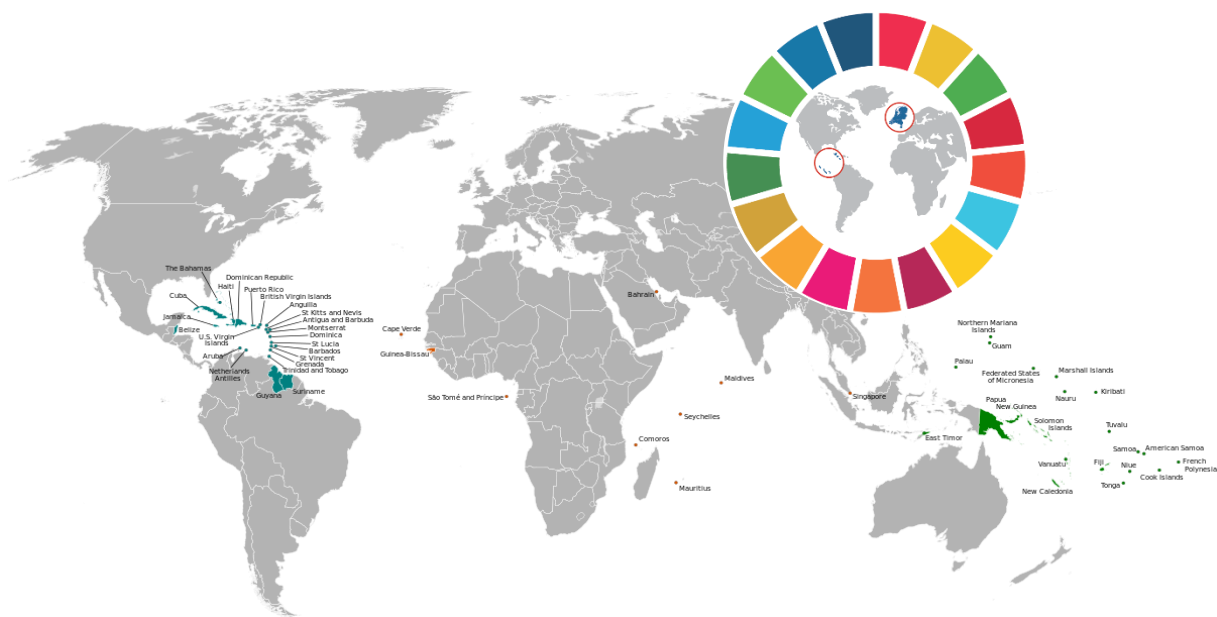




# At the Forefront of Climate Change?

A case study on norms and identity shaping Dutch foreign policy on climate change in small island developing States



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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to unravel the constructivist premise that socially constructed identities shape international relations, which will be scrutinised in twofold. Firstly, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are viewed as mere moral commitments due to the lack of a legally binding character. This research will shine a light on how these moral commitments can influence foreign policy. The case study that will exemplify this is the Netherlands' foreign policy on climate change with small island developing States. Climate change poses an imminent threat to these islands, due to rising sea levels. Secondly, the Netherlands' historically and socially constructed identity will be part of this thesis too. The Netherlands has centuries long experience in water management, due to half of the country being geographically situated below sea level. Besides analysing these relations through a constructivist lens, this thesis aims to integrate the disciplines International Relations and Development Studies. Hence, modernisation and dependency theory from Development Studies serve as conceptual frameworks to analyse the sources. This way, an international approach to Development Studies is granted, acknowledging development as a vital component of the international order. Analysing international relations through a lens of development theory will grant a holistic view, while engaging with the non-Western world and recognising the Global North-South relations.

The case study on the Netherlands and small island developing States demonstrates that norms influence international behaviour, however, legal agreements further strengthen moral commitments. This does not mean that one excludes the other, legal agreements should rather be considered as additional reassurance, they are not an imperative to achieve change. In its foreign policy, the Netherlands drew a lot on its historically and socially constructed identity. Thus, social identity shaped Dutch foreign policy. Therefore, relations between countries in the international realm were influenced by this identity. The Netherlands framed its support through addressing its identity as an expert on water related issues, and as three of the four countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are small island developing States, although providing aid was not constrained to the Caribbean.

**Keywords:** United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, small island developing States, Dutch foreign policy, development cooperation, Constructivism, modernisation theory, dependency theory

## **Acknowledgements**

During the time I spent in Cuba whilst I was doing my internship, I experienced the direct impact of rising sea levels on the shoreline of Havana. The smashing waves crashing onto the promenade and entire street, which is most important route through Havana made a huge impression on me. Whilst the tide was high and the waves were at their biggest, the side of the road could not be used as the cars were washed over by the gigantic waves. The power of the sea made such an impression on me, and in combination with the vulnerabilities of a country that is already challenged by many different factors, seemed so unfortunate. I was aware that other small islands were facing the same threats, and their resilience and that of its inhabitants was being greatly tested. This served as an inspiration for this thesis.

Writing this thesis granted me the opportunity to combine my interest for international relations and sustainable development, shining a light on countries that are on the margins of the world. During this research, my interest was furthermore sparked by sustainable development aid and the private sector, as it has shown me the contributions the private sector can make when uniting with governments. I hope to raise awareness for small islands that are suffering inescapable challenges by the sea because of climate change. In this aspect, every reader counts, hopefully becoming conscious of the battle of the world's ever-loved holiday destinations.

I would like to thank my supervisor Paschalis Pechlivanis for his guidance throughout writing process of this thesis.

Lastly, I would like to thank my close ones for always supporting me in my decisions and ambitions.

Charlotte Huijskens

Utrecht, December 2020.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>ACP</b>	The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
<b>AIMS</b>	Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea
<b>AIV</b>	The Advisory Council on International Affairs
<b>BPOA</b>	The Barbados Programme of Action
<b>CBS</b>	Statistics Netherlands
<b>COE</b>	United Nations Centre of Excellence for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
<b>DRR-Team</b>	Dutch Risk Reduction Team
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IR</b>	International Relations
<b>JPOI</b>	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MSI</b>	Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PPPs</b>	Public-Private Partnerships
<b>Rio+20</b>	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (2012)
<b>RVO</b>	The Netherlands Enterprise Agency
<b>SAMOA Pathway</b>	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States
<b>TNO</b>	Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UN-OHRLLS</b>	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

## I. Introduction

In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States, providing a plan of action for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. At heart of the 2030 Agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are intended to be achieved by 2030, providing these goals 15 years to be accomplished. The SDGs seek to build and expand on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that stood central in the fight against poverty from 2000 until 2015. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges climate change as “one of the greatest challenges of our time”<sup>1</sup> as its harmful impacts undermine the achievement of sustainable development. Despite not being the main contributors to climate change, small island developing States (SIDS) are the first to suffer and seriously harmed by the effects of it.<sup>2</sup> The threats of climate change, such as rising sea levels, endangers small islands through inundation which poses a risk for many societies.<sup>3</sup> A new issue entered the climate policy debate: the future of climate refugees, as climate related migration will not be an exception in the future. Estimations indicate that by 2050, more than 200 million people might need to resettle due to climate change.<sup>4</sup> Of the 17 SDGs, Goal 13 is dedicated to address the risks of climate change.<sup>5</sup> The Netherlands was one of the 193 members of the UN that adopted the 2030 Agenda. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte declared at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in 2015, the Netherlands to be “fully committed to making the next leap forward.”<sup>6</sup>

### 1.1 Academic Debates

Within the field of global governance, the 17 SDGs pose a new strategy that is governance through goals; an approach to global policy and governance with goal-setting as a central strategy.<sup>7</sup> The new way of global governance as exemplified by the SDGs is characterised by

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, A/RES/70/1, 8.

<sup>2</sup> L. A. Nurse et al., “Small islands” in: *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part B: Regional Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 1613-1654 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 1617.

<sup>3</sup> UN, “Transforming Our World”, 8-9.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Biermann and Ingrid Boas, “Protecting Climate Refugees: The Case for a Global Protocol” *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development* 50 (2008): 6, 10.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Sustainable Development. “The 17 Goals, History”, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> Accessed on September 3, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Government of the Netherlands, “Speech by Prime Minister Rutte at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit”, September 26, 2015. <https://www.government.nl/documents/speeches/2015/09/26/speech-by-prime-minister-rutte-at-the-United-nations-sustainable-development-summit> Accessed on September 3, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Biermann, Norichika Kanie and Rakhun E Kim, “Global governance by goal-setting: the novel approach of the UN Sustainable Development Goals” *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 26-27 (2017) 26 – 27.

“inclusive goal-setting process, the non-binding nature of the goals, the reliance on weak institutional arrangements, and the extensive leeway that states enjoy.”<sup>8</sup> Despite the 2030 Agenda having been globally adopted and integrated, it has been subject of critical debates due to its limitations. Although the goals are outlined as global, national governments have the autonomy to set national targets and determine their own emphasis regarding the goals. Ergo, the SDGs will be tailored to the abilities and circumstances of governments.<sup>9</sup> This prerogative has been critiqued as scholars advocate this will lead to cherry picking and politicizing of the SDG-agenda. Governments will select certain goals or sectors that will be profitable for their (re)election, hence the goals will be merely used as a political instrument for framing.<sup>10</sup> The universal character of the goals has been both applauded and denounced. Critics argue creating a universal framework that is adaptable to individual states, is a contradiction in itself as universality excludes detail.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, the non-binding nature of the goals is a matter of contention. International legislation is one of the most vital institutional aspects of international relations. When viewing the SDGs in the light of international law, compliance presents a matter of critique. There are not any legal or governance systems existing that regulate whether member states comply with the 2030 Agenda. Governments that adopted the SDGs are not legally accountable for the compliance and application of the goals in national policies. As being argued, the success factor is articulated in the “bottom-up, non-confrontational, country-driven, and stakeholder-oriented aspects of governance through goals.”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, it is claimed the precision of the SDGs is precarious as the goals “specify vague and aspirational outcome targets.”<sup>13</sup> To solve this and strengthen the accountability, the SDGs should compromise clear references to the competent agents of the goals.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast, the lack of legal obligations to achieve the SDGs has also been viewed as beneficial. ‘Soft’ international norms as the SDGs can generate a wider participation as it does not challenge state sovereignty.<sup>15</sup> This thesis sides with the argument that normative discourses,

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<sup>8</sup> Biermann, Kanie and Kim, “Global governance by goal-setting”, 26.

<sup>9</sup> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets. An assessment of where OECD countries stand”, June 2017, 4.

<sup>10</sup> René Grotenhuis, “Van MDG’s naar SDG’s: Het kleine verschil en de grote gevolgen” *Internationale Spectator* 69 (2015): 3.

<sup>11</sup> Lichia Saner Yiu and Raymond Saner, “Sustainable Development Goals and Millennium Development Goals: an analysis of the shaping and negotiation process” *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, 36 (2014): 2, 104.

<sup>12</sup> Biermann, Kanie and Kim, “Global governance by goal-setting”, 26-31.

<sup>13</sup> Åsa Persson, Nina Weitz and Måns Nilsson, “Follow-up and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals: Alignment vs. Internalization” *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law* 25 (2016): 1, 60.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Pogge and Mitu Sengupta, “The Sustainable Development Goals: a plan for building a better world?” *Journal of Global Ethics*, 11 (2015): 1, 57.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, “Hard and Soft Law in International Governance” *International Organization* 54 (2000): 3, 423.



as the SDGs, are valuable in shaping international relations. The IR theory of Constructivism is best at explaining this, which will be further illustrated by the case study of the Netherlands. When situating the SDGs and corresponding indicators in debates on measurability, the matter can be placed into the wider ‘Beyond GDP debate’. Scholars criticise the use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in measuring well-being and sustainable development. There is a need for more inclusive measures to include social and environmental aspects of progress towards welfare.<sup>16</sup> This is a discussion that has been going on well before the SDGs or MDGs were implemented and initiated in 1987 in *Our Common Future*, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development.<sup>17</sup>

The main debate around Dutch foreign policy is the dilemma of *de koopman* versus *de dominee* (the merchant versus the pastor). Striving for international economic cooperation may conflict the Dutch tradition of the pastor, with the moral, humanitarian, and ethical foreign policy. It is argued that in Dutch development cooperation, the pastor prevails over the metaphorical merchant. However, the increasing popularity of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in development cooperation is viewed as a new cover up for governmental indecisiveness and uncompliant development aid.<sup>18</sup> It is alleged that the dilemma between both traditions is enforced through the increase of international cooperation and multilateralism. Considering the Netherlands as a rather small country, membership of multilateral organisations influence Dutch foreign policy reasonably, resulting in a less outspoken policy and being influenced by the international realm and multilateral policies.<sup>19</sup> Hellema undermines this claim, he asserts that the personal interpretation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the creation of a foreign policy in The Netherlands, plays a major role.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, emphasis has been placed on the importance of ‘national identity’ in Dutch foreign policy formation.<sup>21</sup> In regard to development cooperation, it has been argued the Dutch government was heavily influenced by processing post-colonial trauma, after the Netherlands handed over power in its colonies. Motivation is a central point of contention in debates around development aid, called

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<sup>16</sup> Brent Bleys, “Beyond GDP: Classifying Alternative Measures for Progress” *Social Indicators Research* 109 (2012) 373.

<sup>17</sup> Ida Kubiszewski, Robert Costanza, Carol Franco, Philip Lawn, John Talberth, Tim Jackson and Camille Aylmer, “Beyond GDP: Measuring and achieving global genuine progress” *Ecological Economics* 93 (2013) 57-58.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Hoebink, “Nederlandse identiteit en Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking” *International Spectator* 63 (2009): 9, 442.

<sup>19</sup> Peter R. Baehr, Monique C. Castermans-Holleman and Fred Grünfeld, *Human rights in the foreign policy of The Netherlands* (Antwerpen: Intersentia, 2002) 13-15.

<sup>20</sup> D.A. Hellema, *Nederland in de wereld: De buitenlandse politiek van Nederland* (Houten: Spectrum, 2010) 436.

