

**STATEMENT BY HE TUILOMA NERONI SLADE
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on behalf of the

ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

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SECOND COMMITTEE

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Mr. Chairman

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the 43 Members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

We fully support the statement delivered by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China.

May I also take the opportunity to thank the Executive Director of UNEP and the Executive Secretary of the Climate Change Secretariat for their statements this morning.

One of the implementation high-points reported on by Madam Waller-Hunter related to the achievements of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). We are proud to acknowledge the role of the Chairman of the CDM Executive Board, our colleague the Deputy Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda, Ambassador John Ashe.

Mr Chairman,

The issue of climate change will be the most crucial determinant of sustainable development in small island developing States (SIDS). It may just be that we will manage to get our sustainable development policies right, that we ensure stable political, social and environmental progress for our people. Yet we face the real risks that all will be substantially undermined because of climate change. Because of the profligate wastefulness that is destroying the fragile balance of the Earth's climate system.

All countries are connected by the global climate system. But the overwhelming responsibility for causing these growingly dangerous risks rests with a few.

Mr. Chairman,

As frontline States, SIDS recognise their own responsibility. Even though by world standards their emissions are minuscule, many SIDS are taking what action they can to reduce their emissions. SIDS, for instance, have

adopted very far-reaching renewable energy policies, energy efficiency standards and have taken measures that go far beyond their international commitments. Information on activities undertaken in this area can all be found in SIDS national communications made pursuant to the Climate Change Convention.

From this perspective, we cannot accept the validity of the assertion that developing countries must take steps, or take such steps before major emitters will engage in previously-agreed emissions reduction efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

The AOSIS countries join in welcoming the outcomes of the 8th Conference of the parties, and in congratulating the Government of India for its leadership in the critical process of COP8.

We welcome in particular, along with other developing countries, the emphasis on adaptation issues.

However, we do feel that the issue of adaptation will require further consideration. The AOSIS countries place the highest importance on adaptation. We need to, because our communities are suffering, and they have little other option.

We believe that much more in-depth study and understanding are required, and that developing countries, and SIDS in particular, need to be assisted and enabled, through the right technology, information and capacity training to undertake urgently needed adaptation strategies. Above all, our communities need to have access to adequate and predictable sources of financial assistance so that they can effectively undertake adaptation activities.

But adaptation is not the only choice faced by the international community. For adaptation alone will not fix the worsening global climate system. There is need for serious global mitigation efforts. And we need them now. The science as pronounced by the IPCC is not only clear; it is overwhelming.

We believe deeply that the Kyoto Protocol is the right way forward. Measured by the science, the global effort under the Protocol is, indeed, far from adequate. But we all know it is only a first effort. We all know why,

given the present political state of international negotiations, it has not been possible at this point to be more ambitious.

But we must also all be conscious of our common responsibility to our Planet and to future generations, and to ensure that the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere does not go beyond the dangerous mark. The present trends of global emissions remain largely unabated, and all island communities are seriously concerned that the world is moving inexorably along a dangerous path.

From the outlook of the very small and the very exposed, we believe that we need to start planning now for our common future. We are concerned that the parties to the Climate Change Convention continue to fail to discuss the adequacy of Annex I commitments under Articles 4.2 (a) and (b) of the Convention. There is clearly a Convention requirement that we do so, and we believe that we all act in breach of the Convention in failing even in having this item placed on the COP agenda.

Our own expectation is that if and when the COP comes to deal with these provisions, it would be inevitable, given the history of this difficult issue, that the Convention parties will have to deal with the contention for contributions from all parties to the global effort, in line with Article 2 of the Convention. Therefore, by its terms, it seems to us that the Convention does already provide for the basis for a discussion and dialogue on future action, including likely future action in the second commitment period.

In our view there is a common duty to discuss and talk now about plans for the future. It does not follow - and the AOSIS countries must put stress on this - it does not follow that there is any compromise whatever on the very substantial equities that lie with developing countries and with their well-known and well-articulated position on this issue. That position has just now been put again, clearly, by the distinguished representative of the Group of 77 and China.

Let me say that our countries fully share the concerns of many developing countries about any attempt to transmit the primary responsibility for climate change mitigation efforts to developing countries. This is not how we wish to address the problem. Clearly industrialised countries have the primary responsibility for climate change mitigation, and should do more to take the lead and to demonstrate quality leadership on mitigation. We acknowledge

the importance of the efforts now in hand. But it is clear there is no basis for the abdication of responsibility by the industrialised countries.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the most important aspects discussed in New Delhi concerned the need for effective risk management in the context of natural disasters, including the role of insurance. This is a most vital aspect, especially for countries such as ours that are highly vulnerable and least able to cope. The fact is that climate-related disasters, in their frequency and seriousness, are now more the norm than the exception. The reality is that human communities in all regions are suffering. In New Delhi, it was agreed that a workshop be held on this important issue. We hope the workshop will be well-funded and well attended, and we look forward to it.

We cannot put greater emphasis on the damage and suffering now being experienced in all countries, in all parts of the world. Neither can we fail to stress that it is the weak, the small and the poor that suffer the most. I would need to say that it is this broader background of extreme vulnerability and physical damage and suffering against which we need to measure the competing demands of those countries that claim compensation for likely economic losses as a result of impacts of response measures. That is not to suggest that the concerns of those countries are not important. Not at all. Rather, we think the situation needs to be viewed in clearer perspective, so that the needs of those communities already seriously affected, especially the SIDS and LDCs, be responded to as a matter of urgency and priority.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to refer to another issue. Last year the General Assembly approved a resolution that established certain financial linkages between the Climate Change Secretariat and the United Nations. In fact, this relationship has been in place since the inception of the intergovernmental negotiations on climate change. Accordingly, with the arrangements that have been set in place for the current biennium, we believe that the proposal for other arrangements is not acceptable at this juncture. In this respect we support fully what has been said on behalf of the Group of 77 and on behalf of the countries of the European Union.

Mr. Chairman, climate change is going to be a major concern for AOSIS as we prepare for the International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Program of Action. It will be discussed in our regional meetings, and we will seek the input of our experts on the thematic and sectoral implications of climate change on SIDS. We look forward to reporting to the General Assembly and to this Committee on the progress of our deliberations, in particular in regards to possible best practices in adaptation assessment, planning and implementation.

Thank you.