

PAPER NO. 1: THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

**VIEWS ON THE CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNICATIONS FROM
NON-ANNEX I PARTIES, AS WELL AS THE TIMING OF SECOND
NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT
ARTICLE 12.5 OF THE UNFCCC (DECISION 12/CP.4)**

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the issue of the consideration of communications from non-Annex I Parties. As all AOSIS Members are non-Annex I Parties, and the majority are in the process of completing their national communications, this issue is relevant and timely.

I. General concerns with the national communications

AOSIS has found that the assistance provided to them in the preparation of their national communication could be enhanced. A number of technical issues have been raised as particularly difficult for many of the Small Island Developing States to adequately report on. The process of consultations required has also been identified as being far too ambitious for the purposes of the national communications, and to ensure that the contents are as accurate as possible. There have also been difficulties in using some of the existing IPCC guidelines because of issues of scale, as for example emissions from Small Island Developing States in many cases are so very small.

II. Improvements to the guidelines

At this stage, although improvements will no doubt be needed, AOSIS finds it to be premature to call for a full review of the existing guidelines for non-Annex I communications, as contained in decision 10/CP.2. However, AOSIS will engage in the discussions as more and more communications become available to see where any common difficulties have arisen.

III. Consideration of the national communications

AOSIS is of the view that the national communications from non-Annex I Parties should not simply be aggregated for purposes of assessing global emissions figures. AOSIS is of the view that a large amount of additional information will be provided by the non-Annex I Parties in their communications on issues such as adaptation projects, vulnerability assessments and other considerations. AOSIS expects the Secretariat to extract these relevant sections for inclusion in the background documentation for a number of discussions by the Conference of the Parties. These include articles 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8 and 4.9, as well as 5 and 6. AOSIS Members intend to include information relevant to these issues in their communications, although the initial communications may not cover all the necessary details. Subsequent communications would be gradually improved.

In their national communications, AOSIS considers it to be particularly important for the

most vulnerable countries to identify adaptation needs and requirements, and as far as possible suggest projects to assist with adaptation. There should be an opportunity to discuss the proposals first of all in terms of their structure (engineering, further research, etc.), second in terms of technological and innovative dissemination, and third in terms of the financing of these projects. AOSIS sees this as an important part of the process, so that the ideas being generated in one vulnerable country can be shared with others in a similar situation. This would be a meaningful contribution towards implementing article 12.4.

In terms of the exact process that this consideration will take, AOSIS finds it difficult to make a concrete suggestion in the absence of more national communications from non-Annex I Parties. It is at stage considered premature to apply the same review process which Annex I Parties have to take part in to the non-Annex I Parties. However, there are some lessons that could be learned, such as the mutual benefits that accrue from having the advice of experts on sections of a Party's national communication. Whether this expertise should be made available on a voluntary basis, and whether it should be made available prior to the completion of the national communication, or prior to the initiation of the subsequent national communications, is not yet decided. AOSIS considers that at the very least the initial process should also consider issues such as technological needs, capacity building and institutional strengthening identified by non-Annex I for adaptation as well as mitigation measures.

AOSIS would suggest that an initial process be considered for those communications that will have been received by the 5th Conference of the Parties, but that the formal decision should be taken at the 5th Conference of the Parties. This initial process should consider such issue as the need for provision of expertise, enhancement of the reporting structure, policy advice, and problems encountered. The initial process should also highlight how the contents of the national communications can and should be utilized in the discussion of other important issues before the Conference of the Parties. It is also important to facilitate the retention at the national levels of key personnel involved in the production of the national communications. This aspect should be discussed in the context of this initial process, especially in relation to the funding requirements as identified in article 4.3, keeping in mind the provisions of article 12.5 and the ability of the non-Annex I Parties to engage in these activities.

AOSIS looks forward to further discussing these issues at the meetings of the subsidiary bodies in Bonn in May and June, 1999.