In consequence, and in comparison to other states, small states exhibit an enviable record of political stability, with only a few exceptions."

Weakness is generally associated with small states and their general tendency to be unable to defend themselves from aggression. Because of this, small states tend to rely on the international system to safeguard their safety. To counter its security vulnerability, three alternatives are presented to small states: (a) neutrality or nonalignment, (b) alliances with other states whose military capabilities far supersede their own, and (c) collective security arrangements which can be universal in nature, but which recent trends have favoured regional arrangements that can fight aggression faced by such small states.

The fifth characteristic identified by Sutton and Payne is that of *dependence*. This characteristic mainly concerns a small state's economic dependence on other larger states. It has forced small states to adopt an outward stance, similar to openness, discussed earlier. This means that small states have to continuously adapt to economic developments of larger states. On the other hand the benefits of dependence do exist (Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997, p. 12): "dependence is not a static

concept and that changes in the international system can provide new opportunities for both sets of partners from which each can benefit, as in the promotion of offshore financial services or greater awareness of the needs of environmental protection."

The Commonwealth Secretariat and World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States (2000) identify seven characteristics, some of which overlap with the abovementioned characteristics: remoteness and isolation (described above), openness (also described above), susceptibility to natural disasters and environment change, limited diversification, poverty, limited capacity, income volatility and access to external capital.[5]

The geographical locations of many small states happen to be in areas which are prone to floods, hurricanes, cyclones, desertification and volcanic activity. They are thus *susceptible to natural disasters and environmental change*, perhaps much more than larger states. These problems are far-reaching, and can disrupt infrastructure, result in production and export losses, and have serious repercussions on the economy and the population.

In recent years, climate change has also had a serious impact, especially the rise in sea levels. Small states, especially low-lying countries, face severe consequences of loss of land mass, if not extinction.

Adding to this list of characteristics is *limited diversification.* Small domestic markets seem to be the norm, which constriction does not allow much room to branch out and expand on production and export levels. In fact, most small states have showed little significant diversification. While in some states, the income generated from local production and the export of primary commodities has been replaced by services related to tourism and by financial services, others have remained focused on primary commodities, resulting in poor GDP growth. It is also a common trend for small states to replace the production of a product or service rather than to diversify by adding more products or services to the country's portfolio.

Although not a general trait, *poverty* is among the characteristics of small states which remains a serious challenge. In fact, evidence shows that poverty levels tend to be higher in smaller states, as

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[5] Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Joint Task Force on Small States. (2000). *Op. cit.,* p. 9

would be the income distribution among the population. This vulnerability is linked to income volatility, a characteristic which can create additional challenges as the population is less likely to be able to withstand drops in incomes.

Limited capacity in terms of human resources, which overlaps with Sutton and Payne's analysis, is a well-known fact, which spans out of the small population living in an equally small state, where in many cases the population is scattered. The strain of having limited human resources is felt in both the public and private sector.

The vulnerability of limited capacity as described by the Task Force partly overlaps Sutton and Payne's openness.

In the public sector, although this fact is not present in every small state, the disadvantages are felt mostly in states which have high transport costs. The provision of goods and services is therefore difficult to provide for across all the state, resulting in accessibility difficulties, especially in remote areas.

The Task Force also notes that "as they face the challenges and opportunities of globalisation small states are also finding they do not have sufficient institutional capacity to participate fully in international finance and trade negotiations – the outcomes of which can profoundly affect their economies." Yet, this does not only hold true for international representation, but also within ministries and foreign missions, whose key persons often take on multifaceted and wider-range tasks to make up for lack of staff. In the private sector, firms are generally small, with very limited capacities, including manpower, the financial ability to invest in marketing and the media, and innovation. Furthermore, most firms are monopolies or oligopolies, a result of which is the lack of the same level of competition which larger states and their consumers benefit from.

Lastly, all the abovementioned factors have a negative impact on the economy of small states, which can be made vulnerable due to, among other factors, *income volatility* and difficulty to *access external capital*.

The residents of small states are more likely to experience higher volatility in their incomes due to three main reasons: (a) small states rely heavily on imports, which make their economies more susceptible to fluctuations in world market prices; (b) as stated upon, small states have limited diversification and are more likely to replace the production of a product or service rather than adding to existing products/services; (c) their vulnerabilities in terms of being prone to natural catastrophes also affects their economies to a large extent, and a result, affect the population's income. Some small states' ability to diversify production and to specialise in specific sectors, including financial and other highly specialised services, helps them mitigate this economic vulnerability.

A second challenge is that of accessing external capital, which when proving difficult can lead to further economic vulnerabilities. Small states' difficulty in attracting foreign investment – due to them being perceived as highly risky by investors – means that small states have to compete more with other economies on the international market, which competition does not always prove successful to small states.

Briguglio (2004) gives economic vulnerability a name, yet his conclusion can be said to be a reflection of small states' ability of coping well with vulnerability: "An important point to be stressed at this early stage is that vulnerability is not the same thing as poverty or economic backwardness." In other papers, the present author referred to what he called the "Singapore Paradox" (Briguglio, 2002), that is, the case of a number of small states that are economically vulnerable, but who have managed to generate high income per capita despite the drawbacks. Prime examples are Singapore, Cyprus and Malta. Briguglio notes that it is possible, as such states have proven, to build one's own resilience to be able to cope with vulnerability.

Despite the obvious vulnerabilities, especially common among small states, the characteristics above display a range of advantages which small states have exploited to their own good use, such as resilient political structures, neutrality, openness, and the ability to adapt faster than larger states. As Sutton and Payne state, these capabilities allow them to minimise disadvantage and maximise potential. They note that while small states remain vulnerable, they do not remain helpless.

4.   Categorising "small" into coalitions

Common characteristics which small states share, as well as their almost innate capability of fighting helplessness, have brought them closer together to form coalitions.

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) group gathers low-lying coastal countries that share similar sustainable development challenges. The group was recognised at the 1992 Rio De Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit.

Although the United Nations never established specific criteria to determine which states fall under the SIDS list (UNCTAD 2002), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have developed their own lists.

In the absence of specific criteria, UNCTAD (2007) has adopted an unofficial list of 29 SIDS for analytical purposes.[6] It has consistently argued in favour of a United Nations-established set of official criteria to identify small island developing states, with special reference to the question of smallness.

On the other hand, the UN DESA uses a list of 51 small island developing states and territories[7] to monitor the sustainable development of SIDS. These are geographically categorised in three main regions: the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the AIMS (Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea). Each of these regions has a regional co-operation body: the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Pacific Islands Forum and the Indian Ocean Commission.

These 51 SIDS often work together in the United Nations through the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), of which most SIDS are members. AOSIS, seeded in 1990 at the Second World Climate Conference in Geneva (Heileman, 1993), is the ad hoc lobby and negotiating voice for SIDS within the United Nations system, and has a membership of 44 states and observers, 38 of whom are United

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[6] See Annex I
[7] See Annex II

Nations member states.[8] AOSIS members work together primarily through their Permanent Diplomatic Missions to the United Nations in New York.

Distinctly from the abovementioned groups is the informal grouping of small states, known as the Forum of Small States (FOSS). The FOSS, established by the United Nations on the initiative of Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Chew Tai Soo, on May 22, 1992, is on a non-ideological and non-geographical group, comprising 100 countries and meeting a number of times per year, including the Small States Forum held annually. Years later, in 2007, the Small States Network for Economic Development was set up in Malta upon an initiative by the Government of Malta[9] with the full support of the World Bank (Borg, 2009).

All the abovementioned groups have a proven track record at the United Nations in pushing forward the interests of the countries they represent. Among the successful initiatives is the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPoA), which was the result of the 1995 Barbados Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and which has been further implemented through the Mauritius Strategy, an outcome of the 2005 Mauritius United Nations Conference on Small Islands. As explained in further detail below, the Barbados Programme of Action finds its beginnings in a final communiqué of the 1989 Twentieth South Pacific Forum,[10] the Langkawi Declaration on Environment, adopted by the 1989 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and the Male Declaration on Global Warming and Sea Level Rise adopted in 1989 by the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise. The Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) has also been crucial in supporting the implementation of the BPoA.

Another area in which small states have made a global impact, especially at the United Nations, is in the climate change debate, which is said to have surfaced on the General Assembly's agenda with the Maldives' speech on the real threats the island state was facing, as well as with Malta's proposal to

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[8] See Annex III
[9] "'Founding members' means the following small states: Malta, as the progenitor of the Network proposal, and Barbados, Mauritius, St Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, and Vanuatu, as states that have served as Chair of the Small States Forum as of the inception of SSNED." (SSNED, 2006)
[10] In 2000, the name was changed to Pacific Islands Forum.

make climate change a common concern of mankind. A few years later, immediately following its formation in 1990, AOSIS soon demonstrated its ability to maximise its members' potential influence.

As will be demonstrated and argued below, not only are small states able to exert influence at the United Nations, but the power of the many to speak with one voice has also proven true in many cases.

5.   The behaviour of small states at the United Nations

The behaviour of small states at the United Nations is generally influenced by a number of elements, some of which are a direct result of the innate characteristic of being small, including their vulnerabilities, their specific needs, whether geographically, economically, politically or culturally, and their ability to discover and focus on niches, or specialisations. Furthermore, we have already seen how small states are likely to form coalitions with other like-minded states, and how this is also a result of having common characteristics. This will feature again below.

Hong (1995) states that while small states differ in level of development, human and natural resources, geographic location and cultural background, the factors that explain their behaviour generally include: (a) their perception of their own national interests; (b) their vulnerability in international relations; (c) the competition for attention and recognition by the international community; (d) the opportunity to restructure the United Nations to be more responsive to their needs; and (e) the need to co-operate on a common agenda and common objectives in order to maximise their influence.

I argue that while national interests and factors arising from the international scene are generally an influential determinant, their behaviour is also highly influenced by their affinity to group themselves with states having similar common characteristics and common concerns. Their need to co-operate on a common agenda is not simply aimed at maximising their influence, but finds its roots in the desire to understand and be understood. Naturally, co-operating on a common agenda often requires small states, especially island states, to permeate their individual insularity concerns in favour of a common agenda. Yet, this is a price small states are generally willing to pay.

I also argue that despite evidence that small states have at times competed for attention, the recognition they have managed to achieve has been a direct result of their having developed and sustained niches – often shaped by what they consider their national priorities to be – and successfully promoted them to some of the most important structures witnessed today.

Furthermore, while agreeing on small states' desire to make up for vulnerabilities in international relations and to reform the Security Council to secure better representation, I add a further element which explains small states' behaviour, that is, their limited human resources which makes it a challenge for them to follow every development that takes place at the United Nations, and which in turn prompts them to adopt certain practices to overcome this challenge.

The above-mentioned elements that explain small states' predominant and general behaviour are analysed in detail:

(a)   National/regional agendas

Camilleri (2007) states that choices in foreign policy are a response to constant and objective factors – geographical, geostrategic, socio-economic, historical, and cultural – as well as to a set of external and often unpredictable factors arising from the prevailing international system. The constant factors of geography and geostrategic location, and the external factors arising from the prevailing international system, are powerful determinants of the foreign policy of any state, but, more immediately, of that of the smaller and weaker ones. Camilleri also states that not only these factors, but also their vulnerabilities may be a direct reflection in the way small states conduct their diplomacy.

