



ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

STATEMENT

UN CLIMATE AMBITION SUMMIT

Wednesday 20th September, 2023

*Your Excellency Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations
Excellencies
Colleagues*

- I am honoured to bring you greetings from the Independent State of Samoa, and I am pleased to deliver my remarks as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).
- On behalf of the people inhabiting some of the most vulnerable regions in the world, I thank you, Secretary General, for convening this crucial meeting. For our small island developing states, global climate ambition – or sadly, the lack thereof – is the issue which is determining the very survival of our people.
- I stand here for the people of Tuvalu and Kiribati, islands where communities have already been forced to relocate due to the rising seas.
I stand here for the Marshall Islands, where residents are challenged to access safe drinking water due to saltwater intrusion.
I stand here for Dominica, where Hurricane Maria cost \$90 billion in damage.
I stand here for the Maldives, where coastal erosion is threatening livelihoods.

I could continue to recount many more examples, but I am here to ensure that all people of small island developing states know that their voices are being heard on the world stage, and we will not stop fighting for their right to remain on the lands in which the legacies of their ancestors are rooted, the lands we have every obligation to protect for current and future generations.

- We wholeheartedly endorse the United Nations Secretary-General's acceleration agenda for climate action. For decades, AOSIS has been sounding the alarm on the devastating impacts of climate change, and the need for countries to be accountable for their contributions to this crisis.
- As SIDS, our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is **LESS THAN ONE PER CENT**. The G20 is responsible for **EIGHTY PER CENT** of emissions. **EIGHTY PER CENT**. Our small islands are being ravaged and bearing the terrible burden of the bigger countries' pursuit of profit over the wellbeing of our people. This is not right. It is unjust. And we talk ad nauseum about making good – when will leaders finally **ACT** for our climate, for our people?
- The Synthesis Report for the Technical Dialogue of the Global Stocktake was released this month, underscoring that emissions are not in line with the one point five degrees Celsius goal, and the window to up ambition and deliver on current promises is closing fast.
- However, the Report also makes it clear that one point five can certainly still be kept alive! We must work together on this – there is absolutely no time to waste. The world can peak emissions by 2025 through collective action. With the right mix of support and clean technologies and solutions for dramatically scaling up renewable energy use, and permanently shifting away from fossil fuels on the deadline set by science, we can get this just transition right.
- We are not where we need to be, but with deep and fast emissions cuts to halve global emissions by 2030, we can achieve our global goal of limiting warming to one point five Celsius, to avoid the very worst impacts of climate change.



- Small island developing states are not standing still waiting for the world to change. Despite formidable capacity constraints, AOSIS members continue to drive the UN system forward, calling on it to address the climate crisis and protect the most vulnerable across all its institutions and bodies.
- SIDS are also actively engaged in climate action domestically to address the challenges posed by climate change and promote sustainability. For instance:
 - Samoa is serious about transitioning to clean sustainable energy through the utilization of renewable energy sources. This is demonstrated by investments in Alaoa Hydro Plant, 750kW Afolau Biomass Gasification Plant, Battery Energy Storage Systems at Fiaga and Faleolo.
 - The Marshall Islands worked closely with civil society to achieve clean water for all – only the second nation in the world to meet this SDG, and against difficult odds.
 - Dominica is committed to becoming the world's first climate-resilient nation, investing in resilient infrastructure, reforestation, and geothermal energy projects.
 - Palau has created one of the world's largest marine sanctuaries, the Palau National Marine Sanctuary.
 - Cabo Verde has been developing wind and solar energy projects to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Many SIDS are leading the way in driving forward renewable energy initiatives as well as making concerted adaptation efforts to combat erosion and sea level rise and address water and agricultural challenges – however, this will all be for naught if all countries do not collaborate and if we are not provided with the support we urgently need from the international community, particularly on the financial and technical fronts.



- Colleagues, the time has come to truly commit to climate action. As we look ahead to COP28, AOSIS is reiterating our call for:
 1. GST outcomes that are focused on course correction;
 2. Agreement to a framework on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), and robust outcomes from the GGA work programme for adaptation action that deliver on the needs and priorities of SIDS, including on the commitment to double finance for adaptation.
 3. More ambitious action on mitigation, including commitments to phase out fossil fuels and remove related subsidies;
 4. The operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund and robust funding arrangements at COP28 that are fit for purpose for developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, especially our small island developing States; and
 5. A strong call for delivery of scaled-up and improved finance, technology and capacity building to unlock increased ambition in the next round of NDCs.
- Excellencies, colleagues – how do you want history to remember you? Make no mistake, the storm is gaining strength. It is our **responsibility as leaders** *to course correct in this crisis and steer our people safely out of harm's way*. I appeal to you to stand with us as we chart this urgently-needed new course. Together, we must and we can turn back the tide of climate change.

Thank you.

