



Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
The first part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed
Countries (LDC5)
Thursday, 17 March, at 10 a.m.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We align our statement with the statement delivered by Pakistan on behalf of G77 and China.

We wish to congratulate the President of the Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-5) on his election and appreciation to the co-chairs of the Conference in guiding us to this moment.

Mr. President,

50 years after the adoption of the first programme of action for LDCs, we are here at the fifth round, still striving to achieve the aspirations envisioned by these countries. This time, the Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries must focus on ensuring that 50 years from today there will be no need for a LDC conference because these remaining countries and those that have graduated in previous years would have attained their quest for sustainable development and achieve the sustainable development goals through adequate support from developed countries.

AOSIS is fully committed to ensuring that the international community is working in an effective and tangible manner to improve the lives and livelihood of every citizen of the Least Developed Countries. At the core of the commitment of AOSIS is the need to support the sustainable development of LDCs.

Our advocacy and support for LDCs is steadfast, as a group, we share similar challenges that are unique to our special circumstances and some SIDS are also categorized as LDCs, therefore making our support and advocacy even more important.

Despite some levels of economic growth and development of LDCs, they all remain very fragile and current global threats and challenges are exacerbating the fragility of these countries.

As in the case of many developing countries, but in particular SIDS and LDCs, we are still searching for that hope of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as the impact has and continues to be greatest on our respective countries.

Some of the challenges we face are reminiscent of the past when conflict and war prevented many in the developing world from achieving sustainable development.

Our group of countries considered the most vulnerable are faced with new and emerging threats.

Climate change and the current global economic crisis resulting from the COVID19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs more than any other countries.

Developed countries are responsible for polluting the planet, they should assist LDC's in reducing their vulnerabilities and managing their environment sustainably while not impeding their development pathways.

The full implementation of the Paris Agreement along with the Glasgow Pact, as well as delivering on climate finance is critical for LDCs. The recent IPCC report paints a dire picture for SIDS and LDCs.

We need to ensure not only the survival of our planet, but also the opportunity for future generations to thrive on this planet, by sustainably generating food and clean water for all. Food and water security are constant threats being faced by LDCs.

The fight against hunger as well as poverty eradication remain an enduring objective in the development process of LDCs and, therefore, AOSIS is of the view that international cooperation must be anchored in the elimination of poverty in all its form and dimensions.

Carbon-neutral energy generation is interrelated with environmental protection, in this context, supporting projects that promote sustainable energy development must be seen as a priority going forward. Transitioning to sustainable energy sources will aid in reducing energy cost and enhancing the overall development of LDCs.

Mr. President,

For far too long, global economic policies are inconsistent with the realities of LDCs, the fiscal policies of developed partners and international financial institutions should be mindful of the need to provide tailored solutions and support to LDCs. ODA support and development finance must continue to be prioritized; the pandemic has shown the true fragility of this group of countries.

50 years ago, when this Group was established, the main objective was not graduation, it was to ensure that the countries in this category were able, with the assistance of the developed countries, to overcome their obstacles that compromise their development. Therefore, it is important that graduating out of low-income status must not be rushed, moving from low-income to middle-income status means nothing if a country is still not resilient to global shocks.

Meeting the goal of having no LDC by 2030 without due consideration to the impact of premature graduation would simply mean that the international community would be faced with

an overwhelming number of middle-income countries that are still very much dependent on the UN system and developed partners for support, with an additional layer of obstacles for accessing the available support.

Measures beyond GDP that takes into account the unique vulnerabilities of graduated LDCs and SIDS must be prioritized. In this regard, AOSIS will continue to lead the intergovernmental process of the development of a Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index that in our view will compliment and address the gaps found in GDP measurement.

Mr. President,

The Doha Programme of Action must be implemented in its entirety, it must be owned by all LDCs and supported by developed partners and the UN system.

The priorities that the LDCs demand at part 1 of LDC5 are a greater commitment rooted in national leadership of their development agenda.

There is a crucial role to be played by developed countries in terms of investment in physical and human capital, reducing poverty and promoting growth and sustainable development.

The United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, other multilateral institutions and regional development banks must fully support the Doha Programme of Action.

When possible, south-south, north-south and triangular cooperation should also assist in delivering the Doha Programme of Action for all LDCs, building on the lessons learnt and scaling up best practices.

In concluding, AOSIS will continue to advocate for all LDCs, we are in this fight together. We will continue to play our part with determination in an effort to strengthen multilateral cooperation to meet the global challenges of the remaining decade, including those faced by LDCs.

It would be remiss of AOSIS if we did not thank the Government of Qatar for agreeing to host the second part of the Conference. We remain hopeful that the Doha Programme of Action when adopted, would make a significant difference in the lives of the one billion human beings living in the Least Developed Countries and looks forward for a full engagement at part 2 of LDC-5 in 2023.

I thank you.