In practice, the items that small states have on their agenda are highly influenced by the very nature of their "smallness". Like any other state, the agenda of small states is composed of issues which are linked to their characteristics, especially their vulnerabilities, including their being vulnerable to natural disasters and environment change, their likeliness to be unable to defend themselves

adequately on their own, their proneness to poverty, and other vulnerabilities which are likely to have an impact on small states.

Thus, for example, the debate on climate change is a central issue for small states, in particular, low-lying coastal small states, who risk their very own existence. A sea-level rise of one metre unavoidably results in loss of land, and admittedly, the risk of losing 100m2 of land mass is more acute in a small state like Malta, than in most large states.

It is not surprising, then, for small states and island states to be more active in climate change and sustainable development debates, and in combating threats afflicting their regions in particular. Hence, the history of small states at the United Nations reveals a concentration of activity and proposals revolving around a contained number of issues that reflects their choices in foreign policy.

(b)   Formation of coalitions

The fact that the number of small states has increased drastically over the past years, and the fact that small states find affinity with other small states with similar concerns, have led these states to form important alliances among themselves.

Furthermore, the role that small states have played, or are currently playing, in various multilateral negotiations confirms that small and cohesive groups can have an effect (Camilleri, 2007).

Coalitions are formed for two main reasons. Firstly, coalitions, the most common of which are geographic-based groupings, are more sensitive to those issues which are high on small states' agendas, in particular, environment challenges, security threats and economic vulnerabilities. Not only do such states share common understandings about such issues, but the groups they form are more likely to focus specifically on those concerns that are linked to such states, perhaps more that a large intergovernmental organisation can.

One of the setbacks to coalitions, especially vis-à-vis small island states, is a state's insularity, that is, the individual identity which is likely to leave limited room for co-operation between physically isolated states, mainly because the needs and circumstances may vary drastically. Despite the prima facie setback, however, the diplomatic chronicles of the SIDS and AOSIS have shown that insularity can actually lead small states to co-operate on resolving concerns that emerge as a result of insularity.

Secondly, coalitions are formed not only for states to discuss their concerns with each other, but to be able to show strength in numbers. Although such strength is not successful in every case, groups of small states such as AOSIS have succeeded in having their cases heard, and even in securing a number of proposals into international agreements.

Shibuya (1996) notes that the problem of island states is in getting their voices heard in the international arena, although admittedly, the problem presents a difficult task, but not an impossible one. The experience of the Earth Summit has shown the crucial importance of formal organisations such as AOSIS in maximising the island states' potential influence. Shibuya (1996, p. 555) notes that:

"the power of the many to speak with one voice has a multiplying effect. Even in a system that values power over all else, the smallest members of such a system can still achieve notice, given the right circumstances. Even mice can roar, and sometimes they can be heard, even by the lions."

(c)   One vote per sovereign state and small states' contributions

The United Nations represents the international institution where small states can rightfully engage in multilateral diplomacy. This means that despite the difficulties for small states in making themselves heard, small states have capitalised on the one vote per sovereign state rule (Cooper and Shaw, 2009), which has meant that the rule has also permitted small states to influence the shape of the international regulatory framework through the use of a bloc vote (Read, 2002).

Taking advantage of this rule has allowed small states to make significant contributions, many of which have been adopted in General Assembly resolutions, or have served the basis for further action,

to the extent of being the basis for some of the established institutions we have today, important international initiatives and other norm-laying agreements. We have also seen that the rule has increasingly been used by small states to their advantage, by grouping themselves at the regional level and in joining with like-minded states to be able to speak with one common, unified voice.

A further element relates to an important branch of the United Nations – the much debated Security Council. Small states are more susceptible than larger states to both the benefits and the constraints arising from the actions and decisions of multilateral organisations or international institutions, and this is very much felt at Council level.

As the Council structure stands today, many states are heavily engaged in debates that will hopefully lead to reform in the Security Council. Small states have not shied away from debate; on the contrary, awareness of their vulnerability on the international arena, the fact that the number of small states which attained independence and became United Nations member states has increased since the last Security Council increase, and the fact that they acknowledge that they can enhance their participation, has led small states to participate actively in the debates surrounding Security Council reform. More specifically, small states are calling for increase in Security Council membership, as well as changes in composition and procedures which would lead to greater transparency and accountability, and more representativeness, legitimacy and consultations (Hong, 1995).

(d)   Limited human resources

From a very practical point of view, small states suffer from the obvious disadvantages arising from limited human and material resources. Face to face with their external counterparts, diplomats from small states very often have to rely on heavy doses of versatility, presence of mind, and creativeness to overcome their initial handicaps (Camilleri, 2007). Limited capacity places limitations on small states' diplomatic relations (Hein, 2004). Limited human resources impinge directly on small states' ability to be represented adequately in as many fora as possible. Small states struggle to keep up with every development, and with relatively small permanent missions in New York, Geneva and Vienna (as well

as all the other instances where diplomatic negotiations take place), diplomats are likely to be overstretched with tasks and items on their agenda. This also means that small states cannot participate actively – whether it is to contribute to ongoing debates or to express their particular concerns – where they fail to be present. Despite the obvious setbacks, this has in turn prompted them to adopt certain practices to overcome this challenge.

6.   Meaningful participation

Despite the vulnerabilities and setbacks, small states have not only proven that they can participate actively on the international arena, but that their participation is also meaningful. It will be amply proven that their voice counts at the United Nations, so much that small states have managed to put forth proposals that later formed the basis for important initiatives, agreements and institutions. The success stories highlighted in the next chapter will display the behavioural elements described above, and will demonstrate the meaningful participation of small states.

The case studies in the next chapter will be grouped in two: their participation on substantive issues debated at the General Assembly and Security Council, and their participation in procedural affairs, especially their role in the Security Council reforms debate.

Chapter II – Small states' participation at the United Nations: procedurally and substantively

"...Indeed, name the issue, and I can point to a small state playing a central and innovative role," Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in Montevideo in 1998 (p.3).

"Reform of the United Nations? Austria served as co-chair of the working group of the General Assembly that examined the chronic financial difficulties experienced by the Organisation. Human rights? Ireland has given the United Nations a new High Commissioner for Human Rights, former President Mary Robinson, a well-known expert who has brought new dynamism to the field. The environment? The small island developing nations of the world, which are especially vulnerable to natural disasters and the impact of climate change through rising sea levels, are on the front-lines of our work for sustainable development. They may be small islands, but big issues are involved, with implications for all of us. Disarmament? Norway was a driving force behind the international coalition that brought about the adoption of a convention banning the production, sale or use of anti-personnel landmines..."

The following case studies shed light into the main proposals and initiatives undertaken by small states which have had – and still have till this day – an important bearing. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan notes, small states have contributed in every sector.

The sections below will demonstrate such initiatives and proposals, for every sector, starting with substantive issues, followed by procedural issues at the United Nations, and include those in which small states have acted on their own individual merit, and those in which small states have sought to contribute actively through a common voice. As stated previously, the case studies below are not exhaustive, and the fact that other successful case studies are not highlighted below certainly does not render them less meaningful.

1.   Environment

(a)   <u>Barbados Programme of Action, Mauritius Strategy and sustainable development</u>

Unquestionably one of the most important initiatives that finds its origins in concerns expressed by small states at the United Nations is the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPoA), which was the result of the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados in 1994, and the Mauritius Strategy, an outcome of the United Nations Conference on Small Islands, held in Mauritius in 2005, aimed at further implementing the BPoA.

The BPoA, whose report prepared by the Global Conference was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly during its 49th session through Resolution 49/22, established a specific blueprint for the sustainable development of SIDS, and was dubbed (Macintyre and Heileman, 2005) the Pacific's Agenda 21. The blueprint identified 14 priority areas – (1) climate change and sea-level rise; (2) natural and environmental disasters; (3) management of wastes; (4) coastal and marine resources; (5) freshwater resources; (6) land resources, energy resources, tourism resources, biodiversity resources, national institutions and administrative capacity; (7) regional institutions and technical co-operation; (8) transport and communication; (9) science and technology; and (10) human resource development – and indicated specific actions for addressing these areas.

Years before, the final communiqué of the 1989 Twentieth South Pacific Forum,[11] the Langkawi Declaration on Environment, adopted by the 1989 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and the Male Declaration on Global Warming and Sea Level Rise adopted in 1989 by the Small States Conference on Sea Level Rise, led the United Nations General Assembly's 44th Session to adopt Resolution 44/206 on "Possible adverse effects of sea-level rise on islands and coastal areas, particularly low-lying coastal areas", through which it recommended, in Article 4, that the vulnerability of affected countries and their marine ecosystems to sea-level rise be considered during discussions of a draft framework convention on climate as well as within the framework of the United

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[11] In 2000, the name was changed to Pacific Islands Forum.

Nations conference on environment and development to be held in 1992 and during the preparatory process for the conference.

In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro did in fact bring the special case of such areas to international attention through the adoption of Agenda 21 (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2004), an ambitious programme of action for sustainable development, which included a programme on the sustainable development of small states. Among the programme of actions promulgated under Agenda 21 was also a chapter promoting rules for the sustainable use and conservation of marine living resources on the high seas, the negotiations of which can be traced to a separate initiative proposed by a group of small states.[12]

The 1992 UNCED also called for convening the 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS, from which the Barbados Programme of Action would originate, which was also to officially recognise SIDS as a group. During its 47th session, through Resolution 47/719 the General Assembly called for the setting up of a high-level Commission for Sustainable Development, established as a functional committee of the Economic and Social Council (Decision 1993/207), which was entrusted with the tasks of, among others, examining the progress of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels. The Commission eventually started convening what became known as the SIDS Day (United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, 2005), which takes place during the review session of the Commission, and is a valuable opportunity to assess progress and to further advance the implementation of the BPoA and of the Mauritius Strategy (Borg, 2009).

AOSIS, the negotiating voice for SIDS within the United Nations, was particularly active at the 1994 Barbados conference, and was in fact described (UNCTAD, 2004, p. 9-10) as "the leading force in the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS." It also played an important consultative and substantive role in supporting the implementation of the BPoA.

Periodical reviews of the BPoA's implementation were undertaken. Five years after its adoption, the 22nd Special Session of the General Assembly (UNGASS-22) undertook a review and appraisal of the

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[12] More on p. 42

programme's implementation and identified areas which required special attention and means which could aide the programme's implementation. In 2000, leaders attending the Millennium Summit resolved (Resolution 55/2, 55th Session) to implement the programme and the outcomes of the UNGASS-22 rapidly and fully. In 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the special case of SIDS and dedicated a chapter of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, one of the two main documents adopted by the Summit, to the sustainable development of SIDS. The chapter included, under Article 61, a request for the General Assembly to convene an international meeting for the sustainable development of SIDS, which request was granted through Resolution 57/262. Among many meetings, three regional preparatory meetings took place for Pacific, AIMS and Caribbean SIDS in 2003 (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2003), which were eventually followed by the 2005 Mauritius United Nations Conference on Small Islands, which marked the tenth year since the adoption of the BPoA, whose outcomes were the Mauritius Declaration and Mauritius Strategy.

