



Statement delivered by Nauru on behalf of

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

Opening of the High Level Segment COP-18 / CMP- 8

Doha, Qatar - 5 December 2012

Thank you Mr. President.

Congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency. I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for the extraordinary hospitality you and the people of Qatar have shown during our visit to your remarkable country.

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, which represents 44 low-lying island and coastal countries around the world that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Mr. President,

With so many issues to be debated, and so many narrow interests to be satisfied at the climate negotiations, we have a tendency to lose sight of the big picture.

Too often we think about the fine details of these talks in isolation – as if somehow we can solve climate change if we only were able to make progress in one key area or another.

While this habit may provide comfort to those who for one reason or another find it too unpleasant to take the level of action required, I assure you it is of little consolation to those of us who are already suffering, and in some cases dying, due to a crisis not of our making.

Since we met last year in Durban, we have witnessed a startling increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather because of climate change. Droughts are making it harder and harder to grow crops; and coral reefs, the foundation of the marine ecosystems we rely on for food and survival, are dying before our eyes.

Unfortunately, despite 20 years of commitments to taking action, global temperatures and sea levels continue to rise alongside record greenhouse gas emissions. Prior to the start of these talks, a series of scientific reports were unambiguously clear: unless we immediately reduce emissions, we are on track for a 3-5 degree rise in temperature and an

unthinkable future.

In other words, the time for incremental progress and piecemeal solutions has long since past.

Mr. President,

I don't think it is possible to capture the essence of what we must do here in Doha in a single word, but since we live in a world that seems to thrive on sound-bites, I will try: Ambition.

Our task this week is to increase the ambition in every track of these negotiations.

The harsh reality is that anything less will not suffice. The positions AOSIS has taken here are based on the agreement we reached in Durban and derive from an indisputable fact: unless we commence ambitious action across all areas of the negotiations some of us will not make it to the end of the century.

If that seems too "hardline" for you – please - show me on a map which of our countries you think are expendable.

Mr. President, the solutions we have proposed take a practical approach to the problem we face.

Our position on the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, for example, is not arbitrary; it is the legal embodiment of the ambition we know is required: higher QELROS, a 5-year obligation period, no freeloading in the flexibility mechanisms, and provisional application to maintain legal accountability from the first day of 2013, which after all is our only assurance action will be taken.

As far as raising short-term ambition, we have submitted a common sense approach that would bring countries together over the next year to identify the actions they can take to lower their emissions. If there are obstacles to doing so, we can discuss how they might be overcome – a truly collaborative effort to find solutions that will benefit the global community.

And, of course, poor countries will not be able to take the kind of action we know is needed without the mobilization of finance, technology, and capacity building from the developed world. Many of us have taken ambitious pledges to build renewable energy systems – we want to achieve them – all we need now is sufficient means of implementation to get the job done.

Finally, many small islands and other vulnerable countries have been left to shoulder the costs of climate impacts that are already occurring and will now be impossible to avoid— as the typhoon that recently struck Palau and is now battering the Philippines makes abundantly clear.

We have therefore called for the establishment of an international mechanism that will

protect communities against losses and damages suffered when mitigation and adaptation efforts fall short.

To be honest, I didn't expect I would be able to point to key progress made this early in the week, but I was encouraged by the discussion we had yesterday on the AOSIS plan on enhancing mitigation ambition under the ADP. No one here disputes we all have to do more.

Our plan provides an opportunity to do something we don't seem to do enough of at these negotiations: Talk about how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We have a long two days ahead of us; let's get to work. Thank you.