<sup>21</sup> Hoebink, “Nederlandse identiteit en Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking”, 438-439.

the development aid split. Two motives are distinguished for development aid: moral or self-interest motives.<sup>22</sup>

## 1.2 Relevance and Research Question

It is argued that one of the flaws of International Relations (IR) is its failure to engage with the non-European world. The results of this nonengagement are displayed by the mutual ‘stand-off’ that endures between IR and Development Studies as development has not been seen as a crucial component of the international order.<sup>23</sup> This thesis will not contribute to this so called ‘stand-off’ but rather integrates both disciplines. Foreign policy is a logical component of International Relations, as it entails interstate behaviour. Development cooperation is an integral part of foreign policy, at least in The Netherlands, henceforth this research aspires to narrow the gap between both disciplines.

This thesis aims to bridge the gap between IR and Development Studies by means of a case study on the implementation of SDG 13 and the framing thereof. The central research question in this thesis is: *‘How has the Netherlands framed and applied Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate change in its foreign policy towards small island developing States?’* This research positions itself between both disciplines, therefore, concepts from both disciplines will be applied to answer the research question, aiming to bridge both fields. This is an avenue that has been insufficiently explored.<sup>24</sup> As the SDGs were established in 2015, the timeframe of this thesis will be from 2015 until 2020. Thus, the first phase of the Netherlands’ implementation of the goals will be uncovered and analysed.

Literature on the SDGs mainly focusses on the negotiation process of the 2030 Agenda and the character of the goals as a totality, such as measurability and universality. This thesis aims to illustrate the application and framing of specifically SDG 13. In doing so, this research will take a constructivist approach to global governance, also contributing to debates on the Netherlands’ foreign policy and development cooperation policy in general. Additionally, this research will complement existing literature on Dutch foreign policy with the Global South. In many of the literature on Dutch foreign relations with the Global South, development

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<sup>22</sup> Peter van Lieshout, Robert Went and Monique Kremer, *Less Pretension, More Ambition. Development Policy in Ties of Globalization* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010) 25.

<sup>23</sup> Phillip Darby, “A Disabling Discipline?” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 95-102.

<sup>24</sup> Branwen Gruffydd Jones, “Africa and the Poverty of International Relations” *Third World Quarterly* 26 (2005): 6, 987-989.

cooperation is overlooked as the literature mainly focusses on human rights policy.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, this research on Dutch foreign relations with Global South countries will add to the existing literature, granting a more complete view of the Dutch foreign policy with the Third World. Particularly since 2012, when foreign trade became one of the core-responsibilities of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>26</sup>

Aside from attributing to academic debates around the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the answer to the research question also contributes to a societal debate. The research will uncover whether the SDGs truly take an important place in the Dutch foreign policy. Either way, the research will hopefully increase our understanding of the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda. An answer to the research question will eventually contribute to how to improve implementation of the SDGs in foreign policy. By uncovering the gaps in addressing the vulnerabilities, this will contribute to appropriately addressing the challenges, and preventing security risks from occurring. For instance, the displacement of people due to rising water levels and the outcome of the islands becoming inhabitable.

The case study of the Netherlands is taken as the Netherlands has a clearly defined identity abroad, that of an expert on water management. In this case, it is interesting to unravel how the Netherlands frames its identity abroad, if it shapes international relations. Similarly, the influence of SDGs as norms, more specifically SDG 13, on the Netherlands will be scrutinised. This research will illustrate whether the Netherlands complies with the international norms and frameworks the UN provides to address SDG 13 in SIDS.

### **1.3 Theoretical Approach: Crossing IR and Development Studies**

Barnett and Sikkink argue the study of IR is shifting towards the study of global society. They recognise the increase in literature on the influence of material and normative elements defining the international structure.<sup>27</sup> The identification of this shift towards the study of global governance and the increasing importance of shared values and norms, will be the backdrop of this research. The research takes a constructivist approach to the study of global society. Hence, the IR approach of merely looking at the interactions between states and foreign policies is not included in this thesis. The central premise within this research is that the international structure

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<sup>25</sup> Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *De ontdekking van de Derde Wereld. Beeldvorming en beleid in Nederland, 1950-1990* (Den Haag 1994) 64.

<sup>26</sup> Steven Collet, "Modernizing the Dutch Diplomatic Service: A Work in Progress" *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 10 (2015): 4, 441.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Barnett and Kathryn Sikkink, "From International Relations to Global Society", in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 62-63.

is a social structure, and that shared norms influence state behaviour in the international realm. This is best explained by Wendt's contribution to IR constructivist theory. He argues that how states and people behave and think in world politics, is based on socially and historically constructed norms and identities.<sup>28</sup> Ruggie explains the constructivist view as the recognition that building blocks of international reality are ideational, besides merely material.<sup>29</sup>

The study of IR has long been dominated by state-centred perspectives, such as Realism and Liberalism. Constructivism poses another approach to these state-centred perspectives. According to IR theory, realists would view goal-setting as a façade for breakdowns due to the absence of accomplishing meaningful binding multilateral agreements. Realists would depreciate the SDGs, and the 2030 Agenda as a whole, providing “scant guidance for prioritizing scarce resources.”<sup>30</sup> Consequently, this thesis will include a constructivist approach to international relations, centring the notion that international norms such as the SDGs, are influencers of state actions. Furthermore, Development Studies is a wide encompassing discipline which asks for a holistic analysis. Development cooperation should not be regarded as an isolated, local process. It involves many actors, not just state actors.<sup>31</sup> Besides that, the SDGs are a global framework, addressing governments but also academia and the private sector. Henceforth, the constructivist approach is best in analysing foreign policy in the SDGs context.<sup>32</sup>

#### **1.4 Methodology, Sources and Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis aims to answer the main research question by means of two subsidiary questions and is divided into three chapters. Chapter one will provide a theoretical framework of the main theories and analytical concepts that will be used in this thesis. Therefore, developing a framework for the following two chapters. To develop this framework, literature on IR and Development Studies will be used. The second chapter of this thesis aims to answer the first subsidiary question: ‘Which policy framework did the UN provide to address Sustainable Development Goal 13 in SIDS?’ In this chapter, the origins of the SDGs will be explored and

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<sup>28</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics” *International Organization* 46 (1992): 2, 393-395.

<sup>29</sup> John Gerard Ruggie, “What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge” *International Organization* 52 (1998): 4, 879.

<sup>30</sup> Arild Underdal and Rakhyun E. Kim, “The Sustainable Development Goals and Multilateral Agreements”, in *Governing Through Goals: Sustainable Development Goals as Governance Innovation*, ed. N. Kanie and F. Biermann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017) 242.

<sup>31</sup> Jones, “Africa and the Poverty of International Relations”, 988.

<sup>32</sup> UN, “Transforming Our World”, 15.

debated, similarly for Goal 13 and the notion of SIDS. This chapter will uncover which frameworks the UN provides in addressing sustainable development in general, particularly for SIDS. This chapter is mainly based on primary UN sources, such as political declarations, resolutions, agreements, and reports. Secondary literature on SDGs and SIDS will be used to complement and contextualise these primary sources.

The answer to the first subsidiary question will guide as a structure to the second subsidiary question. The third chapter aims to answer: ‘To what extent did the Netherlands comply with the UN framework to address Goal 13 in SIDS?’ In this chapter, the findings of chapter two will serve as a backdrop to investigate whether the Netherlands complied with the UN frameworks and if it made use of the tools and aspects outlined by the UN which were classified as being essential to achieve sustainable development in SIDS. The Dutch efforts to achieve Goal 13 in SIDS will be analysed. A focus will lie on the facets highlighted by the UN in its frameworks. The Netherlands has had two important opportunities to address the vulnerabilities of SIDS in the international political arena. Namely, during the European Union (EU) Council Presidency and whilst it took its seat on the UN Security Council. This chapter will uncover whether the Netherlands was orchestrating its views on SIDS into broader multilateral partnership organisations such as the EU and UN. In this chapter primary sources from the Government of the Netherlands will be used, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Similarly, independent reports on climate finance and the SDGs achievements will be analysed. This will be incorporated with secondary literature on the Dutch image abroad and addressing vulnerabilities in SIDS.

## **II: Theoretical Framework**

In the first chapter of this thesis, the main theories and analytical concepts of this research will be outlined and discussed, hence developing a framework for the following two chapters. Starting with the used terminology, International Relations or the abbreviation IR will refer to the discipline, whereas international relations refers to the empirical matter within the international realm.

### **2.1 Constructivism: The Middle Ground in IR Theories?**

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, a constructivist approach will be taken to analyse Dutch foreign policy on achieving SDG 13 in SIDS. As voiced by Jackson, Constructivism is a response to the dominance of Realism and Liberalism in IR theory. He positions Constructivism in the middle of those two dominant theories. Realism and Liberalism focus on rational state-level analysis. In divergence with this, Constructivism lays the focus on social and relational construction of states and their pursuits.<sup>33</sup> According to Adler, Constructivism takes the middle ground in IR theories, namely between the rationalist approach covered by realists and liberalists, and the interpretive approach covered by postmodernist, poststructuralist and critical IR scholars.<sup>34</sup> Constructivists handle a sociological approach to international politics and highlight the importance of ideas and shared understandings imparting value and meaning to international politics.<sup>35</sup>

To build upon a constructivist approach of IR in this thesis, the origins and significant concepts of the approach must be mapped out first. Wendt, Kratochwil and Onuf played a meaningful role in the creation of Constructivism. Onuf had first presented a constructivist approach of IR theory in 1989, although Alexander Wendt popularised the approach. Wendt became one of the most influential constructivist IR scholars through his article ‘Anarchy Is What States Make of It’ in 1992.<sup>36</sup> His argument is drawn from sociology and includes identity- and interest-formation. The title of his work ‘Anarchy is what states make of it’ is his main rationale, arguing self-help and power politics do not follow causally or logically from anarchy.

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<sup>33</sup> Ian Hurd, “Constructivism” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 299

<sup>34</sup> Emanuel Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics” *European Journal of International Relations* 3 (1997), 319 – 320.

<sup>35</sup> Robert J. Jackson, *Global Politics in the 21st Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 73.

<sup>36</sup> Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11.

They are rather socially constructed. Wendt argues states can be self-interested, but the meaning of self-interests is incessantly redefined as identities change. Furthermore, he claims international institutions have the ability to transform state identities and interests. Hence, norms define circumstances and therefore significantly influence international practice.<sup>37</sup>

Although the constructivist approach to IR theory includes many different scholars, the common ground is the notion that the world is socially constructed. The social, contrary to the material, has greater significance influencing international politics. Wendt introduced a commonly used example on the meaning and threat of nuclear weapons that clearly highlights the constructivist approach. His argument involves that social contexts influence state behaviour and their capability. Naturally, states act differently towards enemies than towards friends. The social context of these relationships gives meaning to materialist powers, such as nuclear weapons. Canadian possession of many nuclear weapons would not cause an immediate threat to the U.S. as they have a strong, long-lasting relationship. Although if Cuba were to possess a nuclear weapon, this would be incredibly alarming to the U.S.<sup>38</sup> Demonstratively, the social context gives meaning to the capability and threat of nuclear weapons, rather than the material value of the weapons in itself.

Constructivists describe the international sphere as a process of co-constitution. States contribute to creating institutions and norms in the international sphere. However, these international institutions and norms influence individual states as well. Subsequently, constructivists claim international norms and institutions simultaneously influence state actions, as they are results of state actions. Hence, the principle of reciprocal creation of states and international norms and institutions serves as foundation for the constructivist approach.<sup>39</sup>

Constructivism is split in three divisions: systemic constructivism, unit-level constructivism, and holistic constructivism. It is argued that Wendt's theory of Constructivism best lends itself to explain systemic constructivism. This branch of Constructivism focuses on "ideational and normative structure of international environment and ignores changes at the domestic political realm".<sup>40</sup> Wendt makes a distinction between social and corporate state identities. Corporate state identity includes internal human, ideological, cultural, or material characteristics that define a state. Cultural state identity refers to "meanings that an actor

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<sup>37</sup> Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it", 393-395.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, 397.

<sup>39</sup> Hurd, "Constructivism", 304.

<sup>40</sup> Mahdi Mohammad Nia, "A Holistic Constructivist Approach to Iran's Foreign Policy" *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 2 (2011): 4, 281.

attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others.”<sup>41</sup> Following Wendt’s argument on systemic constructivism, social identity influences the construction of foreign policy during social interactions between states in the international realm.<sup>42</sup>

According to the rationale of systemic constructivism, the UN is seen as an institution where new norms emerge, and new ideas are being diffused into the international sphere. This thesis will illustrate how international norms and ideas, formulated in the SDGs, impact foreign policy choices.<sup>43</sup> The level of analysis in this thesis will be twofold, namely analysis on state level and international system level. As the foreign policy of the Netherlands will be studied, state level analysis will take place. Analysis on the international system level is similarly included in this thesis, as international goals as posed by the UN, theoretically influence and construct Dutch foreign policy. I.e., this points to a reciprocal influence between international and domestic affairs. Putnam picked up on this two-fold analysis of foreign policy construction and he introduced the notion of ‘two-level game’. This contains governments trying to satisfy domestic political interests at the international level, while complying with international interests and diminishing undesirable consequences from foreign developments. Briefly, the attempt of decision-makers to merge national and international priorities simultaneously.<sup>44</sup>

Adler set out the existing debate in IR theory about the nature of the discipline, which approach is most suited to explain the nature of the international realm. Arguably, the constructivist approach is the most convincingly and thorough in explaining foreign policy and henceforth used in this thesis.<sup>45</sup> Realism and Liberalism are grouped under the rationalist branch of IR theory. They presume states have fixed identities and interests which are usually material, and that these interests are pursued through rational calculations.<sup>46</sup> The idea that state interests are mere objective facts and calculations, simplifies the game of global politics. Rational theories such as Realism and Liberalism lack in explaining and analysing the game of global politics and foreign policy as they leave no room for socially constructed ideas. Therefore, the idea that state interests are constructed through history and social interaction provides a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach to study IR. Ideas are a component of the international realm and thus must not be disregarded while studying IR. Consequently, a constructivist

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<sup>41</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the international state” *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994): 2, 385.

<sup>42</sup> Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the international state”, 385-386.