AOSIS was also instrumental after the BPoA's adoption. At the end of the ten-year review process of the BPoA, the AOSIS Strategy Paper – adopted by the SIDS Ministers in Bahamas in January 2004, and endorsed by the Group of 77 and China – served as the basis for negotiations which led to the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy (Permanent Mission of Mauritius to the United Nations, 2006). The Mauritius Strategy, the current United Nations sustainable development strategy for SIDS for the period 2005 to 2015, and the only global blueprint that addresses specifically and exclusively the development challenges of SIDS associated with their vulnerabilities, was endorsed by the General Assembly during its 59th session in 2004 through Resolution 59/311 (UNDP, Pacific Centre, 2006).

(b)   Climate Change on the global agenda

"It is a particular honour, Madame, as among our membership are many countries that have been "first movers" in the international response against climate change. These include: Maldives, host to one of the first Ministerial Declarations on the Impacts of Climate Change; Malta, sponsor of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution that launched the Convention negotiations; Vanuatu, who

submitted the first outline of elements for a Convention; Mauritius, the first state to ratify the Convention, followed quickly by Seychelles and the Marshall Islands; Trinidad and Tobago, sponsor of the AOSIS protocol that spurred the Berlin Mandate process; Fiji and Antigua and Barbuda, the first to ratify the Kyoto Protocol; and the many island states whose delegations work tirelessly in this process to defend the front line in the battle against global warming."

It is with this statement that Ambassador Tuiloma Neroni Slade of Samoa (1998. In: UNFCC Climate Change Secretariat, 2005), on behalf of AOSIS, summed up the initiatives undertaken by small states with regards to climate change.

What today has become one of the most important debates, attracting as much interest from politicians and diplomats as well as the average citizen, emerged in the General Assembly in 1987 during its 42nd session, when Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom brought the subject of climate change to the world's attention. Representing a country where the effects of climate change is likely to have serious consequences for the future of the citizens of the Maldives, President Gayoom (1987) highlighted the dramatic repercussions in a factual and candid way:

"As for my own country, the Maldives, a mean sea level rise of two metres would suffice to virtually submerge the entire country of 1,190 small islands, most of which barely rise over two metres above mean sea level. That would be the death of a nation."

President Gayoom's address was possibly the launch of the debate on climate change on the international stage (Briguglio, 2007), and marked the beginning of a long journey in the establishment of a convention on climate change.

i.   'Common concern'

In 1988, a year after President Gayoom's address, another meaningful contribution of a small state at the United Nations, and a milestone in Maltese diplomacy, was registered. During the 43rd session of the General Assembly, Malta submitted a proposal for the international community to declare the

conservation of climate as part of the "common heritage of mankind" (Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations, 1988).

In a publication prepared by the United Nations and Commonwealth Division within the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1990, p. 33), who was at the time headed by Ambassador Saviour Borg, former President of Malta Vincent Tabone was recorded as describing the proposal "an urgent issue". At a Special Plenary Meeting of the same session, the President warned that "unless urgent action on a global level is taken, the change could very well lead to irreversible damage."

Malta was thus once again instrumental on an issue which would have significant positive developments in the international fora. Malta's proposal was initiated at a time when it was interested in the joining the European Union, and began to look for ways to associate more closely with the West. It thus wanted to demonstrate a capacity to handle large issues (Hong, 1995).

Despite the very intensive negotiations, Malta's proposal was well-received by the General Assembly. Although during the negotiations, the concept that global climate was part of the "common heritage" did not receive the required support (Baslar, 1997), the General Assembly went on to adopt Resolution 43/53 on the Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations and Mankind in 1988, which declared climate as the common concern of mankind (Kjellén, 2007):

"Convinced that climate change affects humanity as a whole and should be confronted within a global framework so as to take into account the vital interests of all mankind… Recognises that climate change is a common concern of mankind, since climate is an essential condition which sustains life on earth."

In its resolution of 1988, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organisation and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), utilising the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "immediately to initiate action leading, as soon as possible, to a comprehensive review and recommendations including… (e) Elements for inclusion in a possible future international convention on climate." Borg (2009) notes that this decision started the process for the preparation, and later, for the adoption, of the

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which came into force in 1994 with 192 parties as of December 2009.

Horn (2004) notes that several soft law instruments have supported the concept of common concern of humankind as an environmental concept, some examples of which are General Assembly resolutions, preambles of conventions, and conference statements and declarations.

The concept of climate change as a common concern of mankind has also been referred to in the preambles of two international environmental conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Horn notes that even though the preambles of these Conventions do not contain binding commitments, they do indicate the context and background to the Conventions. "The continued repetition of this concept indicates a willingness by States to accept this concept and its application to international environmental law" (Horn, 2004, p. 246).

ii.   First outline of a climate change convention

In 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The United Nations General Assembly endorsed the establishment of the IPCC through its Resolution 43/53 which had also declared climate change as a common concern of mankind. The IPCC's first assessment report was completed in 1990, and served as the basis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In December 1990, the 45th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 45/212 that established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change (INC/FCCC), supported by UNEP and WMO, to prepare an effective framework convention on climate change, containing appropriate commitments, and any related instruments as might be agreed upon, taking into account proposals that may be submitted by states participating in the negotiating process, the work of the IPCC and the

results achieved at international meetings on the subject, including the Second World Climate Conference.

Kjellén (1994, p. 152) states that the Secretary General's decision to appoint Maltese Ambassador Michael Zammit Cutajar to the post of Secretary General for the INC/FCCC contributed to the success of the negotiations. "The appointment of a Maltese national to the post of Secretary General was also a recognition of the important role played by Malta in alerting the General Assembly to the importance of the climate issue."

The growing urgency to alleviate the problem of climate change which undoubtedly has serious consequences on small states, and the difficulty in making a big enough impact on an international level, led small states to collaborate together and address the problem collectively. Shibuya (1996) notes that it was unlikely that islands would be able to solve the problem of global warming by themselves. This necessarily had to become a global issue.

In 1989, the island states forming part of the South Pacific Forum (SPF) prompted the consideration of the inter-linkage between sea-level rise and climate change and the potential damage their economies and populations faced. Through Resolution 44/206, the General Assembly recommended that the vulnerability of affected countries and their marine ecosystems to sea-level rise be considered during discussions of a draft framework convention on climate as well as within the framework of the United Nations conference on environment and development to be held in 1992 and during the preparatory process for the conference. The provisions contained in Articles 4.3 and 4.4 of the Framework Convention on Climate Change respond to this request.

Among the island nations attempting to bring global warming to the international formal agenda, the island nation of Vanuatu was also a key player and leader (Shibuya, 1996).

It was Vanuatu's Ambassador to the United Nations, Robert Van Lierop, who chaired the Alliance of Small Island States upon its formation in 1990. Although the environmental threats for Vanuatu were not immediate, due to its altitude, it still proved to be able to represent the interests of island states in a successful way. Under the leadership of Vanuatu's ambassador, AOSIS was able to play an active role

in the meetings leading to the Rio Summit, and was one of the few groups of developing nations that played an active role in the negotiations for the climate change convention. AOSIS has been described, in fact, as the notable exception to the fact that most developing countries were reluctant to become actively involved in the negotiations (Djoghlaf, 1994. In: Irving et al, 1994).

In 1991, Vanuatu's Ambassador was named co-chair of Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, which was to articulate the convention's institutional framework. It is in this sense that it has been said that Vanuatu helped submit the first outline of elements for a convention. The island's position as co-chair of the working group – to reflect its position as chair of AOSIS – thus marked a "first" for island states as a group to be given a leadership position within a United Nations forum (Bodansky, 1994. In: Irving et al, 1994). Furthermore, as a group, AOSIS emerged as "unquestionably" the most important group of developing countries (Djoghlaf, 1994. In: Irving et al, 1994).

iii.   AOSIS and the Kyoto Protocol

Climate change poses the greatest environmental threat to small states. The consequences of there being carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is predicted to warm the earth, leading to an increase in average temperatures, and the melting of ice. The consequential increase in temperatures is likely to affect fresh water supplies and local fisheries, on which some small island states are hugely reliant. Coupled with other environmental threats, rapid sea-level rise will pose serious and existential threats to small states, some of which are a little more than a meter above the sea level. Davis (1996) states that "the modest rise in sea level that is accepted in the scientific community will inundate at least four low-lying Pacific island countries, and damage many more."

The threat posed by climate changed has spurred small island states to form an important coalition, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the negotiating voice for SIDS within the United Nations. AOSIS was instrumental to the drafting of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Supported by the United Nations coalition of more than 100

developing countries known as the Group of 77, and China, AOSIS made significant contributions despite its limited resources and the difficulties which its individual member states faced back home.

The proposal of AOSIS – to achieve in the text of the Climate Convention a statement to the effect that concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are stabilised at levels that would not present a danger to the global climate system – was a significant challenge. Davis (1996) states that with this aim in mind, AOSIS submitted a draft protocol to the first Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention held in Berlin in April of 1995. This constituted the first draft text in the Kyoto Protocol negotiations (Yamin and Depledge, 2005). This protocol, dubbed the AOSIS Protocol, established a goal of a 20 per cent reduction of greenhouse gasses by the year 2005, and has become a centrepiece of continued international negotiations on climate policy known as the Berlin Mandate (Davis, 1996).

On another occasion, AOSIS demonstrated its ability to voice the environmental concerns of small island states in a unified way. Davis (1996) attributes this, among other factors, to effective leadership. He explains how during negotiations in Geneva, the first chair of AOSIS, Ambassador Robert Van Lierop, who represented Vanuatu for more than a decade at the United Nations,

"...led AOSIS on an indignant, late-night walkout from a particularly contentious meeting of the Group of 77 and China in Geneva, in which a single oil producing member of the Group stubbornly blocked all discussion of key planks in the AOSIS proposals. Significantly, a little over a year later, AOSIS under his leadership was handed the full authority of the Group of 77 and China to negotiate a separate agreement in preparation for the UN Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados."

AOSIS helped put pressure on states to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, which was adopted in 1997. At the September 1999 Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of AOSIS in New York, the leaders affirmed that the issue of climate change remained an urgent, principal concern for small island developing states. They reiterated that the efforts of the developed countries to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases should be strengthened and accelerated. They expressed the need for further

international assistance for small island developing states to plan for longer-term adaptation to the effects of climate change, and urgently called on Annex 1 Countries to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and develop clear plans for carbon dioxide reduction (Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2000).

On the Kyoto Protocol's entering into force in 2005, AOSIS (2005) described its initiative as having played a significant role in the negotiations leading up to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol:

"Indeed it was the AOSIS that originally proposed the idea of a protocol in 1994. AOSIS realised in the early 1990's that the Framework Convention on Climate Change was not creating enough incentives to encourage countries to significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and that legally binding commitments would be required."

It also said that it saw the Kyoto Protocol as a small, but significant step which creates a new carbon market which will provide useful financial incentives for the development and use of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies.

More recently, on December 12, AOSIS released its proposal for a legally binding agreement to secure the twin objectives of the survival of the Kyoto Protocol and the strengthening of the UNFCC, entitled Proposal by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) for the Survival of the Kyoto Protocol and a Copenhagen Protocol to Enhance the Implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change. Despite the fact that its proposal did not achieve the required status, AOSIS demonstrated once again the ability to support the interests of SIDS through a unified voice.

