



High-level Meeting on the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda:

Strengthening the New Urban Agenda to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

28 April 2022, United Nations Headquarters

Statement on behalf of AOSIS:

I have the honor to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

Let me begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for organizing this High-Level debate on strengthening the New Urban Agenda. We believe this is a timely dialogue, especially considering the global movement towards carbon neutrality by 2050, while overcoming the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as persistent challenges in sustainable development.

The New Urban Agenda is instrumental in enhancing management of risks and building resilience to the impacts of climate change and rapid urbanization. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are uniquely placed in this context, as most urban settlements with economic and social activities are placed in coastal areas, which are often most prone to disasters. At the same time, urbanization is also expanding in SIDS, placing more of the population at risk.

Therefore it is clear that urban development should be strategic, and based not only on economic considerations, but also population growth, the environment and other relevant socio-economic factors. However, there are significant gaps in current approaches that examine such hazards, as they often overlook this relationship between multiple hazards, human activity and environmental factors. One of the main obstacles in obtaining a comprehensive picture in SIDS, is the persistent capacity challenges in data collection and management, which needs to be strengthened through targeted support.

Taking into account the inevitable shift towards urbanization, it is also critical to strengthen resilience of urban centers, and reduce the inequalities that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. SIDS are facing a multitude of crises that have overshadowed our ability to respond, and therefore need greater support from the international community.

Concurrently, barriers on access to finance, especially concessional finance and ODA, should be reexamined and addressed to ensure that the most vulnerable countries receive the critical support they need for enhancing resilience. In this regard, we believe that the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, which is currently being developed by the High-Level Panel mandated by the UNGA, would be a useful tool to better direct resource mobilization.

Strategic and well managed urbanization paves the way for achieving sustainable development and carbon neutrality in the long-term. On the other hand, if poorly managed, it will widen inequalities and have severe implications on climate change, environmental degradation and peace and security.

Therefore, in conclusion, AOSIS reiterates the call for informed and strategic sustainable urbanization, enabling livelihood opportunities and a better quality of life for all, in harmony with nature.

I thank you.