<sup>43</sup> Persson, Weitz and Nilsson, “Follow-up and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals”, 60.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games” *International Organization* 42 (1988): 3, 434.

<sup>45</sup> Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics”, 319 – 320.

<sup>46</sup> Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty. How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) 50.



approach to foreign policy is more comprehensive than the liberal and the realist approaches to the field of IR.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, interpretative theories such as Postmodernism and Critical Theory base their argument on philosophical deconstructionism. They argue that explaining global politics and describing the international realm is an impossible effort due to the complexities of reality. These theories are more concerned with attempting to unravel what constitutes truth and reality.<sup>48</sup> Constructivist scholars are not concerned with this philosophy of deconstruction. They accept the reality of the international realm as it is and rather unpick the issues in international relations. Henceforth, Constructivism provides the most holistic approach to studying IR, including the influence of social ideas next to rationalist calculations, and moving beyond a deconstruction thinking.<sup>49</sup>

## 2.2 Ideas in Foreign Policy

After mapping out the general concepts and origins of Constructivism, and the deficiencies of the rationalist and interpretive approach to IR, the constructivist approach to analyse foreign policy needs to be further defined. This will serve as the foundation for this thesis. Foreign policy fits within Constructivism as state leaders base their actions on multiple calculations. On one side, the specific situation is calculated to plan action. However, actions are also often based on entrenched national ideas about appropriate state behaviour.<sup>50</sup> Constructivist scholars regard foreign policy as “a product of identity and cultural values stimulated by the discourses that shape a country’s self-perception.”<sup>51</sup> Ideas that shape international politics are intersubjective and rise beyond individual beliefs. They are shaped in ‘collective memories’ manifested in government procedures, educational systems and rhetoric of governance in general.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, foreign policy as expressed in government procedures is a product of collective ideas.<sup>53</sup> State interests are socially influenced and it is argued that “new foreign policy ideas are shaped by pre-existing dominant ideas and their relationship to experienced events, something

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<sup>47</sup> Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics”, 319 – 320.

<sup>48</sup> Yosef Lapid, “The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era” *International Studies Quarterly* 33 (1989): 3, 246-248; Jackson, *Global Politics in the 21st Century*, 72-72.

<sup>49</sup> Christian Reus-Smit, “Imagining society: constructivism and the English School” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 4 (2002): 3, 489.

<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey W. Legro, *Rethinking the World: Great Power Strategies and International Order* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) 7-8.

<sup>51</sup> Jackson, *Global Politics in the 21st Century*, 74.

<sup>52</sup> Legro, *Rethinking the World*, 6.

<sup>53</sup> Hurd, “Constructivism”, 301.

reinforcing the continuity of concepts and infrequently leading to their radical change.”<sup>54</sup> Wendt similarly emphasizes the importance of collective meanings in constructing actions: “actors acquire identities – relatively stable, role-specific understanding and expectations about self – by participating in such collective meanings.”<sup>55</sup>

Predominantly, foreign policy through the constructivist lens is a product of socio-cultural constructions, identities, ideas, and shared understandings. National interests of states and their material objectives are not overlooked in the creation of foreign policy. Nevertheless, the main drive behind these interests and objectives are socially constructed identities and understandings. This research will scrutinise how commonly held norms and values drive decision-making, rather than rational thought. The global adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and additional SDGs are embodying such a social environment. However, since there are not any legal instruments that can hold states accountable for these goals, what is the tangible force behind the promotion of the SDGs by the UN? The claim is that Constructivism is best at explaining this. The UN diffused a social environment with the SDGs, a mutually agreed framework with shared understandings, values, and goals. The drawback is that it is not a tangible framework. Through the mutual agreement of these goals and ideas, state behaviour is influenced. Although states will not be held accountable for compliance with the goals.<sup>56</sup>

The constructivist approach to the reciprocal social construction of norms, institutions, identities, and interests poses a challenge to the debate over structure or agency shaping behaviour. Namely, the co-constitution blurs the lines of structures and agents in the international sphere. Structures signify the institutions that create the international context and rules and norms within. Agents are the actors operating within this context.<sup>57</sup> Wendt argues the sociological approach of Constructivism provides a solution to this problem as the co-creation of norms, identities and institutions makes the debate obsolete.<sup>58</sup> The structure-agency debate within IR remains prominent. The flaws of Constructivism are highlighted, it is argued that it lacks a theory of agency. While emphasising the importance of social structures and norms, constructivists should lay more emphasis on agents and actors who help create and change social structures and norms.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Legro, *Rethinking the World*, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it”, 397.

<sup>56</sup> Bowen et al., “Implementing the “Sustainable Development Goals”: towards addressing three key governance challenges – collective action, trade-offs, and accountability” *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 26-27 (2017) 92-93.

<sup>57</sup> Hurd, “Constructivism”, 303.

<sup>58</sup> Alexander E. Wendt, “The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory” *International Organisation* 41 (1987): 3, 337.

<sup>59</sup> Jeffrey T. Checkel “The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory” *World Politics*, 50 (1998): 2, 325.

It is claimed that national attitudes towards international society affect foreign policy. States respond differently to international rules and norms. They can choose to accept or decline, by doing so will either enhance or undermine the international order.<sup>60</sup> Concerning great powers, their national attitudes could influence the amount of conflict in world politics. Change and continuity in foreign policy ideas depends on pre-existing ideas. Hence, the future of international relations is highly dependent on these foreign policy ideas, which can be subjective to transformation or continuity.<sup>61</sup>

Critically assessing the role of ideas, it is difficult to separate deep-rooted state ideas from foreign policy. For instance, the opportunity that every country can decide which SDGs they will lay focus on, and how to integrate the SDGs in foreign policy, poses a challenge. This will probably not lead to shocking transformations. The premise is that countries will implement the SDGs to such a degree that they fit their own policies, ideas, and identities. In sum, social concepts construct international life, and formation of state interests is influenced by institutions or norms in the international system. Shared understandings, collective norms, and social identity lay foundation to the constructivist theory. This serves as a point of departure for this thesis, while SDGs serve as shared understandings and international norms within the system.

### **2.3 Stand-off between IR and Development Studies?**

One of the critiques of the discipline of IR is the lack of engagement with the non-Western world. Arguably, this has resulted in an impasse between the disciplines of IR and Development Studies.<sup>62</sup> Scholars within the discipline of IR have insufficiently recognised development as a crucial component of the international order. Contrarily, the discipline of Development Studies has been critiqued by scholars for failing to address the international causes of development.<sup>63</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, this research will not contribute to the ‘stand-off’ between both disciplines, but rather integrate them. In the Netherlands, development cooperation is an integral part of foreign policy, and foreign policy is a key aspect of international relations. This thesis will shine a light on sustainable development and the international approaches towards the achievement of it, from an IR perspective. Development can no longer be seen as an isolated, local process. It is a wide-ranging issue, therefore best met with an international approach to the root causes of poverty and development. International solutions to achieve sustainable

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<sup>60</sup> Legro, *Rethinking the World*, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, 8-16.

<sup>62</sup> Darby, “A Disabling Discipline?”, 95-102.

<sup>63</sup> Jones, “Africa and the Poverty of International Relations”, 988.

development will be most encompassing. Especially after the adoption of the SDGs, which has arguably been the most widespread global agenda since the adoption of the UN Charter in 1945.<sup>64</sup>

## 2.4 Modernisation and Dependency Theory

As this thesis positions itself on the crossroads of IR and Development Studies, relevant theories from Development Studies will be discussed. This will grant a holistic framework for the further chapters. In development literature, modernisation theory was one of the most influential theories to explain and analyse societal modernisation processes. It makes a division between two types of society, the modern and traditional societies. Modernisation theorists argue traditional societies are hindered in their development because of their entanglement with certain norms, beliefs, and values. To progress and modernise, traditional societies should follow the culture of modern societies. These societies are built on industrialisation and the accumulation of capital, therefore compatible with development.<sup>65</sup> As Huntington explains: “the theory of modernization thus rationalized change abroad and the status quo at home.”<sup>66</sup> He claims the modernisation theory was embraced by political scientists around the 1950s. It led to “modern” and “traditional” serving for other touchstones to comparative studies of politics.<sup>67</sup> Modernisation theory seeks to guide traditional societies towards modernisation, hence improving their living standards according to Western standards. It aims to do this through adopting modern, Western societies’ technology and their experience in increasing economic growth.<sup>68</sup>

By the late 1960s, dependency theory arose as a critique to the dominant modernisation theory. Dependency theorists debunk the rhetoric of modernisation theory and argue poor countries are subjected by the industrialisation in developed countries. They place the responsibility of underdevelopment on the international realm.<sup>69</sup> Dependency theorists attribute the burden of deficient economic growth of developing countries to external pressures. This is demonstrated in the dependence on wealthier developed countries for their manufactured goods,

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<sup>64</sup> Malcolm Langford, “Lost in Transformation? The Politics of the Sustainable Development Goals” *Ethics & International Affairs* 30 (2016): 2, 167.

<sup>65</sup> Justice Mensah, “Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review” *Cogent Social Sciences* 5 (2019): 1, 4.

<sup>66</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The Change to Change: Modernization, Development and Politics” *Comparative Politics* 3 (1971): 3, 292.

<sup>67</sup> Huntington, “The Change to Change”, 285.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibidem*, 298.

<sup>69</sup> Mensah, “Sustainable development”, 4.

for which mostly natural resources are exchanged. This dependency is responsible for the continuing underdevelopment of developing countries. Developed countries exploit the economic surplus of the poor countries and they are therefore subjected to underdevelopment.<sup>70</sup>

The MDGs addressed the perceived problems of poor or developing countries but expressed little about the responsibility of developed countries on these problems. The so-called ‘Third World’ was expected to demonstrate progress while Western countries increased their aid. Challenging and reforming Western policies and structures to address the root causes of inequality and poverty, was not included in the MDGs. The MDGs framework received critique because of its depoliticized character and its inability to address fundamental causes of poverty and inequality.<sup>71</sup> Dependency theorists stress the SDGs must, aside from measuring advances in poverty reduction, address structural causes of poverty and underdevelopment. Most importantly, the SDGs must offer pathways to alter those deep-rooted structures.<sup>72</sup>

Arguably, the criticism of dependency theory on modernisation theory has become reality with the SDGs. The goals not only address developing countries, but equally address countries that are regarded as developed. The MDGs mainly focussed on reducing poverty in developing countries, while the SDGs pose an agenda for developed countries. The SDGs articulate developed countries to contribute to achieving global sustainable development. Hence, the SDGs framework includes a more holistic approach, suiting the dependency theory. This thesis will illuminate this, as the Netherlands as a developed country will be subject of a case study on the implementation of SDGs.

## 2.5 Sustainable Development

After embedding this research in theories on IR and Development Studies, the definition of sustainable development must be addressed before embarking on research that centres goals which include the concept. Multiple definitions exist of sustainable development, but the widely cited Brundtland Report serves as a basis for most current definitions.<sup>73</sup> In the report *Our Common Future*, the commission considers social and sustainable development from an equity perspective. The following definition of sustainable development was formulated: “Sustainable

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<sup>70</sup> Susanne Bodenheimer, “Dependency and Imperialism: The Roots of Latin American Underdevelopment” *Politics and Society* (1971) 331-332.

<sup>71</sup> Andy Storey, “Measuring Human Development”, in *From the Local to the Global: Key Issues in Development Studies*, ed. Gerard McCann and Stephen McCloskey (London: Pluto Press, 2015) 35.

<sup>72</sup> Walden Bello, “Post-2015 Development Assessment: Proposed Goals and Indicators”, in *From the Local to the Global: Key Issues in Development Studies*, ed. Gerard McCann and Stephen McCloskey (London: Pluto Press, 2015) 152.

<sup>73</sup> Anja Schaefer and Andrew Crane, “Addressing Sustainability and Consumption” *Journal of Macromarketing*, 25 (2005): 1, 77.

development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>74</sup>

The report includes that goals of economic and social development must be outlined in terms of sustainability in all countries around the globe, either developing or already developed. The definition of sustainable development in *Our Common Future* equally implies a concern for social equity between generations, however, this needs to be extended to equity within all generations. The report considers the intra-generational distribution of wealth as the intergenerational perspective. The intra-generational distribution of welfare mainly focusses on the distribution between developed countries and developing countries. The intergenerational perspective posits that current generations should not excessively extract resources which would negatively affect the future generations’ pursuit of prosperity. According to the commission, development is sustainable when demands are met on intra- as well as on inter-generational equity.<sup>75</sup>

Addressing the responsibility of developing and developed countries, as occurred in *Our Common Future*, follows the argument of the dependency theory within Development Studies literature. The definition of development not solely concerns relatively poor developing countries, however, also wealthier countries that are already developed. This thesis will unravel whether Dutch foreign policy takes the wide definition of sustainable development as formulated in *Our Common Future* into account, to achieve Goal 13 in SIDS.

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<sup>74</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), *Our Common Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 43.

<sup>75</sup> WCED, *Our Common Future*, 43.

### III: UN Development Goals, Goal 13 and Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

#### 3.1 MDGs and SDGs, Discrepancies and Challenges

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the SDGs are the succession of the MDGs which stood central in the fight against poverty from 2000 until 2015. To fully comprehend the nature of the SDGs, the origins of the MDGs, their discrepancies with the SDGs and their overall challenges are worthy to discuss.<sup>76</sup> Both the MDGs and thus the SDGs find their roots in the UN Agenda 21, an initiative for a global partnership for sustainable development. Agenda 21 was adopted by more than 178 governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which was held on June 3 to 14, 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Agenda 21 builds on the principles of General Assembly resolution 44/228 of December 22, 1989, which was adopted by nations when called for a global integrated and balanced approach to environment and development questions. Agenda 21 addressed the pressing problems of that time and prepared the world for the challenges of the next century, the 21st century, hence its name.<sup>77</sup>

As an answer to Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration was adopted to grant an agenda for the twenty-first century. The declaration was unanimously adopted at the Millennium Summit on September 6 to 9, 2000, at the UN Headquarters in New York City.<sup>78</sup> The outcome of the Millennium Declaration was eight international development goals, the MDGs, and they



were established to be reached by 2015. The MDGs consisted of eighteen targets to be met and forty-eight indicators which assisted in measuring the process of meeting the goals.<sup>79</sup>

*The Millennium Development Goals.*<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> UNDESA, “The 17 Goals, History.”