(c)   Law of the Sea

One initiative that stands out as a great accomplishment for a small state is the proposal on the Law of the Sea launched by Malta, just three years after achieving its independence from the United Kingdom. This particular case shows the immense desire of a small state to establish itself as a meaningful contributor to the international scene, and particularly, to United Nations deliberations.

On October 6, 1967, before the 22nd session of the General Assembly, Prime Minister George Borg Olivier on behalf of the Government of Malta (1967. In: Borg, 2009, p. 151) underlined the need and crucial importance of an internationalised sea-bed and ocean floor which should eventually lead to the establishment of "an international agency to assume jurisdiction, as trustee of mankind, over the sea-bed and ocean floor in order to ensure their orderly and rational exploitation, and that from the immense potential of this exploitation the poor countries should also benefit."

A few months later in 1967, headed by Ambassador Arvid Pardo, Malta set out to promote the preservation for peaceful purposes of the seabed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas. During the 1515th Meeting of the First Committee of the 22nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, in an extensive three-hour explanation of the scientific, historical, archaeological and political attributes of the sea-bed and ocean floor which "captivated his fellow diplomats, the audience and reporters" (Freidheim, 1992, p. 29), Ambassador Pardo explained that (United Nations General Assembly, 1967),

"...imminent exploitation of deep-seabed manganese nodules would lead to the enrichment of a few developed states and would encourage national claims to the ocean; further, that newly available technologies would encourage using the seabed for military purposes."

Ambassador Pardo explained that although Malta's objectives were long-term, he hoped that the General Assembly would adopt a resolution embodying a declaration to the effect that the sea-bed and the ocean floor constituted a common heritage of mankind to be "used and exploited for peaceful purposes and for the exclusive benefit of mankind as a whole" (United Nations General Assembly, 1967).

He asked for claims to sovereignty over the sea-bed and ocean floor beyond present national jurisdiction to be frozen until a clear definition of the continental shelf was formulated. Finally he also reiterated Borg Olivier's statements in favour of (United Nations General Assembly, 1967),

"...the creation of a special agency with adequate powers to administer in the interests of mankind the oceans and the ocean floor beyond national jurisdiction. We envisage such an agency as assuming

jurisdiction, not as a sovereign, but as a trustee for all countries over the oceans and the ocean floor. The agency should be endowed with wide powers to regulate, supervise and control all activities on or under the oceans and the ocean floor."

The raison d'être behind Malta's initiatives was that it had identified the Law of the Sea issue as a possible area where conflicting maritime claims could arise. It also recognised the disadvantages that many small states would face in the case of such disputes (Hong, 1995). Initially, although support for the resolution came from many countries, some states showed scepticism and "suspicion" at these initiatives,[13] while a number of technologically advanced states felt they needed time to study the facts and implications before committing themselves on a definite position (Pardo, 1968).

In the three years to follow, however, Malta demonstrated that it was truly speaking "in the interest of mankind". In 1970, in its 25th Session, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 2749 on the Declaration of Principles Governing the Seabed and Ocean Floor, which was adopted by 108 states (including the United States), declaring that:

"1. The sea-bed and ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction… as well as the resources of the area, are the common heritage of mankind. 2. The area shall not be subject to appropriation by any means by States or persons, natural or juridical, and no state shall claim or exercise sovereignty or sovereign rights over any part thereof."

Through this resolution, Ambassador Pardo had started the process which resulted in the international community declaring the international seabed area as the common heritage of mankind (Borg, 2009). In fact, in 1982, the common heritage of mankind concept was included under Article 136 of the United Nations Law of the Sea Treaty. It described the "the seabed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction." The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) came into force in 1994 and has to date 158 signatories, including the European

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[13] "I understand that the fact that Malta has raised the question of the sea -bed and of the ocean floor in the General Assembly has aroused some astonishment, if not suspicion, in the minds of some delegations, and even among legislators in some countries. A m ember of the House of Representatives of the United States recently expressed the feelings of many in the following words: 'The United States as a member - and I might add paying member-of the United Nations is entitled to know: First, why did the Maltese Ambassador, Arvid Pardo, make this premature proposal? Second, who put the Maltese Government up to the proposal? Are they, perhaps, the sounding board for the British? Third, and, most of all, why the rush?'" (United Nations General Assembly, 1967)

Union. It is relevant to note that on the first day when the Convention was opened for signature, 119 delegations appended their signature to the Convention. The first state to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty, also on the first day in which the Convention was opened for signature, was Fiji (Zuleta, 1985. In: Nordquist, 1985). Through Ambassador Satya N. Nandan, Fiji took an active role throughout the Treaty's negotiation process. His biographical note (International Seabed Authority, 2004), states that among his posts were his appointment as head of the Fiji delegation to the Seabed Committee between 1970 and 1973, and to UNCLOS III until 1982; as Rapporteur of the Second Committee of the Conference during which he composed the single negotiating text for the chairman, which became the basic text of the Committee; as Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea from 1983 to 1992, during which he initiated the Secretary General's informal consultations to address the problems of Part XI of the Convention; as delegate of Fiji, during which he was chairman of the informal group named "the Boat Paper Group" that negotiated the Implementation Agreement adopted by the General Assembly in July 1994, which resolved those problems and opened the door to universal participation in the Convention; and as co-chair to the private informal Fiji/UK group which negotiated the compromise on the issue of passage through straits used for international navigation and the regime for archipelagic sea-lanes passage.

In 1980, during UNCLOS III, Ambassador Nandan applauded the negotiations for a number of reasons. The negotiations held throughout the past years had established that the international community was concerned just as much with the problems of big States as with the problems of small state. The emerging treaty showed that every interest had been taken into account, if not fully satisfied (United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, Third Conference, 1982).

Ambassador Nandan, some time later, became the first Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority which was mandated to ensure the implementation of the Convention and its Protocol.

Years after its seminal initiative on the common heritage of mankind, Malta launched another initiative aimed at protecting the extraterritorial spaces, including the high seas. In 1989, Malta addressed a letter to the Secretary General in which it requested the inclusion of a supplementary sub-

item entitled "Environmental protection of extraterritorial spaces for present and future generations" in the agenda of the General Assembly under item 83. In its explanatory memorandum, Malta states that the effective and comprehensive environmental protection of extraterritorial spaces was vital to safeguard the global environment. It thus requested the Secretary General to establish a group of persons to prepare a study which would make recommendations with respect to the identification and extent of "extraterritorial space", the state of the environment and the rights and duties of states vis-à-vis these spaces, and the strengthening of the legal instruments to protect such spaces in the best way possible.

Borg (2009) explains that despite the draft resolution presented in November 1989 by Malta on behalf of the Maldives, Mali, Morocco, Paraguay, Togo and Vanuatu, entitled "Environmental Protection of Extraterritorial Spaces for Present and Future Generations", the General Assembly decided not to take any action on the draft resolution.

Yet, the International Law Commission started consideration of this question, and in July 1989, in agreement with the majority opinion of states and that within the International Law Commission, the Special Rapporteur on "International Liability for Injurious Consequences arising out of Acts not prohibited by international law" proposed to extend the scope of the proposed rules to harm caused in areas beyond national jurisdiction (Verheyen, 2005). Furthermore, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development's Agenda 21 included a whole chapter on the sustainable use and conservation of marine living resources on the high seas so as not to cause damage to these same resources within the 200-mile limit of national jurisdiction of coastal states. Moreover, negotiations were started on a treaty to regulate over-fishing in areas beyond national jurisdiction, which led to the adoption of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UNCLOS relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in August 1995.

(d)   <u>Vulnerability indices</u>

In relation with sustainable development, and falling within the ambit of the BPoA, is the vulnerability index referred to in Articles 113 and 114 of the BPoA, which articles called for the continued development of the indices.

The vulnerability index, first elaborated in 1992, finds its origins in an initiative undertaken four years before. Borg (2009) explains that Malta's proposal to convene a meeting of governments and experts from island developing states and other interested states was adopted in the Report of the Malta Experts' Meeting held in May 1988. This was in turn adopted without a vote through General Assembly Resolution 43/189, which took note of the Experts' Meeting Report, and requested the Secretary General to convene a meeting of governmental experts of island developing countries and donor countries and organisations.

Among the proposals made by Malta at the Government Experts of Island Developing Countries and Donor Countries and Organisations, held under the auspices of UNCTAD in New York in June 1990, was that a vulnerability index be constructed. In his speech, the Maltese Ambassador to the United Nations stated that such an index was important because it "reiterated that the per capita GDP of island developing countries is not by itself an adequate measurement of the level of development of island developing countries as it does not reflect the structural and institutional weaknesses and the several handicaps facing island developing countries" (Briguglio, 2000).

This proposal was carefully considered, and as a result, UNCTAD was requested to undertake a "review of appropriate indicators of social and economic progress which take into account not only the level of GNP but also other factors that relate to the high degree of vulnerability of island developing countries" (Borg, 2009, p. 160). Subsequently, UNCTAD engaged Maltese professor Lino Briguglio to construct what became known as the vulnerability index (Briguglio, 1992). The index intended to measure the precariousness of states, measured through economic exposure, lack of protection and peripherality. The approach adopted by Professor Briguglio consisted of averaging a number of sub-

indices that were considered as representing different facets of economic vulnerability (Briguglio, 2000).

After the promulgation of the BPoA in 1994 and the programme's call for the continued development of the indices, the vulnerability index was not only updated several times (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007), but also served as a positive impact in favour of SIDS in terms of the conclusions it drew. In 1996, during its 50th session, through Resolution 50/116, the General Assembly renewed its request for the "development and compilation of a vulnerability index for small island developing states". That year, the Commission on Sustainable Development[14] called on "the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to accord priority to the development of the index" (1995, Decision 4/16). Also in 1996, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs undertook studies to provide a framework for the development of a vulnerability index. The Department produced a background paper, which it circulated in December 1996, containing an analysis of the vulnerabilities of SIDS, discussing a possible approach to this issue and suggesting discussions on the construction of an economic and an ecological vulnerability index, each looking into appropriate indicators. A number of comments were proposed on the background paper, which were all supportive of its main thrust (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1998). A year later, the Department engaged two consultants[15] to each develop an economic vulnerability index and an ecological vulnerability index. The Department also convened an expert group to review the consultants' technical work and to make recommendations. The meeting (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1998) concluded that:

"...judging from the results of a number of studies using a diversity of approaches, in particular, two reports of the Commonwealth Secretariat, the report of UNCTAD and the reports of consultants that were submitted to the meeting, the group concluded that… small island developing states are more vulnerable than other groups of developing countries."

On parallel lines, other indices to assess economic, social and environmental phenomena have been constructed, among which are the Environmental Vulnerability Index, constructed by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and further developed in collaboration with the

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[14] Established by Resolution 47/719, during the 47th Session (United Nations General Assembly, 1993)
[15] Professor Lino Briguglio and Professor Dennis Pantin.

Environmental Vulnerability Index (EVI) Think Tank, the University of Malta's Islands and Small States Institute, and the United Nations Environment Programme (2004), and the Social Vulnerability Index undertaken by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Briguglio, 2004).

