



**Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) under the
Agenda Item 25 (a & b): Operational Activities for Development & South-
South Cooperation at the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

5 October 2020

Mr. Chair, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report and [the Deputy Secretary-General] for presenting the salient points of the SG's report on operational activities for development and south-south cooperation.

AOSIS supports the Committee's decision to focus its attention during this very difficult and challenging time on the QCPR. We note the critical role the UN development system plays in development on-the-ground and therefore we look forward, as always, to engaging the system and guiding its operational activities for development.

We commend the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for their unwavering commitment to the repositioning of the UN development system in order to respond to programme countries' needs and priorities. This encapsulates the role of the UN as a tangible body in Member States. AOSIS would also like to express its gratitude for the review of the Multi-Country Offices and the recommendations to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and overall performance of those offices to the constituencies they service. We are reminded that this is an ongoing process that needs monitoring and reporting on, as well as making the necessary adjustments where needed to ensure that the service provided by the

system meets challenges as they occur and the countries serviced by MCOs are not left behind in the development trajectory.

AOSIS wishes to reiterate that even though several of the countries serviced by MCOs are SIDS, MCOs and SIDS are not synonymous and therefore there needs to be SIDS specific approaches to addressing the challenges SIDS face outside of the MCO process.

For this cycle, and as we embark on the *Decade of Action* AOSIS believes that it is time to shift the system's focus to delivery on-the-ground and therefore we look forward to providing the system with the sort of guidance to achieve that goal, including the integrated policy advice, programme support, leveraging of partnerships and brokering we require. With only 9 more years to accomplish the implementation of the 2030 Agenda we think it is high time that we are all on the same page and trajectory in order to be successful.

AOSIS' calls will be limited in this regard. First, we will be calling on the system to adopt and mainstream a more climate and environmentally responsive approach into the cooperation framework and in its policy advice to programme countries. We also look forward to the entities of the UN developing system honouring their climate promises made during the Climate Summit in line with urgency for action to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Second, we will continue to encourage the UN development systems and its entities to work along with the international financial institutions and development partners to respond more appropriately to high indebtedness of SIDS. The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced our assertions that the current system remains inadequate

to meet SIDS challenges. Income-only thresholds to determine access to finance is woefully outdated as a metric of need. The system would be better placed by adopting a multi-dimensional vulnerability index that guides access and eliminates the greater costs of inaction in the long-term.

Third, in the realm of responding to COVID-19, SIDS will need the UN development system to utilize its convening power and brokerage role to ensure that all countries have the wherewithal to combat the pandemic and ensure recovery that is worthy of meaningful development. In this regard, we want to reiterate the calls of our Heads of States and Governments for all countries to have equitable and timely access to any coronavirus vaccine, which becomes available. We would also like to stress the continued call of SIDS that recovery be premised on the guarantee of all countries to survive any future shocks and crisis. For us, this means abiding by the commitments we made in the Sendai Framework and Paris Agreement.

As a part of the global south, AOSIS contends that South-South cooperation remains critical in providing the resources and peer-to-peer partnerships required to help in the facilitation of the 2030 Agenda. However, this sort of cooperation cannot be a replacement for, or a substitute for North-South partnerships and obligations to commit ODA to developing countries. Dwindling support in the latter will only serve to entrench poverty and calamity. It is perhaps useful to recall that SIDS economies are not structured to enlist the resources required to meet our multilayered challenges from domestic resources or private finance. The one-size-fits all approach here is inappropriate.

Mr. Chair, AOSIS looks forward to engaging in the QCPR negotiations as a steadfast and committed group. We look forward to guiding the system and placing us all on a firm path to development.

Thank you.