<sup>77</sup> United Nations Sustainable Development (UNSD), United Nations Conference on Environment & Development, “Agenda 21”, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992, paragraph 1.3.

<sup>78</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Fifty-fifth session, “United Nations Millennium Declaration”, A/RES/55/2, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, September 18, 2000, 1.

<sup>79</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Fifty-fifth session, “Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration”, A/56/326, Report of the Secretary-General, September 6, 2001, 56-58.

<sup>80</sup> MDG Monitor, “Outline of the Millennium Development Goals notable challenges”, last modified March 10, 2015, <https://www.mdgmonitor.org/outline-of-the-mdgs-notable-challenges/> Accessed on October 30, 2020.

During the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which took place August 26 to September 4, 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development was adopted. By adopting the declaration, the commitment to sustainable development was reaffirmed by world leaders, building on Agenda 21 and the Millennium Declaration.<sup>81</sup> Roughly ten years later, on June 20 to 22, 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) took place in Rio de Janeiro. During this occasion, members states renewed their commitment to sustainable development and safeguarding a sustainable future for the planet. Although commitment to sustainable development was repeatedly renewed by world leaders, the finish line of the MDGs came in sight. Fortunately, during Rio+20, the creation of new development goals was agreed upon. The outcome document of Rio+20, ‘Future We Want’, voiced the SDGs for the first time. “They should be



coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015”<sup>82</sup>, thus offering a new, global sustainable development framework after the MDGs.

*The Sustainable Development Goals.*<sup>83</sup>

Considering the SDGs followed the MDGs, it is valuable to see the discrepancies between both sets of goals and if lessons were learned from the challenges faced by the MDGs framework. Even though the MDGs provided a global framework for addressing poverty in the world, the goals have been subject to wide criticisms. One of the main criticisms has been the insufficient universal character of the MDGs framework. Achieving the goals was predominantly ascribed to third world countries, with no active role for developed countries, apart from supporting through financial aid. This inadequate separation ignored that advanced, developed countries can also face poverty and deprivation which should not be omitted. From a modernisation theory perspective, the MDGs assigned the pathway towards development to developing countries, aiming to guide them towards modern societies as exemplified by

<sup>81</sup> United Nations, “Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development”, A/CONF.199/20\*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002, 2.  
<sup>82</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Sixty-sixth session, “The future we want”, A/RES/66/288\*, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2012, 46-47.  
<sup>83</sup> United Nations Brussels, “The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”, <https://www.unbrussels.org/the-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs/>, Accessed on October 30, 2020.



developed countries.<sup>84</sup> An additional shortcoming of the MDGs was the lack of remarks to the relationship between the Global North and South and how this impacted development.<sup>85</sup>

Comparing both sets of goals, the MDGs consisted of 8 goals, 21 targets and 60 official indicators.<sup>86</sup> The SDGs consist of 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 indicators.<sup>87</sup> The divergence between both sets of goals, including the characteristics of the goals, as well as the amount of targets and indicators, illustrates the MDGs were much more narrow-focused. They chiefly addressed developing countries in achieving development.<sup>88</sup> In this case, dependency theory serves as a conceptual lens for unravelling the shortcomings of the MDGs. Viewing the MDGs through a dependency theory lens, the aforementioned critiques are in line with the main rationale of dependency theory. The criticisms of MDGs are exemplary for the argument of dependency theory. A great deal of the responsibility for achieving development in third world countries lies in the court of developed countries, due to the economic dependency of developing countries on developed countries. Accordingly, achieving global sustainable development requires equal endeavours of developing and developed countries. Structural changes to address this disproportionate relationship between developing and developed countries will contribute to achieve global sustainable development.<sup>89</sup>

Aside from receiving critique for being too incomprehensive, the MDGs have furthermore been condemned for their lack of attention to environmental issues such as climate change. Themes such as economic development and energy were not explicitly addressed by the MDGs and interlinkages between the different goals and targets were neither recognised.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, the MDGs framework has not been solely denounced. Likewise, the goals have been praised for their simplicity. They were straightforward, easy to state and worked effectively in terms of raising public awareness, mobilisation, continuity, and advocacy.<sup>91</sup>

The SDGs addressed a great deal of the criticisms and shortcomings of the MDGs. The key difference between both sets of goals is the inclusion of a whole different dimension in the SDGs, sustainability. While sustainability became a central concern, the SDGs comprised a

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<sup>84</sup> Huntington, "The Change to Change", 298.

<sup>85</sup> Ashwani Saith, "From Universal Values to Millennium Goals: Lost in Translation" *Development and Change* 37 (2006) 1184.

<sup>86</sup> United Nations Statistics Division, "Official list of MDG indicators", <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm> Accessed on October 30, 2020.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations Statistics Division, "SDG Indicators. Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/> Accessed on October 30, 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Jeffrey D. Sachs, "From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals" *Lancet* 379 (2012) 2206.

<sup>89</sup> Dennis Conway and Nikolas Heynen, "Dependency theories. From ECLA to Andre Gunder Frank and beyond", in *The Companion to Development Studies*, ed. Vandana Desai and Robert B. Potter (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 112.

<sup>90</sup> Lucas et al., "Sustainable Development Goals in the Netherlands. Building blocks for environmental policy for 2030", PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, The Hague, 2016, 13.

<sup>91</sup> Sachs, "From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals", 2210.

broad variety of environmental and economic themes. Consequently, the new goals addressed the MDGs' lack of attention to environmental issues.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, the SDGs enhanced by stressing the integration of the goals and targets, and by emphasising the universal character of the goals. Agenda 2030 and the SDGs concern all nations, not solely developing countries.<sup>93</sup> By emphasising this, the SDGs addressed the critique of development theorists. The relationship between developing and developed countries is crucial when studying and achieving development. The responsibility of the Western world in achieving development is paramount according to dependency theorists. The SDGs successfully addressed these criticisms by emphasising achieving sustainable development is a global, universal burden. Altogether, in comparison to the MDGs, the SDGs are much more comprehensive and global, by including sustainability and addressing both developing and developed countries.<sup>94</sup>

Compliance and accountability have been other criticisms of both sets of goals. They have a freewheeling character as they lack legally binding commitments. Both themes were highly debated during the negotiations for the 2030 Agenda. How could governments be held responsible for implementing the SDGs? Some scholars argue this ultimately led to watered down government commitments on accountability. Especially since developing countries feared accountability would lead to paternalistic finger wagging from rich countries. Arguably, this would touch a raw nerve, when adding post-imperialistic trauma to the equation.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, accountability posed an obstacle in the achievement of the MDGs, which was widely acknowledged. Ban Ki-Moon, former UN Secretary-General, agreed one of the pitfalls of achieving the MDGs was a lack of focus and strong accountability, at the national and international level.<sup>96</sup>

Due to the lack of national and international accountability mechanisms, some scholars see more value in a bottom-up approach. They rather attribute specific tasks to civil society, social movements, academia, the media, and trade unions to find ways to hold their governments accountable for implementing and complying to the SDGs.<sup>97</sup> When zooming out on the critiques on both the MDGs as well as the SDGs, the critiques mostly entail the seesawing between minimalism and maximalism, which fit within the criticism on global target-setting.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Sachs, "From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals", 2206.

<sup>93</sup> Lucas et al., "Sustainable Development Goals in the Netherlands", 13.

<sup>94</sup> Conway and Heynen, "Dependency theories", 114-115.

<sup>95</sup> Kate Donald and Sally-Anne Way, "Accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals: A Lost Opportunity?" *Ethics & International Affairs*, 30 (2016): 2, 201-202.

<sup>96</sup> United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, Press Release Secretary-General, Statements and Messages, "Unmet Commitments, Inadequate Resources, Lack of Accountability Hampering Achievement of Millennium Development Goals, Says Secretary-General", SG/SM/12789-GA/10923-DEV/2791, March 16, 2010.

<sup>97</sup> Donald and Way, "Accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals", 201-210.

<sup>98</sup> Langford, "Lost in Transformation?", 170.

In opposition to these critiques, the non-compliance facet of the goals can be viewed as an asset rather than a hindrance. The goals are a set of moral and practical commitments, which prevented the whole negotiation process of the exact agenda from being heavily delayed. Especially since legally binding treaties on sustainable development are not easy to achieve agreement on.<sup>99</sup> When taking a constructivist approach to compliance, the non-compliant aspect of the goals is similarly considered an advantage. The SDGs are a set of commonly held moral and practical commitments, without a legally binding character. This can be considered a social environment, co-created by international actors and stakeholders. Even though states will not be held accountable for compliance due to non-existing legal frameworks, state behaviour is influenced by this social environment.<sup>100</sup> Following the constructivist notion that foreign policy is a result of socio-cultural constructions, identities, ideas, and shared understandings, the lack of accountability and compliance mechanisms will not pose an obstacle, as moral commitments equally influence state behaviour.<sup>101</sup>

To portray its commitment and to measure the progress of the goals, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) established a status quo in 2016 on the Netherlands' achievements regarding the SDG indicators. The Netherlands was the first country to determine this and was subsequently applauded for its initiative.<sup>102</sup> CBS provided a statistical update of progress in July 2020. The report portrays that for 44% of the SDGs indicators, the Netherlands is located in the top of the EU ranking. For 36%, the Netherlands is located in the middle of the ranking. For 20% of the indicators the Netherlands has a low ranking in comparison with other EU countries.<sup>103</sup> Hence, in several areas the Netherlands is ranked high in comparison to other countries in the EU. The Netherlands' GDP per capita is one of the highest, and the majority of Dutch citizens have confidence in institutions.

However, in other areas much remains to be done. Proportionally, the number of women in management positions in the Netherlands is one of the smallest across Europe and ranks 25<sup>th</sup> out of 26 in the EU.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, the Dutch proportion of renewable energy in Europe is one of the lowest.<sup>105</sup> On SDG 2 'Zero Hunger', the Netherlands ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 28 in the EU on the target 'agricultural productivity'. On the target to ensure sustainable food production systems,

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<sup>99</sup> Sachs, "From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals", 2210.

<sup>100</sup> Persson, Weitz and Nilsson, "Follow-up and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals", 60.

<sup>101</sup> Legro, *Rethinking the World*, 4-6.

<sup>102</sup> Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), "Meten van SDGs: een eerste beeld voor Nederland", Den Haag, 2016, 7-16.

<sup>103</sup> Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), "SDGs in the Netherlands: Status Report 2020", The Hague, July 2020, 10.

<sup>104</sup> CBS, "SDGs in the Netherlands", 26.

<sup>105</sup> Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), "The Sustainable Development Goals: the situation for the Netherlands", The Hague, 2018, 3.

the Netherlands ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 28 in the EU.<sup>106</sup> Accordingly, on the same goal but a different target, the progress of the Netherlands differs in comparison to other countries in the international community.

### 3.2 Sustainable Development Goal 13 on Climate Change

As Sustainable Development Goal 13 plays a central role in this research, the goal will be further outlined in this part of the chapter. The complete goal is *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts* and has five targets with eight corresponding indicators. Target 13.b aims to “Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.”<sup>107</sup> Specifically this target is relevant for this research, as SIDS are the subject of the case study.

#### Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.

13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization, as soon as possible.

13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.

*Sustainable Development Goal 13 and its targets.*<sup>108</sup>

Yearly reports of the UN Secretary-General discuss the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2019 report demonstrates “that progress has been slow on many SDGs, that the most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer the most and that the

<sup>106</sup> CBS, “SDGs in the Netherlands”, 21.

<sup>107</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Seventy-first session, “Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, A/RES/71/313, Agenda items 13 and 117, 18.

<sup>108</sup> UN, “Transforming Our World”, 25.

global response thus far has not been ambitious enough.”<sup>109</sup> On Goal 13, the report notes that due to rising greenhouse gas emissions, climate change is occurring much faster than predicted and the effects of it are experienced worldwide. Concerning SIDS, the report mentions the following: “access to finance and strengthened capacities need to be scaled up at a much faster rate, particularly for least developed countries and small island developing States.”<sup>110</sup>

Furthermore, the report highlights that up until May 20, 2019, 28 countries had accessed the Green Climate Fund (GCF) grant with a value of \$75 million. Of the \$75 million, 67% were for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), SIDS and African States.<sup>111</sup> The GCF is the world’s largest fund dedicated to help developing countries reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, through channelling climate finance towards developing countries. The fund was set up by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2010 and pays particular attention to LDCs, SIDS and African States; countries that are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, the fund plays a crucial role in serving the Paris Agreement, through contributing to keep the average global temperature rise below 2°C. GCF aims to do so by aiding developing countries reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to improve the capability of developing countries to respond to climate change.<sup>113</sup>

As depicted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the financing of climate and disaster resilience is complex. SIDS regularly do not have high domestic revenue and are commonly not attractive to investors. For that reason, SIDS are highly dependent of official development assistance (ODA) as a source to create tools and mechanisms to combat climate change and natural disasters.<sup>114</sup> The dependency on climate finance to achieve sustainable development is an addition to the argument of dependency theorists. The shared claim of dependency theorists is the economic dependence of developing countries, on developed countries. Therefore, responsibility for achieving sustainable development must be placed similarly in the court of developed countries.<sup>115</sup> The report of the OECD repeatedly underlines the main contention of dependency theory; the dependency of developing countries on the economies of developed countries. Thus, highlighting the shared burden in achieving

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<sup>109</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), “Special edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Report of the Secretary-General”, E/2019/68 2019, 2019 session, 26 July 2018 – 24 July 2019, 1.

<sup>110</sup> UN ECOSOC, “Special edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals”, E/2019/68, 18.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*, 19.

<sup>112</sup> Green Climate Fund, “About GCF”, <https://www.greenclimate.fund/about> Accessed on October 27, 2020.

<sup>113</sup> GCF Documentation, “GCF sustainability strategy”, July 2020, 2.