In 2000, Briguglio expressed his concern notes that the Vulnerability Index could be re-formulated (by including sub-indices that characterise LDCs) to focus more on the characteristics of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) rather than on SIDS. Despite this possibility, Borg (2009) notes that through the indices, it has been proved that island developing countries, especially the smaller ones, are more vulnerable than other states. The first attempt to move from a GNP per capita index to a vulnerability index which takes into account a wider range of factors, has been acknowledged as an initial process for the further development in practical policy measures in favour of island developing countries (Borg, 2009).

2. Security, peacekeeping, peace-building

(a) <u>International Criminal Court</u>

An interesting case where a small state made a significant impact in the international scene is that of Trinidad and Tobago's efforts to establish an international criminal court. What is important here is the fact that Trinidad and Tobago, a small state in the Caribbean, submitted its proposals at the United Nations level.

The history of the International Criminal Court (ICC) dates back to post-war 1919, a time in which a need to judge political leaders for war crimes was felt necessary. It was only until after the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals that the United Nations General Assembly felt the crucial need to establish a permanent and effective international court specifically aimed at dealing with the crimes and horrors of World War II.

The cold war scenario from the 1950s to the late 1980s held back the progression of a criminal court. None of the International Law Commission's several draft statutes attracted consensus, which forestalled further developments (International Criminal Court, 2009). The idea was once again set back on track in 1989 when Trinidad and Tobago put forward a proposal for a permanent international court.

It was during the 44th session of the General Assembly, that Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister, A.N.R. Robinson put forward this proposal (Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, 1989):

The establishment of an international criminal court "with jurisdiction to prosecute and punish individuals and entities who engage in, *inter alia,* the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs across national borders would serve to bolster the legal process whereby such offenders are prosecuted and punished and would also contribute substantially to the progressive development and codification of international law."

Illegal drug trade was the underlining factor that prompted Trinidad and Tobago to take such a fervent stand on this issue. However the proposal was far more reaching and was meant to establish a judicial system that would "complement and supplement" the national judicial system as well as that in other Caribbean countries and small states (Henrikson, 2007).

Thus, Trinidad and Tobago's actions on this important matter once again brought the issue to the surface after it had been shelved for many years during the cold war. Although the underlining factor was meant to address the national issue of drug trafficking, the benefits reaped were shared at an international level, as the International Law Commission (ILC) was again charged (United Nations General Assembly, 1989, 44th Session) with drafting a statute for such a court. Glasius (2002) notes that the ILC seized enthusiastically upon this mandate, stretching it from framing the ICC merely as a "drugs court" to a court with jurisdiction over crimes against the peace and security of mankind.

The ILC's final draft of the statute to establish the ICC was completed in 1994, after which the General Assembly set up a Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of an International Criminal

Court which worked on the ILC's draft and which met six times between 1996 and 1998. The final draft was submitted to the Rome Conference on July 15-17, 1988, which adopted the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Grant and Barker, 2009).

Trinidad and Tobago's proposal, another testament to the meaningful impact small states can have at the United Nations, eventually led to the inauguration of the International Criminal Court on July 1, 2002, as a court that is legally and functionally separated from the United Nations but which grants powers to the Security Council under Articles 13 and 16. The ICC has jurisdiction over grave crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression.

(b)   Protection and Security of Small States

Small states have always supported efforts to develop the United Nations into a truly effective world security agency (Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997). It is not surprising therefore that a small state would help place the issue high on the General Assembly's agenda.

In 1989, Maldives piloted Resolution 44/51 entitled Protection and Security of Small States, which was co-sponsored by 54 other states and adopted by consensus. The Resolution recognised that small states may be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs, and urged the Secretary General to pay special attention to monitoring the security situation of small states and to consider making use of the provisions of Article 99 of the Charter, which enables the Secretary General to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.

In 1991, Maldives followed up the issue with a Workshop on the Security of Small States which recommended the establishment of a rapid response force to be under the direct control of the Secretary General and which would be used to meet the security challenges of small states at their request. In the same year, the General Assembly through Resolution 46/43 reconfirmed that small states may be particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs,

and stressed the importance of strengthening the regional security arrangements by increasing interaction, co-operation and consultation.

A further Resolution (49/31) reconfirmed small states' vulnerability to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs, and the fact that they may have special needs is consonant with the right to sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Resolution also:

"...called on the Security Council and other relevant organs of the United Nations to pay special attention to the protection and security of small states in the restructuring and revitalisation of the work of the United Nations, especially within the context of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organisation and in the follow-up activities of the report of the Secretary-General of June 17, 1992 entitled 'An Agenda for Peace'."

In the discussions at the Security Council however, representatives of the European Community and the United States stressed that they would object to making any distinctions among states with regard to their security, since the Charter of the United Nations was based on the sovereign equality of all states, and in maintaining security for all (Commonwealth Advisory Group, 1997).

The Commonwealth Report of 1997 notes that the Maldives initiative has been useful in clarifying positions but clearly limited in its outcome. Small states have been therefore more inclined to put their effort into reform of the United Nations, urging leaders to focus the reform on more accountability and transparency.

(c)   Peacekeeping missions

A number of small states have been actively involved in United Nations peacekeeping missions through Civilian Police, Military Observers and Troops.

Schmidl (2001. In: Reiter and Gärtner, 2001) notes several advantages of small states in international peace missions, including the fact that they are often required to work under limited budget, making them more able to improvise and work in a flexible manner – "an obvious requirement in peace

operations"; not being much of a "power", they invite less polarised reactions; since their involvement and interest in conflict is less obvious, it is easier for small states to act as "honest brokers", which facilitates, and may even render their role, a crucial part in negotiations.

Yet, small states' involvement also attracts disadvantages: they carry less weight (or "punch") in the international arena, they find it harder to influence policy, and are sometimes kept out from the decision-making processes to the detriment of their troops; contingents from smaller countries are generally better suited for civilian, police or limited military, rather than for fighting units. Perhaps the biggest disadvantage emerges as a result of the limited population. Mosser states that the fact that small states are able to contribute only limited contingents raises difficulties not so much where police or traditional peacekeeping missions are small or operate in mixed teams, but where necessity dictates more robust operations. In such cases, multi-national units stand to suffer, possibly fatally, from communication misunderstandings (Schmidl, 2001. In: Reiter and Gärtner, 2001).

Nonetheless, the disadvantages have not detracted small states from making available – even through small numbers – civilian police, military observers and troops.

Neumann and Gstohl (2006) note that it is above all others that small states such as Denmark, Fiji and Nepal "are consistently among the stalwart nations ready to contribute troops, police, and observers."

Fiji, which has been a member of the United Nations for the last 40 years, is among the small states which have contributed most actively. Despite its small size, since 2001, Fiji has contributed to troops in several peacekeeping missions including Lebanon, East Timor, Kuwait, Bosnia and Kosovo (Permanent Mission of the Republic of Fiji Islands, 2001). As of 2007, it added Iraq, Liberia and Sudan to that list. Fiji's efforts in peacekeeping make it somewhat unique for such a small nation, especially when one considers that a state with a population of less than one million is still able to send almost 300 troops, police and military observers (United Nations, 2008b).

Vanuatu is another example of a small state participating in efforts towards international peace and security. Vanuatu's peacekeeping troops have been deployed in peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, East Timor, Congo, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. In his statement to

the General Assembly's 61st Session, Vanuatu's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sato Kilman noted that these efforts illustrated Vanuatu's resolve in peacekeeping and peace-building in both a regional and international context (Permanent Mission of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2006).

Despite the absence of armed forces, Iceland has also contributed to peacekeeping efforts through its contributions to the assessed budget for peacekeeping operations, and through the establishment of the civilian-based Icelandic Crisis Response Unit (ICRU) in 2001, which deployed medical professionals and police officers with peacekeeping missions primarily in the Balkans and in Afghanistan (Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations, 2004).

The above-mentioned states are certainly not exhaustive of the whole list. Other small states have, and are still contributing, to peacekeeping missions. Among them are Samoa, Botswana, Brunei, Cyprus, Djibouti, Grenada and Palau (United Nations, 2008b).

3. United Nations reform

For small states, the most important kind of multilateral diplomacy is through participation in the activities of the United Nations, including participation in its subordinate, regional and technical bodies (Watson, 1984). At the United Nations, small states, which make up a large percentage of the member states, are significant more than ever. Their presence emphasises the principle of sovereign equality, as well as their ability to affect the decision-making processes through their numbers. Hong (1995) notes that the United Nations is so structured that small states can prevent major powers from using the organisation for their own narrow interests, and can provide resources and services, such as peacekeeping forces, that are needed to make the United Nations effective.

The realities faced by small states have also led many of them to use their missions to the United Nations not only to conduct multilateral negotiations, but also for bilateral relations. This modified type of diplomatic practice is what has been described as "diplomacy through the United Nations"

(Watson, 1984, p. 173). The term implies a number of things: an emphasis on the formal equality of states, regardless of size and development; as a way of placing pressure on powerful and developed states especially through General Assembly votes; and a way of conducting bilateral relations with states within which they do not have diplomatic missions (Watson, 1984). Yet, while the General Assembly is based on the one vote per sovereign state principle, the Security Council's composition has attracted widespread controversy about its membership criteria, voting and working methods. Reform debates have focused on the main elements of its composition, namely the permanency of five of its members (so-called "P5", that is, China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States) and their veto powers, as well as the ten elected non-permanent members with two-year terms, while in the General Assembly, debates take place under agenda item on "The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council".

Although the debate on reform surfaced for the first time after the Cold War, it took a sharp thrust forward in 2003, when the Security Council was unable to disarm Iraq, but was also unable to prevent unilateral United States action. Additional events during this time revealed a system in need of reform.

The recent debates have also demonstrated that the much-vaunted equality of membership in the United Nations system is not devoid of critical limitations. Henrikson (2001) notes that the fact that five great powers, the so-called Permanent Five – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – have the veto privilege and can control the proceedings of the Security Council, suggests that international, or state-to-state, interaction in the world is still a two-tier process.

The Security Council is endowed with legislative, judiciary and executive power. In virtue of Article 23 of the United Nations Charter, members confer on the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Members also agree that the Council acts on their behalf, and in virtue of Article 25, they agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter. By contrast, according to Chapter IV of the Charter, on matters related to the maintenance of international peace and security, it may only make

recommendations, despite the fact that it can take decisions on other aspects, acting by a two-thirds majority on "important questions" and by a simple majority on "other questions".

Henrikson (2001) notes that 'status' of small states in the world's scholarship has reflected this institutional, real-world bias. He states that the academic community, like the political community, has tended to 'privilege' largeness over smallness. Historical questions such as the rise and fall of the great powers or the arms race and the control of nuclear technology, conceptual issues such as the doctrine of mutually assured destruction or the theory of hegemonic stability, and problems of international monetary co-ordination or supervision of the multinational corporation all are premised, explicitly or implicitly, on "bigness".

