



A L L I A N C E O F S M A L L I S L A N D S T A T E S

Island Nations Launch New Declaration at AOSIS Leaders Meeting

UN Secretary General says, “Developed countries must deliver “on finance for SIDS, in address at island leaders’ meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly.

New York City, 22 September, 2023

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level week climaxed for leaders of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Leaders Meeting. Leaders from the Pacific, Caribbean, and Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and South China Seas regions all came together, along with United Nations officials on Friday 22nd September in New York City, to outline the issues which must be urgently addressed to achieve sustainability and prosperity for SIDS.

Joining Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata’afa, Prime Minister of Samoa and AOSIS Chair, speakers included UN Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres; President of the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste, His Excellency Jose Ramos-Horta; President of the Marshall Islands; His Excellency David Kabua; President of Palau, His Excellency Surangel Whipps Jr; President of Cape Verde, His Excellency José Maria Neves; President of Seychelles, Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan; President of Kiribati, His Excellency Taneti Maamau; Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Honourable Gaston Browne; Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Honourable Ralph Gonsalves; Prime Minister of St. Kitts, Honourable Dr. Terrance Drew; Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework (UNFCCC), Mr. Simon Steill; and more.

SELECTION OF SPEAKERS’ QUOTES IS INCLUDED AT THE END OF THIS PRESS RELEASE

The exchange focused on issues such as accelerating access to finance with the implementation of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), and the severe climate change challenges which must be addressed at this year’s international climate change summit, COP28.

“Small island developing states are at the centre of a storm of global problems you have done almost nothing to create,” said the UN Secretary General. “We need global action to end these crises. Small island states do not lack ambition, they lack finance. Developed countries must deliver: honoring the promise of \$100 billion US dollars a year; replenishing the Green Climate Fund; and delivering a roadmap to double adaptation finance by 2025.”

Also of significance was a discussion on the Fourth International SIDS Conference, which will take place in May 2024 and be the platform for the international community to focus on SIDS and work with SIDS leaders to chart a new 10-year action plan to achieve development goals.

Prime Minister Mata'afa highlighted the critical need for SIDS to strengthen cooperation as their regions face escalating crises.

"As Small Island Developing States, we must acknowledge that despite our unwavering dedication, we grapple with enduring obstacles that have impeded our progress throughout the last decade," Prime Minister Mata'afa said. "Our leadership and unity are critical at this global juncture. We must leverage our collective strengths and ensure that we are treated with respect, equity and fairness as the world looks towards our collective future."

The summit concluded with the adoption of the [2023 AOSIS Leaders Declaration](#), which notes that that SIDS face unique social environmental and economic vulnerabilities and remain a special case for sustainable development, with specific needs and particular circumstances.

The Declaration outlines the collective positions of SIDS from all regions, focusing on a way forward to ensure a productive Fourth International SIDS Conference, sustainable development objectives, climate change challenges, access to finance for SIDS, safeguarding the ocean and its biodiversity, and goals to be achieved at COP28 to cope with climate change impacts.

On COP28 Outcomes, some of the Declaration calls include:

- Phasing out all inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, and ensuring peaking of global emissions before 2025 and halving them by 2030, transitioning to global net zero global emissions by 2050, with developed countries taking the lead;
- Full operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund;
- The Global Stocktake outcome at COP28 must be forward-looking and in light of equity, and the best available science;
- Developed countries must urgently deliver on their climate finance commitment of USD \$100 billion per year;
- The Global Goal on Adaptation negotiations should yield an ambitious framework to scale up progress on transformative adaptation actions, deliver swift solutions and financial support.

Among the calls on Finance are:

- The establishment of a dedicated debt treatment mechanism for SIDS to enable sound debt management;
- The early adoption of the Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) by the UN General Assembly;
- International Financial Institutions to recognize that GDP/GNI per capita is not the sole measure of a country's development;

- Enabling the Bridgetown Initiative to contribute to the reform of the global financial system in order to improve the response to the climate crisis and the particular development challenges.

[READ THE 2023 AOSIS LEADERS DECLARATION HERE](#)

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About AOSIS:

Since 1990, AOSIS has represented the interests of the 39 small island and low-lying coastal developing states in international climate change, sustainable development negotiations and processes. As a voice for the vulnerable, its mandate is more than amplifying marginalised voices as it also advocates for these countries' interests. In terms of size, AOSIS closely resembles the countries it represents on the global stage, but often punches far above its weight, negotiating historic global commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions, among other achievements.

Media Contact:

Bianca Beddoe | Communications Advisor

media@aosis.org







SELECTION OF SPEAKERS' QUOTES:

- **His Excellency David Kabua, President of the Marshall Islands:**
“There is a growing chorus of voices calling for honesty about the root of this problem: fossil fuels...Stand with those of us who have been calling for a full and urgent phase-out. The best path forward for development is not a reliance on the fossil fuels that are wreaking havoc on our countries, but a move to renewables.”
- **Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Honourable Gaston Browne:**
“At COP28, small island developing states can make good use of The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index to make the valid case for increased funding using the clear lens of vulnerability. It is a very important tool to access the Official development assistance (ODA) support we urgently need.”
- **Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Mr. Vivian Balakrishnan:**
“Enhanced data collection is critical for the development of small island developing states. We need support for the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index to enhance SIDS’ access and eligibility for concessional finance. It is critical that our islands generate our own solutions to our development and climate challenges.”
- **Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework (UNFCCC), Mr. Simon Steill:**
“As a former SIDS minister, I urge AOSIS to continue amplifying the urgent need for increased support particularly for climate change adaptation. We are lacking on adaptation. Access to concessional finance at scale is imperative. We need more than just promises. A strong political signal must be made to renew trust in the system and donors must fulfil their promise of a delivering on the \$100 billion goal.”