



ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

AOSIS Statement Briefing by Co-Chairs of the High-level Expert Panel on the MVI 19th April 2022

Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,

I have the honour to deliver this intervention on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

Since this is the first briefing by the expert panel, the group wishes to offer congratulations to the panel on their appointment by the President of the General Assembly. We are particularly pleased to see Prime Minister Gaston Browne as one of the Co-Chairs.

Co-Chairs,

The road to the journey of the development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index has been long, dating back to 1991. Over thirty years later and countless crises, that has directly impacted the environmental, economic and health landscape of SIDS and the cascading effects of global unrest has brought us to this point.

While we do not wish to revisit past international structures such as graduation that has hampered our ability to become resilient and build back better from multiple shocks, it is important to remind the expert panel as to the exact reason why we are here today.

There is an acceptance by all, and I wish to reemphasize **BY ALL** that SIDS have special circumstances and are uniquely vulnerable. Our small size and small economies make us inherently susceptible to external economic and financial shocks. Our geographies mean that climate change threatens our very survival.

It is also important to note, that at any one point, a disaster can change the face of our small states, eliminating decades of developmental gains and at the extreme, render us landless.

And yet another reminder that thirty years ago, in Rio, the international community recognized SIDS as a special case for sustainable development and acknowledged that we are the most vulnerable group of countries.

But three decades later, we still do not have the necessary financial instruments, tools and development assistance in order to address the severity and multiplicity of crises we face.



Co-Chairs,

We welcome your engagement with us today and we note your intense work programme and taut timeline as you outlined. We also recognize the magnitude of your work but wish to emphasize the need to be meticulous.

This is the only opportunity to get this right, therefore we look forward to your continuous updates to member states and your recommendations that will be included in the upcoming report of the Secretary-General.

Your recommendations and the report of the Secretary-General are critical components to the intergovernmental negotiations that will lend to the possible adoption of the MVI.

Co-Chairs,

From the onset, AOSIS has been clear on the process in the establishment of an MVI and the expected results.

Since this is our first time engaging directly with you, we wish to provide the following on the MVI.

- 1) The MVI must offer lasting solutions to SIDS and must ensure the vulnerabilities of our small states are taken into account and fully addressed.
- 2) The MVI must lead to the availability of concessional financing for all SIDS, in particular those that were arbitrarily graduated into middle and high-income status.
- 3) The MVI must provide access to development, climate and other financing.
- 4) The MVI must provide a platform to address the unsustainable debt levels of SIDS by considering debt relief, debt forgiveness, debt restructuring and innovative financing debt instruments as long-lasting solutions. Without a comprehensive view of debt sustainability in the context of the MVI, SIDS would be unable to achieve the full implementation of the remaining years of the SAMOA Pathway, the 2030 agenda and the achievement of the SDGs.
- 5) While we have indicated that the three pillars of sustainable development must be considered in the development of indicators, it is clear from our perspective and also from various studies commissioned and reports produced that the environmental and economic pillars warrant special attention to capture the structural vulnerabilities of SIDS.
- 6) A key component in the development of indicators must also feature the issue of resiliency. For us, the concept of resilient is two-fold:
 - a. The very reason why we are here today – our very unique vulnerabilities
 - b. It is not our desire to be dependent on a system or developed partners perpetually. The MVI must eventually lead us to a place where we are able to build our resilience.



- 7) The MVI must be agreed within the context of an intergovernmental process and must be accepted and taken on board by the entire UN system, developed partners, international financial institutions and also by the private sector.

Finally, Co-Chairs,

AOSIS recognizes the potential universal nature of the MVI and welcomes discussions on universality and its applicability to other developing countries as outlined by the Secretary-General.

We also wish to restate, as we have done before, that currently, we do not see the MVI as replacing established mechanisms such as GNI, we see the MVI complimenting and addressing the gaps in those mechanisms.

The Group looks forward to further engagements with the expert panel and other opportunities where we can engage interactively with the panel.

But before we close, we wish to pose one question to the expert panel, in 2021, the Ministerial Declaration of the Financing for Development Forum mandated the Interagency Task Force on financing for development to present to this year's forum recommendations on the use possible use of the MVI in addressing the unsustainable debt levels of SIDS. The IATF's report provided useful insights regarding the MVI and debt relief for SIDS.

Noting that the expert panel has engaged UNDP, the RC's working in SIDS, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Caribbean Development Bank on their reports on a possible MVI for SIDS, does the expert panel plan to engage with the Interagency Task Force? Or to reflect on the findings of their report? If this is the case can you provide any details on how this report can be taken into account given that the SG's report pointed to debt sustainability as a possible use of the MVI?

Again, AOSIS wishes to provide its full support to the work of the panel.

I Thank You.