Small states have also been often regarded as underrepresented in the United Nations system (United Nations, 2007). Speaking at the first round of negotiations on Security Council reform, St Vincent and the Grenadines noted that in the entire history of the Security Council, SIDS have only served 13 terms as non-permanent members, and 29 of 37 SIDS – or 78% – have never had the opportunity to contribute as Council Members. Of the 74 states that have never been part of the Security Council, 39% were SIDS. The last SIDS served on the Council seven years ago. "Over 60 per cent of the times that the Council has met, it has done so without the perspective, experience and principle of a single small island developing state – an absence totalling 41 years of Council meetings" (Permanent Mission of St Vincent and the Grenadines, 2009).

Furthermore, if one had to look at the presence of small states on the Security Council – including not only SIDS and other island states but all small states – one finds that: of the states with a population of less than one million, only five states have served on the Council (United Nations General Assembly, 2010); while of those with a population of less than 1.5 million, only ten states have served on the Council since 1946.[16]

The fact that despite the numerical total of small states at the United Nations they have served relatively little time on the Security Council when compared to larger states is among the main reasons why considerable interest has been expressed by small states.

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[16] See Annex IV

<u>Reforms proposed by small states</u>

(c)   <u>Draft resolutions</u>

In December 1992, Resolution 47/62 adopted unanimously by the General Assembly, placed the item entitled Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council on the Assembly's council. In December 1993, through Resolution 48/26, the General Assembly established an Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) as a sub-committee with the task of making recommendations for many areas of reform, including the Security Council. The OEWG's work was to be divided into two areas, or clusters: the first cluster dealing with reforms that required an amendment to the United Nations Charter, including an increase in Security Council members, and issues relating to the veto privilege of the P5; the second cluster dealing with questions that did not require amendments to the Charter, including procedural issues. Discussions continued throughout the years, amid proposals by the Security Council member states on the working methods, until in 1998, Resolution 55/30, following the report by General Assembly president and Working Group chairman Razali Ismael of Malaysia, stipulated that any future resolutions on expanding the Security Council would require a two-thirds majority. This was seen as an added challenge to the already lengthy and difficult negotiations.

In December 2004, the United Nations High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, appointed by the Secretary General a year before, proposed two models for enlargement. Both Model A (adding six new permanent seats, with no veto, and three new two-year term elected seats) and Model B (proposing a new category of eight seats, renewable every four years, and one new two-year non-renewable seat) involved expanding the Council to 24 members.

Several small states have voiced their proposals for a reformed Security Council. Some of these proposals were put forth in the form of resolutions in collaboration with other member states, as in the case of the Group of Four, the Uniting for Consensus group, the African Union and the Small Five,

while others were made through public statements by CARICOM and by small states on their own accord.

In July 2005, the General Assembly discussed the enlargement of the Security Council. Three draft resolutions were submitted, while a fourth resolution was tabled the following year.

One of the resolutions, proposed by the Group of Four (G4) – Japan, Brazil, Germany and India – with the support of a number of states, including small states Fiji, Kiribati, Maldives, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, was in favour of Model A proposed by the High Level Panel, with the addition of four non-permanent members instead of three, for a total Council membership of 25 (United Nations General Assembly, 2005a). In addition, they proposed that the six permanent members be selected as to two states from Africa, two from Asia, one from Latin American and the Caribbean, and one from Western Europe and other states; whereas the four new non-permanent members would be selected as to one state from Africa, one from Asia, one from Eastern Europe and one from Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Uniting for Consensus (UfC) group, informally known as the 'Coffee Club', which gathers Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Italy, Mexico, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Spain, Turkey and small states Malta and San Marino, proposed increasing the Security Council non-permanent members to 20, serving for a two-year term, in addition to the five permanent members (United Nations General Assembly, 2005b). In addition, the UfC group proposed that the 20 non-permanent members of the Security Council would be elected as to six states from among African states, five from Asia, four from Latin America and the Caribbean, three from Western Europe and other states and two from Eastern Europe.

The African Union, which includes small states Cape Verde, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, proposed to increase Security Council membership to 26, with two permanent seats and two non-permanent seats to be allocated for African states, two permanent and one non-permanent seat to be allocated to Asian states, one non-permanent seat for Eastern European states, one permanent and one non-permanent seat to be allocated for Latin

American and Caribbean states, and one permanent seat for Western European and other states (United Nations General Assembly, 2005c).

A fourth draft resolution on Improving the working methods of the Security Council was proposed by the Small Five (S-5) – Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland (United Nations General Assembly, 2006). The five states' draft resolution has been dubbed as contentious, as it proposed that:

"...a permanent member of the Security Council using its veto should explain the reason for doing so at the time the relevant draft resolution is rejected in the Council and a copy of the explanation be circulated as a Security Council document to all."

They also proposed that the permanent members would refrain from using their veto in interventions against genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Their proposal, however, was met by criticism. Russian Ambassador Andrey Denisov was quoted as saying:

"I don't like the idea of discussing it because there is no matter to discuss… If we raise such issues, it means that the General Assembly has doubts that we apply the veto in a proper way." British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry was also quoted as saying "I don't like it… It presumes the General Assembly should tell the Security Council what to do… We consider it an invitation, but not an obligation" (Farley, 2005).

Despite the four resolutions, none of them managed to garner enough support. A more recent attempt at reforming the Council, in September 2008, has seen the General Assembly call for the discussions to be held at intergovernmental level. The Assembly's decision was based on a recommendation made by the OEWG in 2008 (United Nations, 2008b). Langmore (2008) states that:

"...the recent move in the General Assembly of an apparently procedural character gives cause for some optimism. On 15 September 2008, the last meeting day of the 62nd General Assembly, and after

extensive debate, a significant agreement was reached on the process for handling the Security Council issue."

The OEWG's 2008 draft report which proposed continuation of negotiation based on "general agreement" (implying consensus decision-making), rather than "the widest possible agreement" (allowing for a vote), was overridden by decision 62/557 of the General Assembly which aimed at garnering the widest possible political acceptance (Open-ended Working Group, 2008).

In December 2009, debate on reform took a new path when 138 states, with the visible and notable exclusion of UfC members (who sent a separate letter on January 13, 2010), signed a letter addressed to the chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan, urging him to present a "text with options to serve as the basis of negotiations" (Letter dated December 23, 2009). In his reply on January 13, 2010, while refraining from addressing the issue of a composite paper, Ambassador Tanin urged member states to make the most of the forthcoming exchange in the fourth round of negotiations by defining areas of convergence, leading to the fifth round, which would be "text-based" (Lund, 2010). Although many view the Council reform debate as long-winding and too lengthy, admittedly, significant progress has been made. The General Assembly's 2008 decision to allow the negotiations to be voted upon has meant that negotiations could move forward despite the fact that consensus might not be reached. The latest developments show that the attempts to shift the debate towards text-based negotiations might bear significant results during the forthcoming session.

In a further development on January 21, 2010, the Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations tabled a conference room paper which included a proposal presented by the delegations of Colombia and Italy on behalf of the UfC. For the first time, a group of states was proposing that non-permanent seats be taken up by (1) small states with a population of less than one million, (2) medium-sized states with a population of less than ten million, (3) Africa, (4) Asia, (5) Group of Latin American and Caribbean states, and (6) Eastern European group (United Nations General Assembly, 2010). So far, this is one of the strongest proposals in favour of small states advanced by any group. It goes a step further than other proposals seeking to increase Council membership, as the UfC proposal would unequivocally assign a seat to small and medium-sized states.

Throughout the history of Security Council reform, it has become clear that a general consensus that the Council membership needs to be expanded has been reached. Although the modalities of such expansion still require further negotiations, it is through additional seats – possibly a specifically allocated seat – that small states stand a likelihood of being better represented. Such an arrangement is not simply favourable; it is necessary for small states.

(d)   Statements

In its proceedings during the 61st session, the OEWG stated that expansion needed to be based both on the contribution of member states to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the United Nations, as well as to a fair geographical distribution, as stipulated in the United Nations Charter: "Maintaining the current regional groups, any enlargement should address the underrepresentation of developing countries as well as small States" (United Nations, 2007). One of its recommendations, in fact, was that of "striking an adequate balance between the general satisfaction about the geographical representation of the Council, in particular in terms of the representation of developing countries and of small States..." (United Nations, 2007).

Although only one draft proposal clearly proposed a small states' seat on the Security Council, a number of small states have spoken in favour of increase in membership which would give small states more opportunities to be represented on the Council, while other small states have explicitly proposed a SIDS' seat on the Council through various statements.

Speaking at the plenary debate on the report of the Security Council in 2008, Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Vanu Gopala Menon reiterated the importance of there being more non-permanent seats to provide more opportunities for small states to serve on the Council (Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations, 2008):

"This is an important aspect of making the Council more reflective of the views of the membership. Small states have few opportunities to serve regularly on the Council. Indeed, many have never served even a single term on the Council since becoming United Nations members. I stress this point because all too often, the discussions on reform revolve around the interests of the larger and medium powers.

We should not forget that small states have made valuable and constructive contributions during their stints as non-permanent members. Likewise, any increase should accurately reflect geographic distribution. We cannot have any one region dominating the non-permanent seats."

Another set of recommendations have been proposed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which draws together 15 Caribbean states, 13 of which fall within the 1.5 population mark, as well as five associates and seven observers, some of which are dependencies. CARICOM's proposals are in favour of an eventual abolition of the veto, an increase in permanent and non-permanent members, additional permanent members coming from both developed and developing worlds, and an arrangement for the increase in the number of non-permanent members which should allow for greater representation from small and island states (Permanent Mission of Barbados to the United Nations, 2008).

In one of its recent statements however, CARICOM put forth a specific proposal for a SIDS representative on the Council (Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the United Nations, 2009):

"CARICOM is convinced of the merits in favour of dedicated SIDS representation, taking into account equitable geographical distribution of seats, on a reformed Security Council... SIDS share common vulnerabilities, threats, concerns and perspectives which have several dimensions beyond any single threat or challenge, a fact which therefore makes our case even more convincing."

Small state St Vincent and the Grenadines, which forms part of CARICOM, has also issued several statements, in favour of both an increase in permanent and non-permanent members, as well as a SIDS representative on the Council, In particular, the small state has proposed a second complementary measure to create a mechanism that ensures the presence of SIDS among the membership of the Security Council. Such a mechanism would involve a non-permanent seat, or seats, which would rotate among SIDS of the various geographic groupings.

In support of this proposal, Ambassador C.M. Gonsalves reiterated (Permanent Mission of St Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, 2009): "The United Nation's 37 SIDS… represent almost one fifth of the membership of this body. We are a far flung collective, who are linked by neither

ideology nor civilisation, but nonetheless have more in common with each other than with some of the larger developed States within our own respective geographic blocs. Issues unique to SIDS are increasingly prevalent and demanding of attention and consideration at all levels of the United Nations system."

On the same occasion, St Vincent and the Grenadines also proposed consideration, as selection criteria for Council seats, of peacekeeping and peace-building efforts beyond military might and financial strength, since the Charter's exclusive focus on "contribution… to the maintenance of international peace and security" suggests a purely quantitative assessment that favours large, rich, states with military power. Ambassador C.M. Gonsalves criticised this approach toward peace-building and peacekeeping as outmoded, which in turn engenders a lack of diverse perspectives in the Council (Permanent Mission of St Vincent and the Grenadines, 2009):

"The Security Council may rightly wonder how we manage to do this, but our unique and successful peace-building perspectives are lost if the sole focus is on 'contributions' in the financial/military sense. Our qualitative contributions must be taken into account in the Charter. The inherent anti-regional biases in the existing criteria run counter to our current effort to democratise and add equitable balance, especially vis-à-vis small and developing States."