<sup>114</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Climate and Disaster Resilience Financing in Small Island Developing States”, Washington, DC: World Bank (2016) 16-21.

<sup>115</sup> Conway and Heynen, “Dependency theories”, 112.

sustainable development.<sup>116</sup> As climate finance plays a crucial role in achieving sustainable development in SIDS, the Dutch contributions to the GCF will be analysed in the next chapter.

When researching the implementation of Goal 13, it is important to address its synergies with the Paris Agreement. The agreement within the UNFCCC “aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.”<sup>117</sup> The Paris Agreement came into force in November 2016 and has set the goal to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C.<sup>118</sup> Various scholars consider the Paris Agreement a necessity to implement and accomplish SDG 13, as the SDGs encompass serious implementation limits. They argue the SDGs offer a holistic framework in combating climate change, although implementing international efforts to combat climate change is imperative for the direct future.<sup>119</sup> This draws back to the criticisms towards the SDGs, as the goals lack instruments to enforce compliance. As a response to these criticisms, one could argue the Paris Agreement serves to safeguard the accomplishment of Goal 13 on climate change. The SDGs and its totality are moral commitments. Since the Paris Agreement is a legally binding commitment, it supports the achievement of Goal 13. It should not be regarded as a necessity to accomplish Goal 13, merely an additional mechanism to enforce compliance. The SDGs as moral commitments guide governments towards achieving the goals.<sup>120</sup>

SDG 13 acknowledges “the UNFCCC is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.”<sup>121</sup> Some scholars explain this acknowledgement as “[separating] the UN’s legal process to address climate change from the UN’s voluntary process to address sustainable development.”<sup>122</sup> Given this reference to the UNFCCC, not surprisingly many aspects of Goal 13 overlap with the commitments under the UNFCCC, as for example: “the Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind.”<sup>123</sup> Similarly, the UNFCCC urges Parties to “adopt national policies and take corresponding measures on the mitigation of climate change [...] these policies and measures will demonstrate that developed countries are taking the lead in modifying longer-term trends in anthropogenic emissions”<sup>124</sup>, which is in support of SDG

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<sup>116</sup> OECD, “Climate and Disaster Resilience Financing in Small Island Developing States”, 16-21.

<sup>117</sup> United Nations (UN), “Paris Agreement”, 2015, 3.

<sup>118</sup> UN, “Paris Agreement”, 2015, 3.

<sup>119</sup> Filip Kokotović, Petar Kurečić and Trina Mjeda, “Accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goal 13 – Climate Action and the Role of the European Union” *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems* 17 (2019): 1-B, 132.

<sup>120</sup> Donald and Way, “Accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals”, 201-202.

<sup>121</sup> UN, “Transforming Our World”, 25.

<sup>122</sup> Ilan Kelman, “Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction” *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science* 6 (2015) 118.

<sup>123</sup> United Nations (UN), “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)”, 1992, 9.

<sup>124</sup> UN, UNFCCC, 1992, 12.

13.2. A similar commitment can be found in the Paris Agreement: “developed country Parties should continue taking the lead by undertaking economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets.”<sup>125</sup> These commitments highlight the importance of developed countries taking the lead in adopting policies to address climate change. Therefore, these commitments reflect a dependency theory approach to climate change. These pledges acknowledge the responsibility of developed countries in battling climate change and achieving sustainable development globally. Thus, international legal obligations adjoining the UNFCCC, such as the Paris Agreement, contribute to the achievement of SDG 13. While doing so, the problems of dependency are exposed, as the commitments stress developed countries in taking the lead for developing countries to follow.<sup>126</sup>

Regarding SDG 13, change is moving in the right direction in the Netherlands. The indicators to measure the progress of the SDGs are moving towards the targets. However, concerning greenhouse gas emissions per capita, the Netherlands does not perform well domestically. In comparison to other EU countries, the Netherlands ranks 24<sup>th</sup> out of 28.<sup>127</sup> This is due to the Dutch economy relying heavily on conventional energy such as oil, gas, and coal. Moreover, the share of renewable energy from solar, wind and biomass is comparatively low.<sup>128</sup> The SDGs Progress Chart indicates the Netherlands’ poor record on greenhouse gas emissions per capita is in line with the global level. The global assessment portrays the current level is far removed from achieving the target, and a deterioration trend is visible.<sup>129</sup>

### **3.3 Small Island Developing States and Their Challenges**

After illustrating Goal 13, the final part of this chapter will be dedicated to further exploring small island developing States and their challenges. SIDS are represented by the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). The UN-OHRLLS classified 58 countries and territories as SIDS, which are located and spread over three geographical areas: the

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<sup>125</sup> UN, “Paris Agreement”, 2015, 4.

<sup>126</sup> Richard Sharpley, “Tourism and Sustainable Development: Exploring the Theoretical Divide” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 8 (2000): 1, 11-13.

<sup>127</sup> CBS, “SDGs in the Netherlands”, 12.

<sup>128</sup> CBS, “The Sustainable Development Goals”, 48-49.

<sup>129</sup> United Nations, “Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart 2020”, June 2020, 4-6.

Caribbean, the Pacific and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS).<sup>130</sup>



*Small Island Developing States.*<sup>131</sup>

Before the SDGs and Goal 13 on climate change, series of attempts to address the vulnerabilities of SIDS have been set out, initiated by the UN. To research the implementation of Goal 13 for SIDS, it is essential to outline the policy framework the UN provided for addressing the challenges that are faced by SIDS. The recognition of SIDS as a distinctive group of countries with many shared characteristics, occurred first in Agenda 21 in 1992. Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 articulates: “[s]mall island developing States [...] are a special case both for environment and development. They are ecologically fragile and vulnerable. Their small size, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets, place them at a disadvantage economically and prevent economies of scale.”<sup>132</sup>

After the recognition of SIDS as an exceptional group, The Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) was created in 1994. The document affirmed the unique situation of SIDS, their vulnerabilities and development challenges that are characteristic for these nation states. The BPOA was the first policy document that outlined the special vulnerabilities and development challenges of the islands. Besides reaffirming the unique character of SIDS, the document

<sup>130</sup> United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), “Small Island Developing States: Small Island Big(ger) Stakes”, New York: 2011, 2.

<sup>131</sup> The Steering Committee on Partnerships for Small Island Developing States in Collaboration with United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “Partnerships for Small Island Developing States”, 2016, 31.

<sup>132</sup> UNSD, “Agenda 21”, paragraph 17.123.



provided a strategy to address their vulnerabilities in the pathway towards sustainable development.<sup>133</sup>

The programme was reviewed in 1999, at BPOA+5. A new resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly after this review, to further the process of implementation of sustainable development for SIDS. Recognising “considerable efforts have been made at all levels to implement the Programme of Action, and that there is a need for these efforts to be further supplemented by effective support from the international community.”<sup>134</sup> Hence, the review promised further action and improvement for the route towards sustainable development for SIDS. Notably, effective support from the international community was requested. Therefore, achieving sustainable development was viewed as a path to not be walked alone by SIDS. This echoes dependency theory, ascribing responsibility to the international realm, instead of solely to SIDS.<sup>135</sup> In 2002, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) was laid out after the World Summit on Sustainable Development. JPOI was an action plan which addressed sustainable development in SIDS, emphasising the need for providing support and assistance to local communities in SIDS by means of adequate financial resources.<sup>136</sup> Scholars argued that up until 2002 significant progress has been made on paper, with respect to addressing sustainable development in SIDS. However, in practice much remained to be accomplished, especially by developed countries. More financial and technical assistance was required to realise sustainable development for SIDS.<sup>137</sup>

In 2005, the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS was held in Mauritius. The conference resulted in the adoption of the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (MSI). The MSI asserted with concern: “10 years after the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States [...] implementation of its commitments had fallen far short of expectations, largely due to insufficient levels of financial support.”<sup>138</sup> In 2010, during the 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly, a five-year review was held on the progress on sustainable development of

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<sup>133</sup> United Nations General Assembly, “Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States”, A/CONF.167/9, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994, paragraph 19, 11.

<sup>134</sup> United Nations General Assembly, “Declaration and state of progress and initiatives for the future implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States”, A/RES/S-22/2, 3.

<sup>135</sup> Mensah, “Sustainable development”, 4.

<sup>136</sup> United Nations, “Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development”, A/CONF.199/20\*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002, 42.

<sup>137</sup> Fathimath Ghina, “Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States. The Case of the Maldives” *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 5 (2003) 139.

<sup>138</sup> United Nations, “Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States” A/CONF.207/11, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005, 95.

SIDS through the Mauritius Strategy. Repeatedly, financial support from developed countries was demanded to address the challenges faced by SIDS.<sup>139</sup> The pathway to achieving sustainable development in SIDS is similarly ascribed to the international community. Therefore, the dependency of SIDS on the international community is acknowledged, mirroring dependency theory rationale.<sup>140</sup> Although, providing support in the form of financial resources should be approached delicately. The premise of modernisation theorists is that development can be achieved by following the evolutionary path to modernisation, through economic growth. The assumption that development follows from mere financial impulses is deficient, because the reliance of developing countries on developed countries should be considered.<sup>141</sup>

‘Future We Want’, the outcome document of Rio+20, repeatedly highlighted the unique case of SIDS in achieving sustainable development. Concerns were expressed on the outcome of the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy, as SIDS made less progress than other states. In some cases, SIDS even regressed in terms of sustainable development. The document underlined their weaknesses and that their progress towards achieving the MDGs has been uneven. To further address these problems, “we call for the convening in 2014 of a third international conference on small island developing States, recognizing the importance of coordinated, balanced and integrated actions to address the sustainable development challenges facing small island developing States.”<sup>142</sup> This conference was held in Apia, Samoa in September 2014 and resulted in the adoption of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.<sup>143</sup>

As mentioned earlier, during Rio+20 the foundation was laid for the SDGs. Similarly, during this conference, the attention for SIDS accelerated, formulated in the SAMOA Pathway. In the Pathway, UN members reaffirmed their commitment to the sustainable development of SIDS. In the resolution, climate change is labelled as one of the biggest challenges and it includes a call for countries to invest in SIDS, for them to achieve sustainable development. The SAMOA Pathway also included an urgent call for strong partnerships at all levels to address the particular vulnerabilities of SIDS.<sup>144</sup> Sustainable development was to be achieved

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<sup>139</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-fifth session, “Sustainable development: follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States”, A/65/436/Add.2, 2.

<sup>140</sup> Mensah, “Sustainable development”, 4.

<sup>141</sup> Sharpley, “Tourism and Sustainable Development”, 4.

<sup>142</sup> UNGA, “The future we want”, 34.

<sup>143</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Sixty-ninth session, “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway”, A/RES/69/15, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 14 November 2014, 1.

<sup>144</sup> UNGA, “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway”, 5-8.

only “with a broad alliance of people. Governments, civil society and the private sector all working together to achieve the future we want for present and future generations.”<sup>145</sup>

Continuous reaffirmations of commitment are the first steps towards achieving sustainable development for SIDS, but the aim of this research is to discover if the Netherlands was not just talking the talk, but also walking the walk. What other tools besides creating strong partnerships did the SAMOA Pathway propose to achieve sustainable development in SIDS? In the section ‘Climate change’ of the Pathway is urged “developed country parties to increase technology, finance and capacity-building support to enable increased mitigation ambition and adaption actions on the part of developing country parties.”<sup>146</sup> The document moreover highlights the GCF and that it will play an important role in climate finance, conveying financial resources to SIDS to support sustainable development.<sup>147</sup>

On September 27, 2019, the UN General Assembly held a high-level meeting to review the progress of sustainable development for SIDS through the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. During the review, the value of partnerships to support sustainable development in SIDS was reaffirmed. Consequently, the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework was established.<sup>148</sup> At the High-level Mid-term Review of the SAMOA Pathway, UN Secretary-General António Guterres stressed “[s]mall Island Developing States are a special case for sustainable development. They require concerted long-term attention and investment of the entire international community”.<sup>149</sup>

The challenges SIDS are facing are of particular interest to the Netherlands as three of the four countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands are SIDS, namely Aruba, Curacao and Sint Maarten. As mentioned by Prime Minister of Aruba Mike Eman, climate change affects the whole world, but developing and fragile states are facing the most extreme risks as they have little resources and capacities to cope with the challenges that climate change brings about.<sup>150</sup> When taking a historical approach to the Dutch position on climate change and SIDS, a link can be made with the Netherlands’ geography. The most remarkable geographical

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<sup>145</sup> UNGA, “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway”, 1.

<sup>146</sup> Ibidem, 9.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Seventy-fourth session, “Political declaration of the high-level meeting to review progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, A/RES/74/3, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 October 2019, 3.

<sup>149</sup> United Nations Secretary-General, “Secretary-General’s remarks at the High-level Mid-term Review of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway”, September 27, 2019, New York, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2019-09-27/secretary-generals-remarks-the-high-level-mid-term-review-of-the-small-island-developing-states-accelerated-modalities-of-action-%28samoa-pathway%29-delivered> Accessed on September 29, 2020.

<sup>150</sup> The Netherlands at International Organisations, “Debate Peace and security challenges facing Small Island Developing States”, last modified July 30, 2015, <https://www.permanentrepresentations.nl/documents/speeches/2015/07/30/statement-debate-peace-and-security-challenges-facing-small-island-developing-states> Accessed on September 29, 2020.

element of the Netherlands is the large part of the country that needs to be protected from flooding, managed by an impressive system of dunes and sea and river dikes. This is of utmost importance to the Netherlands as almost half of the country lies below sea level. Water unquestionably shaped the development of the landscape and the society of the Netherlands and will continue doing so as changes in climatic conditions influence sea levels.<sup>151</sup>

As already highlighted by Prime Minister Eman, SIDS are on the front line of climate change. Although SIDS are not responsible for emitting the most carbon into the earth's atmosphere, the states pay the highest price regarding the effects of climate change. Various experts address the gaps and the needs in institutions of governance and policies that can facilitate reaching the SDGs and the adaptation and resilience building in SIDS. The results contribute towards a better understanding of the challenges the SIDS are facing.<sup>152</sup> Scholars emphasise the importance of good governance helping to integrate different measures to improve water security and disaster risk resilience. This contributes to enabling groups in society to adapt and transform into resilient societies. The prerequisite for good governance is cooperation between different organisations such as government agencies, experts, NGOs, and other stakeholders.<sup>153</sup>

The next chapter will uncover whether good governance played a role in the support the Netherlands offered SIDS. Chapter three examines Dutch attempts on addressing Goal 13 in SIDS, including the framing of these attempts. Special attention will be granted to Dutch efforts on climate finance, building partnerships and promoting and supporting good governance. Conclusively, after analysing the SAMOA Pathway, these parameters have been remarked to be essential to address climate change in SIDS to achieve sustainable development.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Guus J. Borger and Willem A. Ligtendag, "The role of water in the development of The Netherlands – a historical perspective" *Journal of Coastal Conservation* 4 (1998) 109.

