



**Statement by Nauru on behalf of
the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
AWG-LCA Opening Plenary**

Mr. Chair, Nauru has the honor to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, a grouping of 43 members most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

We wish to express our profound sympathy and condolences to the people of Haiti who recently lost friends and loved ones in Hurricane Isaac.

Our work in this working group, and within the Convention, must assume a much greater degree of urgency if we are to avert a global catastrophe.

At the outset let me unequivocally state that AOSIS will not relent in its call that all developed countries honour their moral and legal obligation to take the lead in combatting climate change. Greater ambition is required both in terms of developed country mitigation commitments and the provision of climate finance to enable developing countries mitigation actions in order to meet the below 2 degrees or 1.5 degrees temperature goals. Anything less would entail an unacceptable level of risk for small islands, whose development prospects, viability and survival depend on it. In this there is no flexibility.

AOSIS continues to believe that while our task is more urgent and difficult, it is still achievable. In 2011, global mean atmospheric CO₂-concentrations exceeded 390 ppm-CO₂, higher than any time in at least the last 800,000 years and likely 5-10 million years. Global arctic sea ice extent is currently already at a record low, below the yearly minimum sea ice level of 2007. Observations show that hot extreme temperature conditions, which covered much less than 1% of the Earth's surface between 1951-1980, now typically cover about 10% of the land area. The rate of sea-level rise has risen during the last decades, and in the last twenty years is double the rate

observed over the entire last century. Increasingly intense and more frequent extreme weather events are devastating every corner of the planet. Even the wealthiest and most powerful are no longer immune. In the US, at the end of July 2012, 64 per cent of the contiguous U.S. was experiencing moderate to exceptional drought. The ramifications of this drought are global as food prices become less affordable.

If we are honest with ourselves we would acknowledge that our collective response has not reflected the gravity and seriousness of these challenges. The gap between what is required to address this problem and what countries have pledged continues to widen and promised flows of financial resources remain unfulfilled.

We are at a major turning point in the history of mankind. Are we willing to sacrifice the most vulnerable members of the international community? This is the stark choice we face. But after the islands disappear, who will be next?

Let this context guide our work here in Bangkok and beyond. We must see our common endeavor for what it truly is – our collective responsibility to humanity – both current and future generations. We therefore believe that we must move immediately into our work in informal groups. The time for reflecting and evaluating is over. Humanity demands action and they demand it now!

I thank you.