The reform debates have shown that small states have not been content in taking a passive stance, but are determined to take an active one. It has become a well-known fact that the chances of being better represented on the Council are greater if Council membership is increased, and it is more so if the proposal for a small states' seat on the Council materialises. It is also a well-known fact that the quest for membership increase is not only desired by small states, but by United Nations member states in general.

Despite this common desire, however, small states have opted to participate actively, especially in the knowledge that any agreement requires a two-thirds majority of member states, a majority in which, due to their numbers within the United Nations, small states have a greater role to play.

Furthermore, not only have small states joined other states in voicing their proposals, but some of them have undertaken a more visible approach by joining groups as core members, by taking on a central role in proposing draft resolutions, and by expressing their position through official statements.

Chapter III – Lessons learnt from "roaring mice"

A number of factors have moulded the behaviour, interactions and role small states have had at the United Nations.

As seen in the previous chapters, historically, it was the decolonisation and fragmentation of larger states that placed special focus on the sudden growth of small states. This growth in number at the turn of the century attracted initial concerns from powerful states, who later abandoned the idea of introducing alternatives to full membership in favour of the recognition of sovereignty of states, regardless of size.

The characteristics generally attributed to small states – including island, land-locked and developing states – induced them to behave in particular ways. Their susceptibility to natural disasters and environmental change, often difficult market conditions, and other weaknesses associated with smallness have led them to strongly assert their local and regional needs, and to form coalitions with other states sharing similar characteristics. Yet, their resilience and desire to overcome the challenges is proof that small states may be weak, but certainly not powerless.

Camilleri (2007) notes that although, generally speaking, their limited resources put smaller states in a weaker bargaining position in their interactions with larger ones on an international level, this initial disadvantage can, on occasion, be bypassed or reduced. To do so may require a reliance on collective solidarity and the rule of law, a strict focus on limited objectives, and the adoption of creative solutions. It is in this respect that small states have proven to be able to succeed at the United Nations. The case studies highlighted in Chapter Two are all vivid examples of successful interventions, fruit of their active and meaningful participation.

While the case studies are not meant to quantify or to measure in any way the impact or success such interventions have achieved – indeed, the case studies are standalone proof that small states can participate meaningfully – there are nonetheless identifiable lessons which small states have taught to the international order. These lessons learnt offer the basis for strategies which small states in general can adopt.

1.   **"The whole" of a group of small states can be greater than "the sum of its parts".** Henrikson (2001) reiterates that among the challenges to small states' security and welfare, the most profound is from the physical environment, natural and man-affected too.

"Because of their relatively high sensitivity to environmental pressures, from global warming and resulting rising sea levels to local habitat degradation and resource depletion, small states have become, as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has pointed out, 'front-line zones where, in concentrated form, many of the main problems of environment and development are unfolding" (2001, p. 51).

Indeed, small states' susceptibility to natural disasters and climate change is among the main "forces" that drive them to form coalitions, the most common of which are regional groups based on geographical proximity. The Small Islands Developing States group, for example, gathers three regional co-operation bodies: the Caribbean Community, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Pacific Islands Forum, the latter of which, formerly the South Pacific Forum, was important throughout the debates that led to the Barbados Programme of Action.

Similarly, organisations such as AOSIS, composed of small islands states, and FOSS, originally created for mutual support for elections, are not region-based by gather states sharing similar characteristics. AOSIS has been instrumental in a number of negotiations: it has been described as the leading force in the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS in 1994, which produced the Barbados Programme of Action; 10 years later it was similarly influential when it proposed a draft protocol to the Conference of the Parties in 1995, which resulted in the Kyoto

Protocol. On the other hand, the Forum of Small States (FOSS), which was set up by Singapore, now discusses topical issues. The value and impact of FOSS is also being felt, with both New Zealand and the Czech Republic being elected to the Security Council partly through the support of FOSS members (Hong, 1995).

All of these groups have not only succeeded in voicing the concerns of their members in a vociferous way, but they have established themselves as influential groups, earning the respect of larger states. AOSIS, for example, is known to have been handed the full authority of the Group of 77 and China, to negotiate a separate agreement in preparation for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS in Barbados (Davis, 1996).

Yet, although these coalitions come together because of their regional proximity or similarities in characteristics, it is also notable to observe that their member states are far from being identical, or far from share the exact same characteristics. There are in fact notable differences between the members. A case in point is AOSIS, which owes its success to the sense of unity existent among its members. Davis (1996) notes that such unity has been achieved despite vast differences between AOSIS members, for example, while some are prosperous tourist destinations, others are undeveloped and virtually unknown to most of the world. AOSIS states differ on other aspects: some import energy, others are producers; some are democracies, others are emerging from communism.

That "the whole" of a group of small states can be greater than "the sum of its parts" finds a satisfactory expression within the United Nations system, in which there is a recognised group system. The examples cited above show that the group system allows states to join forces with other states with which they shared a common interest, thus acquiring a bargaining leverage that it would not have had if it had operated alone (Henrikson, 2007).

2.   The aspiration for attention and recognition, despite weaknesses and vulnerabilities, leads small states to seek niches, or specialisations. Niches are generally associated with specialised segments of a market. In diplomacy, it adopts a different, yet related, meaning: broadly speaking, it is

the specialisation of foreign policy. In this light, one can reiterate that small states have demonstrated resilience in the face of weaknesses, an ability to overcome certain challenges, and the capability of providing initiative and leadership in specific policy areas.

Rana (2008) notes that niche specialisation entails choosing an area of expertise either in an attempt to fill a real need in world affairs, or through self-interest, which may match the natural, cultural or other resources available to such small state.

"Switzerland, for instance, offers itself to Western or European countries to run their 'interests sections' when countries break bilateral ties. The fact that Switzerland is a neutral country helps in this role... Malta did this with the Law of the Sea... Mauritius and the Maldives have focused on tourism... Trinidad and Tobago played a key role in the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Of course, such a role involves a proactive mindset, and a willingness to spend resources on the chosen task; this may inhibit some developing or transition countries from pursuing this option. The key is to relate one's own interest with a demand that satisfies other countries. It can be argued that more small countries could exploit such niche areas than happens in practice."

Hong (1995, p. 282) states that the creation of niches helps small states protect themselves and survive, without which, they risk going unnoticed and unappreciated. "Small states need to work and try harder to be successful and credible members of the United Nations. If they slip below the political radar, they will find it hard to be elected to the bodies that matter, especially the Security Council."

Malta established itself firmly on the diplomatic and political map when its proposal to declare the high seas "common heritage of mankind" materialised with the signing of the Law of the Sea Treaty containing the same declaration. It sought a similar intervention with regards to climate change, and achieved further recognition when the issue was acknowledged by the General Assembly as a "common concern". Trinidad and Tobago has been similarly successful after its proposal for the setting up of a 'drug court' led to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Similarly, the Maldives piloted a resolution on protection and security for small states, while Singapore has been particularly active in the debate on Security Council reform.

Barbados's Prime Minister Owen Arthur (2000) believes that niches are sectors which every state is able to identify and adopt: "The successful development of small states can now be the exception that proves the rule that all states, irrespective of their resource endowment, their previous growth patterns, their special circumstances and idiosyncrasies, can find and hold appropriate niches in the new and emerging global society, in which no one need be, nor is left behind."

3.   Diplomacy is crucial. Henrikson (2001, p. 68) states that for most small states, the most important global developments, including those that directly shape their welfare, usually originate on an international scale, generating the need for international representation.

"The best way they often have to reason and to protest, and otherwise to express their self-interest, is externally, through diplomacy. If done through the diplomatic system, especially within the organised context of the General Assembly or other multilateral setting in which each country has a vote as well as a voice, they can do it "democratically" and achieve international legislative results."

Henrikson (2007, p. 68) explains that the greatest opportunity for survival for small states lies in institutions, and, especially, in diplomacy, submitting that the new diplomacy will increasingly be a rule-governed discourse.

"Particularly for small states, effective engagement in the international diplomatic system is simply crucial. From the "summit" level to lower-level technical meetings, the representatives of a country to other countries, and to international organisations, establish the persona of that country in the world, not merely its "image". Active participation in the diplomatic system can also be a country's best safety net, to be relied upon when and if all else fails."

Professor Henrikson also identifies six different types of diplomacy that are pertinent to small states (most of which have already been described above as lessons learnt):

(a)   Quiet diplomacy, which is associated with bilateral diplomacy, and in particular, "between mother and daughter countries… often involving special relationships, such as the ones that notably obtain between former British colonies" (Henrikson, 2007, p. 68);

(b)   Protest diplomacy, that is, a confrontational type of diplomacy. The element of protest can refer to literal protest, or a type of conduct through which a small state can make itself heard;

(c)   Group diplomacy, a very much sought-after principle, especially by small states, where the operative principle is strength in numbers.

(d)   Niche diplomacy, which the author describes as a concept closely akin to marketing. The countries' foreign policies almost become their business products, resulting in the attainment of influential places on the international scene;

(e)   Enterprise diplomacy, a greater daring and risk-taking type of diplomacy, requiring more innovation than niche diplomacy;

(f)   Regulatory diplomacy, whereby technical international co-operation is necessary in response to increasingly serious crimes that are more likely to weaken small states than larger ones.

4.   Limited resources necessitate innovative solutions. Limited capacity places limitations on small states' diplomatic relations, as it impinges directly on their ability to be represented adequately in as many fora as possible. As a result, small states struggle to keep up with every development. However, this has prompted small states to adopt certain practices to overcome this challenge.

We have seen in Chapter Two that although the United Nations fosters multilateral diplomacy, small states have capitalised on their missions – especially those in New York – for bilateral relations. Watson (1984, p. 175) notes that their missions constitute an effective delegation through which they can conduct relations with states with whom they do not exchange competent and permanent diplomatic missions. Although the effectiveness is limited, the "diplomacy throughout the United

Nations" has already proved to be a real convenience for some. "Bilateral diplomacy through United Nations delegations thus helps small states, both because it enables them to make full use of one competent diplomatic mission whereas they cannot manage a large number, and also because the political climate and assumptions of the United Nations favour the equality of small states."

Yet, this carries the disadvantage of being remoter and more indirect than that of a purely bilateral arrangement of one government negotiating with another government from their respective capitals through their envoys. Unless the delegates are experts in the issues forming the subject of negotiations, diplomatic exchanges are likely to suffer. Hence the need for states to be able to supplement the inclusion of experts for negotiations.

Another area which small states are beginning to capitalize upon is the application of information and communications technology (ICT) to diplomacy.

Rana (2008) notes that because of the costs involved and the specialised human resources that is required, only a few small states have started applying ICT to diplomacy. As a consequence, the gap in the efficacy of the diplomatic methods used by small states and the leading diplomatic powers has widened. On the other hand, Ambassador Rana points to the small Baltic States as examples of small states that have become trend leaders in using their websites and in exploiting ICT to their advantage.