<sup>152</sup> Jana Gheuens, Nidhi Nagabhatla and Edangodage Duminda Pradeep Perera, "Disaster-Risk, Water Security Challenges and Strategies in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)" *Water* 11 (2019): 4, 637.

<sup>153</sup> Gheuens, Nagabhatla and Perera, "Disaster-Risk, Water Security Challenges and Strategies in SIDS", 657.

<sup>154</sup> UNGA, "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway", 1-10.

## IV. Case Study: The Netherlands and its Efforts on Goal 13 Regarding SIDS

### 4.1 The Netherlands and SIDS – One Kingdom, Four Countries

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the Netherlands has an exceptional relationship with SIDS. Three of the four countries of the Kingdom are SIDS, and the Netherlands has a long history of managing the challenges which have come about due to rising sea levels, as half of the Netherlands is situated below sea level.<sup>155</sup> This chapter will uncover whether the Netherlands is actively sharing its knowledge of and experience in water management. Although the Kingdom of the Netherlands is made up of four countries, it has been laid down in the third article of the Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands that next to defence and Dutch nationality law, foreign policy is a responsibility of the Kingdom as a whole. Thus, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs creates foreign policy for the entire Kingdom which serves the interests of all four countries of the Kingdom. On areas such as tourism, healthcare and education, the individual countries form their own policy.<sup>156</sup>

During the seventieth session of the UN General Assembly on September 28, 2015, the King of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Willem-Alexander addressed the Assembly. He stressed the importance that the voices of small Member states should be heard as they often “show us the way forward.”<sup>157</sup> The example he brings forward is “the longtime plea by small island States for a far more active global approach to climate change and marine pollution. They feel the urgency like no other.”<sup>158</sup> The monarch centred the Kingdom in his rhetoric and emphasised how pressing the urgency is for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Besides outlining the national interest, he appeals to the Dutch identity and knowledge as well. “With its centuries of water-management experience, the Netherlands is one of the best-protected deltas in the world, investing billions to help mitigate the effects of climate change.”<sup>159</sup> As shown in this statement, the Dutch identity together with national interests, is used in his rhetoric to demonstrate the Netherlands’ position on the approach to address the effects of climate change in SIDS.

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<sup>155</sup> Borger and Ligtendag, “The role of water in the development of The Netherlands”, 109.

<sup>156</sup> Overheid.nl, “Statuut voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden.” <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0002154/2017-11-17>, Accessed on November 20, 2020.

<sup>157</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Seventieth session, “13<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting”, A/70/PV.13, Monday, 28 September 2015, New York, 46.

<sup>158</sup> UNGA, “13<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting, A/70/PV.13”, 46.

<sup>159</sup> Ibidem.

The Dutch government identified three projects for 2018 to accomplish the goal to increase peace, safety, and stability in the Caribbean region. In the coalition agreement, the integrated international security strategy, and the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the importance of stability in the Caribbean region to the Kingdom of the Netherlands was highlighted. Consequently, three projects were identified to receive support from the Dutch government to realise the aforementioned goal. One of the projects was a contribution of \$105.655 to the Island Voices Journalism Campaign of the UN-OHRLLS.<sup>160</sup> In 2019, the UN office ran this campaign for SIDS-journalists to amplify their knowledge and capacity to increase their efficiency in reporting UN discussions about the challenges and agreements concerning SIDS.<sup>161</sup> By supporting the journalism campaign, voices of people from SIDS were heard and public dialogue was stimulated. However, the Dutch contribution to this project is clearly framed to serve own interests. As portrayed in the government documents, stability in the Caribbean region was of utmost importance to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Dutch contribution to this campaign is an example of the “two-level game” of foreign policy construction. By providing support for the campaign, the Netherlands intended to merge national and international interests. Safeguarding stability in the Caribbean region was a domestic political interest. However, whilst supporting the international SIDS campaign, international priorities were assured too. The campaign did not limit itself to supporting SIDS in the Caribbean. All SIDS were supported in knowledge and capacity building and increasing attention for their vulnerabilities. Hence, although the Netherlands intended to support this campaign for national interests, international interests were similarly pursued.<sup>162</sup>

During the High-Level Review of the SAMOA Pathway, the Kingdom of the Netherlands was represented by the prime ministers of Aruba and Curacao. The Prime Minister of Curacao addressed the extreme impacts for SIDS, not limited by hurricanes but also including the impact of the crisis in Venezuela on the Caribbean countries of the Kingdom. He emphasised the need for the SAMOA Pathway to expand on partnerships to achieve the goals, as set out in the SAMOA Pathway, as well as the 2030 Agenda.<sup>163</sup> On April 17, 2020, the Government of Curacao completed a questionnaire on the implementation of the Pathway. The response provided input for the 2020 UN Secretary General Report. The document mentions

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<sup>160</sup> Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, “Wijziging van de begrotingsstaat van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (V) voor het jaar 2018 (wijziging samenhangende met de Najaarsnota)”, 35 095 V, nr. 3, vergaderjaar 2018-2019, 3

<sup>161</sup> United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), “SAMOA Pathway. A Guide for Island Journalists”, 11.

<sup>162</sup> Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics”, 434.

<sup>163</sup> Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, “Verslag van de 74<sup>e</sup> AVVN 23-27 september 2019”, Min-BuZa.2019.252, 11 november 2019, 4.

that in consultation between Curacao, Aruba, Sint Maarten and the Netherlands, a training school between the countries was set up, to elevate the level of teachers and to strengthen the Dutch education system.<sup>164</sup>

This initiative on improving education is in line with the framework provided in the SAMOA Pathway. To achieve sustainable development, SIDS need to collaborate with the international community “to increase investment in the education and training of their people.”<sup>165</sup> Education alone cannot achieve sustainable development, however, it plays a vital role in the process. As people are the greatest resource in building resilient and sustainable nations, capacity building will help gaining skills to reach Goal 13 and achieve sustainable development.<sup>166</sup> Moreover, improving education and training of own people will not contribute to the exploitative North-South relations. Therefore, the inequality between developing and developed countries will not increase, following the main critical claim of dependency theorists.<sup>167</sup> Additionally, the questionnaire addressed the importance of access to low coast development financing. As Curacao forms part of the Netherlands, the country does not have access to the majority of international funding programs. Hence, Curacao has joined the World Trade Organization as an independent member, to become eligible for more financial support than it currently has access to.<sup>168</sup>

## **4.2 The Netherlands and Climate Finance**

Climate finance forms an important element of supporting SIDS in reducing the vulnerabilities they face due to climate change. Good governance is important to channel different kinds of support and integrate measures to improve the vulnerabilities in SIDS.<sup>169</sup> Regarding good governance, it remains unclear if Dutch efforts led to improved governance. Dutch governmental, scientific, and private sector experts that were working with the Dutch Delta Approach were interviewed. A respondent expressed: “There has never been a truly objective,

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<sup>164</sup> Government of Curacao, “Completed Questionnaire by the Government of Curacao. Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the MSI, BPOA for the Sustainable Development of SIDS”, April 17, 2020, 9.

<sup>165</sup> UNGA, “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway”, 6.

<sup>166</sup> Michael Crossley and Terra Sprague, “Education for sustainable development: Implications for small island developing states (SIDS)” *International Journal of Educational Development* 35 (2014) 93.

<sup>167</sup> Motolani Agbebi and Petri Virtanen, “Dependency Theory – A Conceptual Lens to Understand China’s Presence in Africa?” *Forum for Development Studies* 44 (2017): 3, 445-447.

<sup>168</sup> Government of Curacao, “Completed Questionnaire by the Government of Curacao”, 10.

<sup>169</sup> Gheuens, Nagabhatla and Perera, “Disaster-Risk, Water Security Challenges and Strategies in SIDS”, 657.

strategic analysis of where we have added value.”<sup>170</sup> So the actual influence of the Netherlands on improving governance remains disputed.

Scholars argue the political context of countries receiving developing aid is the foremost aspect that needs to be considered. Research results highlighted the relation between government effectiveness and the number of civilians killed and affected by natural disasters in SIDS. Governance effectiveness appears to make a substantial difference, indicating higher government effectiveness leads to a lower number of casualties resulting from natural catastrophes in SIDS. Projects aimed at developing climate mitigation, adaption and reducing vulnerabilities in SIDS need to be adjusted to the political context of each country. Due to the reason that certain vulnerability reduction measures may not have the same outcome in nations that have weaker institutional frameworks.<sup>171</sup>

International climate finance is of paramount importance to worldwide cooperation on climate change. It is especially vital to SIDS as they are highly dependent on foreign aid to address the challenges they face. Climate finance literature shows that climate funds play a crucial role in facilitating developing countries to alleviate climate change and adapt to its effects.<sup>172</sup> Various scholars conducted research on the effectiveness of climate finance and whether the external support reduces vulnerabilities in SIDS. Empirical research portrays “foreign aid and social development variables are crucial to promoting adequate and balanced responses to climate change.”<sup>173</sup> The SAMOA Pathway equivalently addressed the importance of finance: “[w]e urge developed country parties to increase technology, finance and capacity-building support to enable increased mitigation ambition and adaptation actions on the part of developing country parties.”<sup>174</sup>

The Oxfam Climate Finance Shadow Report mentions the Netherlands “should be applauded for providing a high share of their climate finance to adaptation.”<sup>175</sup> Moreover, the report demonstrates the estimated share of finance to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and SIDS by main country donors for 2017/18. The Netherlands’ share to LDCs is 31%, although the share to SIDS portrays an alarming 0%. When comparing these results with other countries such as Australia, which has a share of 25% to LDCs and 50% to SIDS, the Dutch contribution

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<sup>170</sup> Ellen Minkman and Arwin van Buuren, “Branding in policy translation: How the Dutch Delta approach became an international brand” *Environmental Science and Policy* 96 (2019) 118.

<sup>171</sup> Martin Sjöstedt and Marina Povitkina, “Vulnerability of Small Island Developing States to Natural Disasters: How Much Difference Can Effective Governments Make” *Journal of Environment & Development* 26 (2017):1, 95-96.

<sup>172</sup> Scandurra et al., “Does climate finance reduce vulnerability in Small Island Developing States? An empirical investigation” *Journal of Cleaner Production* 256 (2020), 2.

<sup>173</sup> Scandurra et al., “Does climate finance reduce vulnerability in Small Island Developing States?”, 1.

<sup>174</sup> UNGA, “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway”, 9.

<sup>175</sup> Tracy Carty, Jan Kowalzig and Bertram Zagema, “Climate Finance Shadow Report 2020. Assessing progress towards the \$100 billion commitment”, Oxfam International, October 20, 2020, 18.



appears scarce. The report mentions that nearly all main donors, except Australia, are neglecting SIDS in the provision of support.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, the report reveals an overlooked scandal that is part of climate change: the excessive use of loans in the name of climate assistance. In 2017/18 almost half of the climate finance to SIDS was provided in the form of loans, instead of grants. As argued in the report: “the world’s poorest countries and communities should not be forced to take out loans to protect themselves from the excess carbon emissions of rich countries.”<sup>177</sup> The report recommends all donors to urgently increase grant-based climate finance to LDCs and SIDS, most importantly donors that provide a low share of their support in the form of grants.<sup>178</sup>

Additionally, the report touches upon the risks of climate finance in the form of loans, as it contributes to the unsustainable debt burdens of many low-income countries. Climate finance is designed to help countries adapt to the challenges of climate change, however, it is more likely to harm developing countries by increasing their debt burden.<sup>179</sup> This critical approach to climate finance is in line with the main argument of dependency theorists that economies of developed countries carry the burden of underdeveloped countries.<sup>180</sup> The Netherlands reported \$364 million bilateral public climate finance over 2017/18, of which 100% existed of grants.<sup>181</sup> Hence, the Netherlands does not contribute to this overlooked scandal in climate finance and does not participate in preserving unsustainable debt burdens of developing countries.

The SAMOA Pathway stressed the importance of the Green Climate Fund (GCF): “the Fund will play a key role in channelling new, additional, adequate and predictable financial resources to developing countries”.<sup>182</sup> The Contribution Agreement between the GCF and the Government of the Netherlands demonstrates that the Dutch government provided a contribution of the total amount of €100.500.000 and \$285.714 between 2015 and 2019 to the fund, all in form of Grant Contributions.<sup>183</sup> This contribution similarly underlines the Netherlands’ approach in providing grant-based climate finance, instead of loans. New financial

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<sup>176</sup> Carty, Kowalzig and Zagama, “Climate Finance Shadow Report 2020”, 20-21.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibidem*, 3.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>180</sup> Mensah, “Sustainable development”, 4.

<sup>181</sup> Carty, Kowalzig and Zagama, “Climate Finance Shadow Report 2020”, 10.

<sup>182</sup> UNGA, “SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway”, 9.

<sup>183</sup> GCF Documentation Finance, “Contribution Arrangement. Netherlands”, April 27, 2015, 1-3.

commitments to the fund were made in 2019, the Netherlands announced to increase its contribution to €120.000.000.<sup>184</sup>

With respect to climate finance, the Netherlands' commitments are embedded in legal agreements. Financial contracts thus bolster moral commitments to provide development aid. Similarly, legal agreements such as the Paris Agreement strengthen Goal 13 on climate change, as commitment to the Paris Agreement is legally bound. In 2017, the Kingdom of the Netherlands participated in the voluntary national review of the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In the accompanying report on the implementation of the SDGs is mentioned that the Netherlands' international climate actions are largely determined by the Paris Agreement.<sup>185</sup> Some scholars even argue the Paris Agreement is imperative to achieve Goal 13.<sup>186</sup> As illustrated by financial contracts and the Paris Agreement, legal agreements can be viewed as frameworks that serve as a backbone to international constructed norms. However, they do not make moral commitments, as embodied in the SDGs, redundant. They rather serve to safeguard commitment, and do not make the constructivist argument that collective norms and understandings shape state behaviour, obsolete. Adding to the constructivist argument, the importance of legal bound treaties as a reassurance behind commonly held understandings such as the SDGs, can be identified.<sup>187</sup>

Viewing this argument through a constructivist lens, the facet of reciprocal creation of states and international norms and institutions becomes evident. Legal agreements serve as a base to internationally held norms and influence state actions, such as the Paris Agreement influences the Netherlands' climate policy. Similarly, state behaviour such as the Netherlands' increasing contribution to the GCF provides crucial support to the Paris Agreement. Consequently, that behaviour influences the achievement of SDG 13, since the Paris Agreement is crucial to accomplish SDG 13.<sup>188</sup> Therefore, the constructivist claim shows that the international sphere follows a process of co-constitution. State behaviour and international norms and institutions follow a process of reciprocal creation, as international norms and institutions simultaneously influence state actions since they are results of state actions.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Green Climate Fund, "UN Climate Summit paves the way for an ambitious and successful replenishment of the Green Climate Fund", Press release, 23 September 2019, <https://www.greenclimate.fund/news/un-climate-summit-paves-way-ambitious-and-successful-replenishment-green-climate-fund>, Accessed on November 22, 2020.

<sup>185</sup> United Nations High Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017, "Kingdom of the Netherlands. Report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals", 30.

<sup>186</sup> Kokotović, Kurečić and Mjeda, "Accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goal 13", 132.

<sup>187</sup> Legro, *Rethinking the World*, 8-16.

<sup>188</sup> Kokotović, Kurečić and Mjeda, "Accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goal 13", 132.

<sup>189</sup> Hurd, "Constructivism", 304.

When assessing the Netherlands' contribution to climate finance, the country should be praised for providing climate finance in the form of grants, instead of loans. Herewith, the Netherlands does not contribute to preserving unsustainable debt burdens of SIDS. Additionally, the raise in contribution to the GCF shows the Netherlands is willing to play its part in channelling financial resources to developing countries. Although this is a great step towards achieving sustainable development in SIDS, the financial contributions towards specifically SIDS are scarce. The Netherlands provides more climate finance to LDCs than to SIDS which could be improved.

### **4.3 Public-Private Partnerships**

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are cooperative activities between the public and private sector. This objective is encapsulated in SDG 17, which contains 'Partnerships for the Goals'. Although creating partnerships is a separate goal on its own, the intention is entwined in every SDG, including Goal 13. The Netherlands acknowledges the importance of partnerships to achieve sustainable development, and forming partnerships is common practice throughout the Kingdom of the Netherlands.<sup>190</sup> As per the findings in chapter two, the SAMOA Pathway highlights that partnerships are imperative for SIDS to achieve the SDGs. The document indicates: "the private sector plays an increasingly important role in achieving sustainable economic development, including through public-private partnerships."<sup>191</sup>

In 2015, the Government of Aruba partnered with TNO, the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, and the United Nations Development Programme to create the UN Centre of Excellence (COE) on Sustainable Development for SIDS. The objective of the project was "to provide a platform for strengthening innovation and resilience among SIDS through South-South cooperation and exchange of knowledge on sustainable practices in energy, public-private partnerships, water management, environment, tourism and health."<sup>192</sup> The results of the COE were a high level training in establishing sustainable development roadmaps, the establishment of a sustainable development virtual platform, the provision of in-country technical assistance by TNO and the development of knowledge products and learning tools to support knowledge transfer.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> UN High Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2017, "Kingdom of the Netherlands", 14.

<sup>191</sup> UNGA, "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway", 4-6.

<sup>192</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Towards creating a Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Aruba", Country: Aruba – project document, October 28, 2015, 1.

<sup>193</sup> UNDP, "Towards creating a Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development of SIDS", 5-6.

In August 2015, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education cooperatively launched the project ‘Strengthening Small Island Developing States’ capacity in the water sector to cope with the effects of climate change’. The main aim of the project was capacity building of professionals and decisionmakers regarding water management in SIDS, to improve the coping mechanisms to address the effects of climate change. After a successful start with cohorts in 2015 and 2016, the strategy of the institute is laid out until 2023.<sup>194</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made another 24 fellowships available for professionals from official development aid (ODA) eligible SIDS across the globe, starting October 2020 and 2021. The MSc Fellowships are provided from ODA and cover the cost of accommodation, insurance, travel, and tuition fees.<sup>195</sup>

An additional case of Dutch expertise forming part of a partnership to address the vulnerabilities of SIDS is the project ‘From water scarcity to abundance on SIDS using solar desalination’. The partnership is led by Elemental Water Makers, a Dutch private technology company providing solutions for water scarcity, through desalination powered by renewable energy. This partnership between stakeholders in SIDS and a Dutch private company is an exemplary case study of Dutch expertise providing support to fight the water-related challenges generated by climate change. The goal of the partnership is to secure fresh water for the islands, using renewable energy and thus without emitting greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>196</sup>

The Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) is a government agency that supports entrepreneurs, NGOs, knowledge institutions and organisations. At request of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, RVO administered Dutch Risk Reduction Team (DRR-Team). A DRR-Team is another example of a PPP, a collaboration between the Dutch government and the private water sector.<sup>197</sup> DRR-Teams can be formed upon request by foreign governments and will advise these governments on resolving water issues. DRR-Teams visit the countries that request aid and write an extensive report on the mission.<sup>198</sup> Therefore, DRR-Teams can tailor the solutions to the political contexts of the countries, which is considered of utmost importance.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> UNESCO-IHE, “Fellowships for Small Island Developing States’ water professionals”, Delft, 5 September 2015, <https://www.un-ihe.org/news/fellowships-small-island-developing-states%C2%B4-water-professionals>. Accessed on November 22, 2020.

<sup>195</sup> IHE Delft, “SIDS Fellowship, Programme for Water Professionals”, Flyer SIDS Programme, 2.

<sup>196</sup> Sustainable Development Goals Partnerships Platform, “From water scarcity to abundance on SIDS using solar desalination”, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=26431>. Accessed on November 22, 2020.

<sup>197</sup> Netherlands Enterprise Agency, “Dutch Risk Reduction Team – DRR”, <https://english.rvo.nl/subsidies-programmes/dutch-risk-reduction-team-drr>. Accessed on November 22, 2020.

<sup>198</sup> Minkman and van Buuren, “Branding in policy translation”, 118.

<sup>199</sup> Sjöstedt and Povitkina, “Vulnerability of Small Island Developing States to Natural Disasters”, 95-96.

The 2016 report of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on development cooperation mentions Dutch endeavours on water and climate resilience. DRR-Teams are similarly mentioned: “the Netherlands is able to advise governments on their entire disaster management cycle – from prevention, preparedness and response to recovery”.<sup>200</sup> The report includes the accomplishment that more than ten missions were made in 2015, to countries as Mozambique, Myanmar and Guyana.<sup>201</sup> Of the 379 DRR-projects that took place between 2015 and 2020 and addressed SDG 13, 24 projects were located in eight SIDS: Cuba, Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The projects addressed flood mitigation, providing engineering solutions in river management, offering recommendations on the institutional strengthening of flood management and capacity building. One could argue it is a rather limited effort that only six percent of all DRR-projects on Goal 13 involved SIDS, and only eight of the total fifty-eight SIDS were involved in DRR-projects.<sup>202</sup>

As DRR-Teams are requested by foreign governments, the requests of the teams are based on the identity of the Netherlands, which is known abroad as an expert on water management. DRR-projects are therefore a demonstration of the constructivist argument that socially constructed identities are main drivers behind state behaviour.<sup>203</sup> Foreign countries call for aid from the Dutch government based on the conviction of the Netherlands’ expertise regarding water matters. This identity is constructed through history, as the Netherlands has always faced the threat of water. The Netherlands’ identity as water-expert is similarly constituted through these DRR-projects abroad.<sup>204</sup> As these projects are supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they are components of Dutch foreign policy. Therefore, this socially and historically constructed identity, as embodied in the DRR-projects, consequently, influences foreign policy.

The Netherlands’ identity is reinforced by the actual expertise and technology of Dutch private companies and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. SIDS entrust the capabilities of the Dutch government and professionals from the private sector to provide assistance on water related topics. Thus, these projects mirror the constructivist argument that national identities and attitudes can influence international society through foreign policy.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Development Results in Perspective. Edition 2016”, 4.

<sup>201</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Development Results in Perspective”, 4.

<sup>202</sup> Netherlands Enterprise Agency, Project database “Development Cooperation”, <https://projects.rvo.nl/section/development-cooperation/?countries=1261&countries=1278&countries=1299&countries=1352&countries=1384&countries=1433&countries=1441&countries=1443&sdgs=2301> Accessed on November 22, 2020.

<sup>203</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it”, 397.

<sup>204</sup> Borger and Ligtenag, “The role of water in the development of The Netherlands”, 109.

<sup>205</sup> Legro, *Rethinking the World*, 8-16.

Though in the case of the Netherlands, the socially and historically constructed identity is consolidated by tangible know-how on water management.

Between 2014 and 2019, Rob Zaagman was Ambassador of the Netherlands to Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu. He met with officials of the Tongan Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forests and Fisheries on May 18 and 19, 2016. During these meetings, a special Dutch envoy for Pacific SIDS was present as well. Subsequently, the Dutch Embassy in New Zealand received an official request for support from experts of the DRR-Team from the Tongan Minister for Agriculture, Food, Forest and Fisheries Semisi T. Fakahau on May 30, 2016.<sup>206</sup> In response to the request, a DRR-mission to the Kingdom of Tonga took place between November 14 until 23, 2016. The mission drew up conclusions about the water management and provided recommendations to improve long-term water management. The DRR-Team provided technical assistance to the Tongan Government, the water sector and supported capacity building.

On June 20, 2016, Ambassador Zaagman visited the Pacific Islands Development Forum Secretariat. He emphasised Dutch expertise in water and island resilience, willingness to share climate-smart solutions with SIDS, and potential for closer collaboration on the areas of sustainable development and climate resilience in the Pacific.<sup>207</sup> Ambassador Zaagman used the Netherlands' expertise and past experiences which constructed the country's identity in his rhetoric. Equally, he mentioned the Netherlands' inclination to share solutions, which can be regarded as state identity. The ambassador's line of speech serves as a point of departure for its policy with Tonga. This is in line with the constructivist approach on foreign policy, as state identity and cultural values shape foreign policy.<sup>208</sup>

Some scholars address the double-hatted role of public-private partnerships. The Dutch Delta approach became an international brand of the Netherlands. The Dutch government considered it an export product that supports foreign governments in advancing their water management, as a form of development cooperation. Similarly, engaging in public-private partnerships on water management, involves economic assets and foreign trade is generated.<sup>209</sup> Hence, the Dutch approach to water management was viewed as an export product and became an international brand of the Netherlands. This strengthens Wendt's constructivist contention

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<sup>206</sup> Kingdom of the Netherlands, "Groundwater availability in relation to water demands in Tongatapu", Kingdom of Tonga DRR-Team Mission Report, 1 February 2017, 54.

<sup>207</sup> Pacific Islands Development Forum, "Courtesy Visit by Netherlands Ambassador", August 18, 2016, <http://www.pidf.int/courtesy-visit-by-netherlands-ambassador/> Accessed on November 22, 2020.

<sup>208</sup> Jackson, *Global Politics in the 21st Century*, 74.

<sup>209</sup> Minkman and van Buuren, "Branding in policy translation", 114.

that social identity influences foreign policy during interactions between nations.<sup>210</sup> Although in the case of the Netherlands, its social identity is reinforced by experience, innovative solutions, and technologies for water management.

The double hatted-role of public-private partnerships might result in friction as the focus is laid on economic benefits rather than providing development aid, thus mainly serving Dutch economic interests. This twofold relationship was similarly addressed by Lilianne Ploumen, former Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. In 2017, she pledged to fund the DRR-Teams for three more years. She said: “It’s a two-way process, [...] you’re helping people and improving their living conditions. And at the same time, Dutch companies and knowledge institutions are playing a major part. It’s a fine example of aid and trade.”<sup>211</sup> This logic is the embodiment of Putnam’s “two-level game” as mentioned in the first chapter. National and international priorities are simultaneously merged. While complying with international norms of providing development aid to vulnerable countries, the Dutch national interests are pursued, as national companies are increased with trade.<sup>212</sup>

#### **4.4 The Netherlands European Union Presidency in 2016**

In the first half of 2016, the Netherlands held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. For the Netherlands, the EU is an important partnership, therefore it is valuable to discuss the focal points of the Netherlands during its EU Presidency in 2016. It is interesting to decipher whether sustainable development, as well as placing emphasis on building partnerships with SIDS, was also promoted within the European framework, apart from the global UN framework. One of the spearheads of the Netherlands EU Presidency was a forward-looking policy on climate and energy, for which the Paris Agreement served as an important point of departure.<sup>213</sup>

On March 2015, the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) produced an advisory report on reviewing the Cotonou Agreement, a partnership between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) which came in effect in 2000 and was concluded for a period of 20 years. The agreement originally continued in effect until February

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<sup>210</sup> Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the international state”, 385.

<sup>211</sup> Government of the Netherlands, “Government to continue sending expert water teams worldwide”, News item, 30 September 2017, <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2017/09/30/government-to-continue-sending-expert-water-teams-worldwide>. Accessed on November 22, 2020.

<sup>212</sup> Putnam, “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics”, 434.

<sup>213</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Programme of the Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the European Union. 1 January – 30 June 2016”, 10.

