



Interactive Discussion to Leadership Dialogue 2: “Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic”

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Mr. President
Co-Chairs
Excellencies
Colleagues

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 the Group of 77 and China and wishes to recognize the co-chairing efforts of the Governments of Indonesia and Germany for this interactive session.

Mr. President,

This moment is worth a reflection, for almost three years, small island developing states (SIDS) were battered by the brutality of the COVID-19 pandemic and the multiple crises that followed, in particular the ongoing economic crisis. Data produced by the UN system and the international financial institutions all clearly state that these crises are impacting SIDS far greater than any other group of countries and will undoubtedly prohibit us from achieving the full implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and achieving the sustainable development goals.

Before this crisis ensued, SIDS were already facing a crisis unlike any other. The effects of climate change and the impact on our environment, continues to be the most immediate threat to our lives and livelihoods. As small and low-lying states, we have continually sounded the alarm on the need for the international community to comprehensively work together to address the negative impacts of the environment.

AOSIS is of the firm belief that we can still turn the tide and reverse the road of destruction that we are currently on. While the pandemic disrupted our lives and upended our perception of normalcy, it also allowed for a pause. Even though for a brief moment, that pause provided a small window of hope for a renewal of the environment. As the world stood still during the pandemic and many activities came to a halt, nature was allowed for that brief moment to show signs of replenishment and renewal.

Mr. President,

Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, requires unfettered commitment by all in ensuring that SIDS are placed at the forefront of recovery and our particular vulnerabilities are comprehensively addressed. A sustainable recovery from the pandemic must ensure that we are resilient from all future global shocks.

Economically, the international community must guarantee that all SIDS, regardless of graduated status are given access to concessional financing and grants. This can be achieved by through the application of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index that takes into account the special circumstances of SIDS. AOSIS looks forward to the recommendations from the Expert Panel and the conclusion and adoption of the findings later this year. An internationally agreed and accepted MVI can provide lasting solutions to some of our needs.

SIDS cannot recover from this pandemic if our unsustainable debt to GDP ratio is not comprehensively addressed. As a direct result of this pandemic, many of our countries had to borrow at commercial rates in order to protect lives and fill the gap from the sharp decline of resources. While commendable, the policies that were put in place by the G20, the IMF and the World Bank to address the pandemic were not tailored to address the specific needs of our countries. We need tailored solutions; debt forgiveness and debt relief must be considered as options for a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A commitment to ensuring that official development assistance targets are met, and that development finance is separated from climate finance can aid in the recovery.

Mr. President,

Our economies are dependent on a safe and secure environment. Tourism, agricultural and the ocean are the drivers of much of our economic activities. It is therefore essential that a sustainable recovery ensures that the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the New Urban Agenda are guiding the implementation of a robust and resilient global recovery. The latest IPCC report paints a dark picture of the state of our environment, therefore Stockholm+50 provides that opportunity to reflect on what a healthy planet could mean for us all, how a prosperous planet is our responsibility and the many opportunities that lies ahead as an international community.

I Thank You.