Professor Henrikson (2001, p. 71) cites other examples: "All of the Nordic states rate high on the world list of connectivity and electronic and communications skills. So, too, do many other small states. Some of these, such as Malta, Israel, Bahrain, Singapore, Costa Rica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, are located in 'semi-peripheral' economic areas… Undeniably, the ICT revolution is having an equalising effect on large and small nations, and helping some of the latter to prosper. In some cases, their success is physical geography-related: the profitable niches they have found are strengthened by their time-zone positions – during or perfectly in-between the West European and North American 'business' days. Digitalisation… is transforming the conditions of small-state existence."

5.   **Strength in leadership**. The influence of the Permanent Representative is also of importance. Some Ambassadors remain well known for being active and competent, including Ambassador Arvid Pardo of Malta and Ambassador Tommy Koh of Singapore. Hong (1995) adds Ambassador Shirley Amerasinghe of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Jamil Baroody of Saudi Arabia whose professionalism, competence and personal qualities were so impressive that their foreign ministries respected their judgment and advice and allowed them much leeway in decision-making and policy articulation. Davis (1996) recalls the work of the first chair of AOSIS, Ambassador Robert Van Lierop, who represented Vanuatu at the United Nations for more than a decade and who guided AOSIS through its early years; Ambassador Annette des Illes of Trinidad and Tobago, who will be remembered for having delivered one of the most effective speeches on climate negotiations, when she introduced the "AOSIS protocol" during the 11th Session; and Ambassador Tuiloma Neroni Slade who led AOSIS at the First Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention in Berlin in 1995, and who assisted AOSIS in forging a partnership with a large majority of the Group of 77 and China in support of the protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by developing countries.

Hong observes that some small states are not fortunate enough to possess a large pool of talented representatives. He attributes the uneven quality of small state representation at the United Nations due, in part, to the political factor in ambassadorial appointments and the lack of awareness of the importance of high quality appointments, and other constraints.

Yet, he also notes that whenever small states have had competent teams of diplomats who were excellent at networking, gathering information and able to project influence, friendship and general competence, the small states they represented have been able not only to compensate for their small geographic, economic or population size but equally important, to overcome the physical constraints of small numbers of their missions.

6.   Small states need a strong United Nations. This may be listed as the last of lessons learnt, yet within the scope of the subject-matter of this dissertation, this is probably the most important lesson of all.

Against a backdrop of multilateralism at its best, celebrated within the United Nations, it is an undeniable fact that small states are vulnerable and weak. Due to this, it is all the more important for small states to live in a world of peace, stability, law, order and justice, and to be part of a strong United Nations that can act as an impartial referee.

Hong (1995) observes that a world of order may mean a system of powerful hegemons imposing their will on smaller and weaker states while a world of justice may mean a more chaotic system with more equality among states. Despite its imperfections and weaknesses the United Nations still remains the best vehicle for achieving an acceptable balance between order and justice. This is probably the most important lesson of all because through their participation, small states have demonstrated their tremendous ability to participate meaningfully and influence the outcomes of negotiations.

Yet, an equally important factor in the ideal world of a small state is the success of the United Nations "vehicle" itself. The success of the small state today may ultimately depend on whether the international community, as organised formally in the United Nations, is able to make its working procedurally fairer and more substantively equitable in the outcomes it produces. With this in mind, small states have contributed actively in United Nations reform debates.

And what is perhaps more admirable is that while some of the initiatives undertaken by small states are necessitated by their own needs and requirements, and therefore aimed to serve them specifically, small states have undertaken most initiatives for the benefit of the United Nations and all its member states.

Conclusion

Throughout the years, the profile of small states has changed dramatically, evidenced by the role in international relations small states have undertaken, and reflected by a wave of academic studies that reached its pinnacle in the 1970s but which continue to follow small states very closely.

The decolonisation and defragmentation of certain states have led a relatively high number of small and micro-states to form. In the United Nations, such states were initially met with cynicism from other states, which perceived small states to lack influence and power. Eventually, this idea was abandoned in favour of a more open and approving stance.

In the space of a few decades, small states have become a meaningful group within the United Nations. They soared in numbers, initiatives and influence. In the General Assembly, which holds high the one vote per sovereign state principle, the number of small states became very significant. In the Security Council, the number of small states brought United Nations member states to view the Council's structure as out of date and in dire need of reform.

Yet, small states have capitalised on the one vote per sovereign state principle not only to influence the decision-making process in their best interests, but as a system of balance which benefits all member states. The structure, in fact, allows small states to prevent powerful states from using the system for the benefit of a limited number of states.

However, the significance of small states is not only numerically-based. Although numbers are significant in the decision-making process, small states have come across as an important segment able to forth important proposals and influence the outcomes.

One of the main vehicles was through coalitions. Especially since the 1990s, small states came together to form important groupings, such as the SIDS and its strong voice, AOSIS. Of significant importance is the role these groups have had in sustainable development and climate change issues.

Thus, at the United Nations small states have shown that they have been able to capitalise on the one rule per sovereign state principle. They have realised that much of their power is in their numbers, and to benefit from this fact, small states have often spoken with a unified voice.

Yet, small states' participation is meaningful not only when they form coalitions. One must bear in mind that small states face vulnerabilities and challenges emanating from their characteristics of smallness and 'islandness'. Their vulnerabilities prompt them to form groupings with like-minded states for a number of reasons: to understand and be understood; to gather on a regional setting with other states facing the same geographical-related challenges; because of the strong-powerful perception, they find their strength in numbers. And yet, one of the most visible characteristics is resilience, that is, their ability to face challenges and attempt to overcome them.

Small states are weak but certainly not powerless. At the United Nations, small states have shown that even on their own, they are able to propose and pilot resolutions and other proposals for their own benefit but also for the benefit of all member states. The International Criminal Court and the common heritage of mankind concept in the Law of the Sea are among the noteworthy examples.

Furthermore, small states have also contributed in other areas: peacekeeping and security concerns, and recently, Security Council reforms. Whereas small states have added their voice to those of other states to bring forth proposals, especially with regards to an increase in membership, a move which is seen as bringing greater opportunities for small states to be represented on the Council, recently, small states have taken a further step by proposing a Council seat specifically for small states.

The characteristics that generally shape the behaviour of small states, and in turn, the role they have undertaken within the United Nations system, has proved that despite being small, weak and vulnerable, small states are far from powerless. The case studies presented in this dissertation show that small states possess the ability to recognise their vulnerabilities, ask for help when necessary and undertake innovate ways to overcome them. Such innovative ways have, on many occasions, been

fully recognised by all states – a testament to the fact that small states have not only undertaken an active role, but a meaningful one too.

This sums up the role small states have had at the United Nations – a role that has been and continues to be a constant reminder of the fact that all sovereign states are equal, regardless of size – a principle enshrined in the United Nations charter.

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Annex I

UNCTAD's unofficial list of Small Island Developing States

The United Nations never established criteria to determine an official list of SIDS. This unofficial list is used by UNCTAD for analytical purposes only.[17]

Antigua and Barbuda

Bahamas

Barbados

Cape Verde

Comoros

Dominica

Fiji

Grenada

Jamaica

Kiribati

Maldives

Marshall Islands

Mauritius

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Nauru

Palau

Papua New Guinea

Samoa

Sao Tome and Principe

Seychelles

Solomon Islands

St Kitts and Nevis

St Lucia

St Vincent and the Grenadines

Timor-Leste

Tonga

Trinidad and Tobago

Tuvalu

Vanuatu

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[17] UNCTAD. (2002). Unofficial list of SIDS [online]

Annex II

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development, lists 51 small island developing states and territories[18]

Africa
Cape Verde
Comoros
Guinea-Bissau
Maldives
Mauritius
Sao Tome and Principe
Seychelles

Asia and the Pacific
American Samoa [1/ 4/]
Bahrain [2/]
Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas [1/ 2/]
Cook Islands [1/ 3/]
Fiji
French Polynesia [1/ 2/ 4/]
Guam [1/ 4/]
Kiribati
Marshall Islands
Federated State of Micronesia
Nauru
New Caledonia [1/ 2/ 4/]
Niue [1/ 3/]
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Singapore
Timor-Leste
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu

Latin America and the Caribbean
Anguila [1/ 2/ 4/]
Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba [1/ 2/ 4/]
The Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
British Virgin Islands [1/ 2/ 4/]
Cuba
Dominica

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[18] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development. (2007). Small Island Developing States [online]

Dominican Republic [2]
Grenada
Guyana
Haiti
Jamaica
Montserrat [1,2,4]
Netherlands Antilles [1,4]
Puerto Rico [1,4]
St Kitts and Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
US Virgin Islands [1,4]

[1] Associate Member of a United Nations Regional Commission
[2] Not a Member or Observer of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
[3] States non-Members of the United Nations
[4] Territories non-Members of the United Nations

Annex III

Members and observers of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)[19]

Countries in bold are not United Nations member states.

Members	Observers
Antigua and Barbuda	**American Samoa**
Bahamas	**Netherlands Antilles**
Barbados	**Guam**
Belize	**US Virgin Islands**
Cape Verde	
Comoros	
Cook Islands	
Cuba	
Dominica	
Dominican Republic	
Fiji	
Federated States of Micronesia	
Grenada	
Guinea-Bissau	
Guyana	
Haiti	
Jamaica	
Kiribati	
Maldives	
Marshall Islands	
Mauritius	
Nauru	
Niue	
Palau	
Papua New Guinea	
Samoa	
Singapore	
Seychelles	
Sao Tome and Principe	
Solomon Islands	
St Kitts and Nevis	
St Lucia	
St Vincent and the Grenadines	
Suriname	
Timor-Leste	
Tonga	
Trinidad and Tobago	
Tuvalu	
Vanuatu	

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[19] Alliance of Small Island States. (200). Members and observers [online]

Annex IV

Small states falling within the 1.5 million threshold (set by the Commonwealth's 1997 *A Future for Small States: Overcoming Vulnerability* report)[20]

Member countries of the Commonwealth are shown in bold.

(a)   Africa

Cape Verde (served on the Security Council once: 1992-93)
Djibouti (served on the Security Council once: 1993-94)
Equatorial Guinea
Sao Tome and Principe
Gabon (served on the Security Council three times: 1978-79, 1998-99, 2010-11)
Gambia (served on the Security Council twice: 1998 – 99)
Guinea-Bissau (served on the Security Council once: 1996 – 97)
Swaziland

(b)   Asia

Bahrain (served on the Security Council once: 1998 – 99)
Bhutan
Brunei
Timor-Leste

(c)   Caribbean

Antigua and Barbuda
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Dominica
Grenada
Guyana (served on the Security Council twice: 1975-76, 1982-83)
St Kitts and Nevis
St Lucia
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago (served on the Security Council once: 1985-86)

(d)   Europe

Andorra
Estonia
Iceland
Liechtenstein
Luxembourg
Monaco

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[20] United Nations, Statistics Division**.** (2008). Population, latest available census and estimates (2007 - 2008) [online]

Montenegro
San Marino

(e)   Indian Ocean

Seychelles
Comoros
Maldives

(f)   Mediterranean

Cyprus
Malta (served on the Security Council once: 1983-84)

(g)   Middle East

Qatar (served on the Security Council once: 2006-07)

(h)   South America

Suriname

(i)   South Pacific

Fiji
Kiribati
Micronesia
Nauru
Palau
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu