



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

Closing of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States

11 April 2024
Conference Room 2
3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

I have the honor to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We align these remarks with those delivered by Uganda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, allow me to express my congratulations to both of you for your astute leadership and dedicated commitment in steering the work of our Preparatory Committee to its conclusion. We also express our appreciation to your experts and to the Secretariat for their tireless efforts, support and cooperation.

We also appreciate the engagement of all of our development partners, whose flexibility, understanding and solidarity has allowed us to reach agreement on the next programme of action for SIDS, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS – a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity.

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies,

In the thirty years since the recognition of SIDS as a special case for development, our countries have faced numerous external shocks and crises that have severely constrained, or in some cases reversed, our development gains. The SIDS situation has remained largely unchanged.

For this reason, when we embarked on this process, SIDS were filled with hope and high expectations. We reiterated the importance of reaching an outcome that encapsulated the development ambitions that SIDS seek for themselves, and how the international community can assist them in a more focused and deliberate manner.

It is deeply regrettable that in many instances during the process, SIDS had been forced to compromise their own ambitions to reach agreement, often on our most pressing issues such as climate change and on the rights of local communities. Together with the G77 and China, it is also AOSIS' understanding that the agreed footnote included at the first reference of the Paris Agreement applies to all of its references throughout the document.

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies,

For SIDS, this process was not about a piece of paper or a document filled with platitudes. It was about our story: the story of our people and our resilience, and not only how we see ourselves, but how we envision our future.

So, while where we have ended is not exactly what we as SIDS have envisioned, AOSIS must stress that this is not the end of the process. This is the beginning.

The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, which we have endorsed today and will adopt at the Fourth International Conference, is the foundation on which we will continue to build on. It will underpin and guide our actions for the next decade, in a forward looking approach.

However, to ensure success, the resilient prosperity that SIDS seek will only materialize through implementation across the areas highlighted in the next Programme of Action.

Therefore, as we turn our eyes towards the Conference itself, AOSIS remains filled with hope and high expectations. We look forward to seeing the level of actions and partnerships emerging out of the Conference that can truly chart a course for the resilient prosperity of the small island and low-lying coastal developing states.

Let us send a strong message from the international community to the people in SIDS that they will not be left behind.

I thank you.