2020, but due to a prolonged negotiation process it was pushed back to December 31, 2020.<sup>214</sup> Former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Frans Timmermans and Lilianne Ploumen requested an advice whether the partnership agreement should be continued after 2020. The AIV welcomed the request for advice in light of the Dutch Presidency of the EU in 2016.<sup>215</sup> The AIV underlined the importance of the Dutch Presidency, as it is a “significant opportunity to put specific priorities of Dutch policy for EU development cooperation, such as coherence, on the agenda for the negotiations.”<sup>216</sup> The Cotonou Agreement is of relevance to SIDS as 37 of the 58 SIDS are part of the ACP.

Lilianne Ploumen expressed great interest in the prospective EU-ACP relations. During the opening ceremony of the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers she stressed: “Another global challenge, which is closely related to sustainable development, is the urgently needed climate action [...] We should build on the successful alliance between EU and ACP states in the COP21 negotiations. And I know this is a particularly important common concern with our Caribbean and Pacific partners.”<sup>217</sup> Moreover, she pointed out the EU-ACP relationship was largely a donor/recipient relationship, which should belong to the past: “the new universal 2030 Agenda for sustainable development rightly places more emphasis on universality: the new goals apply to us all. That is what we need to build on”.<sup>218</sup> While characterising the relationship in such a way, Minister Ploumen embraces the universality of the SDGs, and the responsibility of Western world in achieving sustainable development, following the argument of dependency theorists.<sup>219</sup>

Scholars who examined the influence of EU institutions in post-Cotonou negotiations mention there was an initial expectation that the Netherlands Presidency would play a crucial role in the post-Cotonou negotiations, although in hindsight little progress was made during its term.<sup>220</sup> This is not because of Dutch intentions, rather due to the functioning of EU institutions. The Council Presidency, thus the Netherlands, had little influence on the negotiating process in

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<sup>214</sup> European Commission, Press release, “New Africa-Caribbean-Pacific/EU Partnership: moving forward towards a new partnership fit for the future”, IP/20/248, Brussels, 14 February 2020, 1.

<sup>215</sup> Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV), “ACP-EU Cooperation After 2020. Towards a New Partnership?”, No. 93, March 2015, 6.

<sup>216</sup> AIV, “ACP-EU Cooperation After 2020”, 36-37.

<sup>217</sup> Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), “Statement by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Lilianne Ploumen at the opening ceremony of the 41<sup>st</sup> session of the ACP-EU Council of Ministers”, April 28, 2016, Dakar, Senegal, 1-2.

<sup>218</sup> ACP, “Statement by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Lilianne Ploumen”, 4.

<sup>219</sup> Mensah, “Sustainable development”, 4.

<sup>220</sup> Niels Keijzer and Gerard Schulting, “What role for the rotating Presidency in European development policy? The case of ACP-EU relations” *Journal of European Integration* 41 (2019):5, 667.



comparison to the European Commission, which had substantial control over the agenda and matters of Council Working Group exchanges.<sup>221</sup>

Although a forward-looking policy on climate and energy was one of the four focal points of the Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the EU, there have been no explicit efforts made to address the risks of climate change for SIDS. However, Minister Ploumen profoundly encouraged a future EU-ACP alliance. This potential alliance can serve as another partnership to address the risks of climate change in SIDS and support the island states in achieving sustainable development. Perhaps the Netherlands did not wish to become confrontational with EU member states, or complicate the negotiations on the Cotonou Agreement. However, it would have been an optimal opportunity to address climate change in SIDS in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement negotiations. Another possible explanation for the lack of addressing the SDGs within the EU framework is the given that the SDGs are accompanied to the UN. As the EU has no direct role in assessing or promoting the SDGs, it is possible the Netherlands did not feel the urge to promote the goals within the EU. In the UN, the Netherlands cannot bypass it as the goals have a central place within the UN.

#### **4.5 The Netherlands in the 2018 UN Security Council**

During 2018, the Kingdom of the Netherlands was member of the UN Security Council, hence a great opportunity to address the topics that are of paramount importance to the Netherlands. The Netherlands stressed the consequences of climate change and water stress and raised awareness around the rising sea levels. The issue was literally placed in the limelight on March 18, 2018, on World Water Day. Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Sigrid Kaag and representatives of private Dutch water companies were present in New York at the showing of the artwork *Waterlicht*. The work by Dutch artist Daan Roosegaarde demonstrated a virtual flood on the UN headquarters, a literal demonstration of what would happen if people do not take action on climate change and rising sea levels.<sup>222</sup>

During the 8307<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UN Security Council on the maintenance of international peace and security, Prime Minister Rhuggenaath of Curacao attended the meeting as part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. He stressed the significance of the topic, as

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<sup>221</sup> Keijzer and Schulting, “What role for the rotating Presidency in European development policy?”, 657.

<sup>222</sup> Studio Roosegaarde, “Daan Roosegaarde floods United Nations Headquarters with Waterlicht New York as a call to action”, Press release, March 22, 2018, 1-2; Government of the Netherlands, “The Netherlands puts water centre stage at the UN on World Water Day”, News item, March 18, 2018, <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2018/03/18/the-netherlands-puts-water-centre-stage-at-the-un-on-world-water-day>, Accessed on November 22, 2020.

“increased climate variability threatens social stability. It can ultimately lead to displacement and regional tensions.”<sup>223</sup> Since climate change directly affects his country, stressing this topic is of paramount importance. He similarly emphasised the responsibility of the Council to act on climate change, as it threatens international stability and security.<sup>224</sup> At the UN Security Council meeting on Climate and Security on December 15, 2018, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Halbe Zijlstra underlined the effects of climate change on small islands developing States: “it affects all countries, large or small – like the Small Island Developing States.”<sup>225</sup> As demonstrated above, the Netherlands put the future of SIDS on the agenda of the UN during these three occasions in 2018. Although the effects of addressing the topic are uncertain, it portrays the Netherlands’ commitment to yield attention for the cause of SIDS and the consequences they face regarding climate change.

When assessing the Netherlands’ attempts to address the position of SIDS within the UN framework, the efforts have been rather scarce. Achievements of the targets could have been discussed, or the Netherlands could have emphasised the possibilities to support SIDS and to encourage member states to engage in partnerships with SIDS. Until now, the case for SIDS could have been made more explicit. The challenges for SIDS were addressed, however, the Netherlands was too apprehensive to engage with the topic in detail and directly address member states.

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<sup>223</sup> United Nations Security Council, “Maintenance of international peace and security. Understanding and addressing climate-related security risks”, S/PV.8307, 8307<sup>th</sup> meeting, Wednesday, 11 July 2018, New York, 9.

<sup>224</sup> UNSC, “Maintenance of international peace and security”, S/PV.8307, 9.

<sup>225</sup> Kingdom of the Netherlands, The Netherlands at International Organisations, “Statement at Arria formula meeting on Climate and Security”, News item, December 15, 2017, <https://www.permanentrepresentations.nl/latest/news/2017/12/15/statement-at-arria-formula-meeting-on-climate-and-security>. Accessed on November 22, 2020.

## V. Conclusion

### 5.1 Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to answer the central research question: *'How has the Netherlands framed and applied Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate change in its foreign policy towards small island developing States?'* By answering this question, the 'stand-off' between IR and Development Studies is addressed. By doing so, concepts from development literature such as modernisation theory and dependency theory are used, whilst centring the premise of Constructivism from IR theory.

The first chapter of this thesis developed a conceptual framework to analyse the Netherlands' framing and application of SDG 13 towards SIDS. Chapter two explored the origins of the SDGs and scrutinised the various frameworks the UN provided to address SDG 13 in SIDS. Although the SDGs are not binding, Agenda 2030 acknowledges the UNFCCC as the primary international and intergovernmental forum to achieve a global approach to climate change. Hence, the UNFCCC and its accompanying agreements such as the Paris Agreement, form a vital foundation for SDG 13.<sup>226</sup> Many aspects of Goal 13 overlap with the commitments under the UNFCCC, legal obligations adjoining the forum, such as the Paris Agreement, contribute to the achievement of SDG 13.

Agenda 21 has been an important pillar as it was the cradle of the MDGs and SDGs. Moreover, it was the first time SIDS were recognised as a distinctive group of countries sharing similar environmental, economic and development challenges. Rio+20 has been a pivotal moment for achieving sustainable development for SIDS. During the conference, the foundation was laid for the SDGs and similarly, the attention for SIDS accelerated, formulated in the SAMOA Pathway. The SAMOA Pathway was adopted in 2014 and will expire in 2024 and serves as the global UN framework to achieve sustainable development in SIDS. As the timeframe of the SAMOA Pathway includes the gross of the timeframe of the accomplishment of the SDGs, the framework is concluded to be the most crucial in addressing SDG 13 on climate change in SIDS. The Pathway highlighted the importance of partnerships, conveying financial resources to SIDS to support sustainable finances, supporting good governance through capacity building, and focusing on education. In the SAMOA Pathway, a dependency

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<sup>226</sup> UN, "Transforming Our World", 25.

theory approach is taken. The Pathway urges developed countries to take the lead in sustainable development for developing countries to follow.<sup>227</sup> As an outcome to chapter two, the SAMOA Pathway presented a framework for chapter three, in which the case of the Netherlands further illustrated the constructivist approach. The aim was to uncover how the Netherlands framed its foreign support.

To answer the main question, the case study illustrated the Netherlands used the constitutes of the SAMOA Pathway in its climate policy with SIDS. The Netherlands' contribution is most convincingly visible in the amount of PPPs, exemplified by DRR-Teams missions. These contributions similarly showed the viability of the constructivist approach to IR. The Netherlands' historically and socially constructed identity influenced relations between countries in the international realm. In addition to this, the Netherlands' status as expert on water management is reinforced by the actual expertise and know-how of the Dutch ministries and private companies.

The Netherlands framed its support through addressing its identity as an expert on water related issues, and as three of the four countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are SIDS. However, whilst drawing on its identity, the Netherlands' national interest was evidently on the line, considering the Caribbean part of the Kingdom directly faces the challenges of climate change. Nevertheless, providing aid was not specifically focussed on the Caribbean. The Netherlands provided support worldwide, with strong relations and partnerships among the Pacific SIDS. Dutch foreign policy similarly drew a lot on its own identity, which is historically constructed. This identity implicates the Netherlands' years of experience in Delta management, insofar as becoming the Netherlands' international brand through branding in policy.<sup>228</sup>

Thus, the case study exemplifies the constructivist argument in IR theory that identities shape foreign policies. International norms seem to be vital in shaping international behaviour as well. Although the SDGs are not legally bound, other agreements such as the Cotonou Agreement and the Paris Agreement are adopted to strengthen the UN framework and to hold countries accountable for their behaviour. Hence, the contribution of this thesis to constructivist theory is that an interplay of state identity and international norms influence the international realm. In the case of the Netherlands, its identity is reinforced by tangible know-how and expertise on

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<sup>227</sup> Sharpley, "Tourism and Sustainable Development", 11-13

<sup>228</sup> Minkman and van Buuren, "Branding in policy translation", 114.

water management. Regarding the SDGs as socially constructed norms and moral agreements, occasionally, legally bound agreements reinforce the SDGs to coerce behaviour. Thus, norms influence international behaviour, but legal agreements further strengthen the moral commitments. This does not mean that one excludes the other, legal agreements should rather be considered as additional reassurance. Although the Netherlands' policy has been guided by the Paris Agreement, legal agreements are not an imperative to achieve change. This is exemplified by the Netherlands' efforts in the field of PPPs, as legal agreements were not foundational to the Dutch international aid through DRR-Teams. When critically assessing the Netherlands' record, its participation in multilateral organisations such as the EU and the UN lacked a convincing pursuit in addressing climate change in SIDS. Although climate change was one of the focal points of the Dutch EU Presidency policy, the SDGs and more specifically SDG 13, did not stand high on the priority list of the Netherlands.

## **5.2 Closing Remarks and Suggestions for Further Research**

An important remark is that the outcome of this thesis is framed within the premise of Constructivism theory. Therefore, results of the research can differ when using different theories and concepts from International Relations and Sustainable Development. This thesis has limited itself to the study of the Netherlands, however, this case study can be implemented for different countries on different goals. Moreover, the interconnectedness of the SDGs is not recognised due to the scope of this research, as the focus laid on Goal 13.

In the light of the current COVID-19 pandemic that has been holding the world in its grip for the gross of 2020, the new developments have undoubtedly affected economies and the worlds' ecosystem. Therefore, it is recommended to research the implications of COVID-19 on the progression of the accomplishment of SDG 13 or on Agenda 2030 as a totality. Ten more years to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and with the current COVID-19 crisis, the SIDS have become even more vulnerable as the tourism sector has been hit hard, a sector that is normally of utmost importance to their economies. Consequently, impacts from the pandemic on climate change and the economic impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector, are implications that affect SIDS. These topics are thus recommended for further research.

Furthermore, it is remarkable that the Netherlands was more active in promoting SDG 13 on the UN level than in the EU. This thesis focused more on the UN framework, although, more research on the background debates on the EU would provide an even better overview on the implementation and promotion of the SDGs and the Dutch position in this. It is noteworthy

to research how the SDGs function on the European level and what the factors were that enabled the Netherlands to be more active in the UN than in the EU.

A final suggestion for further research is the Cotonou agreement. The agreement was prolonged until December 31, 2020 due to ongoing negotiations. Whichever outcome the negotiation process will have, will influence cooperation between the EU and SIDS, as 37 SIDS are part of the ACP. A new agreement will possibly grant new cooperation opportunities between the EU and ACP countries, perhaps cooperation on climate change for SIDS. Lastly, the SAMOA Pathway will conclude in 2024 and in time, the UN General Assembly will decide on a successive program to address the vulnerabilities of SIDS.<sup>229</sup> This new forthcoming framework will possibly address a whole new dimension regarding SIDS, when the SAMOA Pathway has come to an end. But only the future will tell.

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<sup>229</sup> UN-OHRLLS, “SAMOA Pathway. A Guide for Island Journalists”, 11.

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## PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

### **Fraud and Plagiarism**

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.

The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.


The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism





entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.	
Name:	Charlotte Huijskens
Student number:	5610680
Date and signature:	Decemer 15, 2020 

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.