

AOSIS statement to the High Level Segment

Thank you Mr. President,
I have the honour and pleasure to speak today on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

It has been said that for the island peoples the oceans do not divide us, in fact they unite us.

We are pleased to be here in Bali and to experience the hospitality and kindness of fellow islanders. We are grateful to the Government and People of Indonesia and Bali for the warm welcome.

Mr. President, for AOSIS climate change is one of the critical issues that confront us as we endeavour to develop our countries on a sustainable basis. It has been well documented by the IPCC and others that our countries are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and that our low adaptive capacity seriously constrains our ability to respond to these threats.

In this context Mr. President participation in this process and the outcomes from Bali is not an option. For us it is a matter of survival:

- the survival of the 41 million people who live in the Small Island Developing States
- the survival in some cases of the very countries in which some us live and
- the possible disappearance of rich and vibrant cultures as a consequence of climate change.

This threat to our survival leaves us with no option but to insist that every effort must be made to reduce emissions from greenhouse gases as quickly as possible.

Some Parties have proposed stabilizing temperatures at 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

Mr. President this is something that we cannot agree with.

- 2 degrees means that we will lose many of our critical ecosystems.
- 2 degrees means that many of our coastal communities will be flooded and inundated.
- 2 degrees means stronger tropical storms and cyclones, reduced water supply and decreased food security.

It therefore means that the first priority of this conference here in Bali is to agree on a shared vision. That vision means that we must strive to limit temperature increases far below 2 degrees Celsius.

In fact the avoidance of adverse impacts on SIDS should be the benchmark against which all the negotiations of the Bali Roadmap should be conducted.

This will require participation of all Parties to the Convention in keeping with their respective capacities and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

This may not be sufficient, as the scientists have told us that we are already committed to a degree of climate change even if GHG emissions were stabilized today. Therefore Mr. President it will also be necessary that this process

- provides us the means to cope with the impacts of climate change,
- provides us with the capacity building to enable us understand the impacts on our communities and develop responses,
- provides us with early warning systems to enable us to deal with the threats from tropical storms and cyclones,
- provides us with the technologies to develop appropriate adaptation responses, and

- provides us with sufficient, secure and predictable financial flows to enable us to implement these critical response activities.

It is disappointing and frustrating that these are the very issues on which we have not seen satisfactory progress within the Convention process, and we are concerned that progress at this meeting is also not satisfactory.

Mr. President, the problem for us is not technical, it is a human problem. It is a problem of people being faced with the threat of losing their livelihoods, a problem of people being faced with the threat of becoming refugees from communities where they have lived for centuries if not millennia.

Mr. President this is a global problem that requires a global solution. No small group of countries can determine the solution. No appropriate solution can be developed without the participation of vulnerable countries like ourselves who are bearing the brunt of the climate change impacts. We therefore strongly believe that the process must be within the UN system, and that the Bali Roadmap becomes the unifying force for all efforts to respond to climate change within the international community.

I can assure you that AOSIS will do its utmost to support your efforts in developing a process that is equitable, fair and transparent and will provide an opportunity for the needs of all countries, no matter how small, to receive due consideration and to be addressed.

We sincerely hope that we will leave here with a Roadmap that will protect vulnerable communities, resolute in the conviction that no island shall be left behind.

I thank you Mr. President