

Statement by Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States at the Opening of
the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action
Bonn, Germany

19 October 2015 Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies, Colleagues,

The Maldives has the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, a coalition of 44 coastal and low-lying islands states that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Co-Chairs,

Let me begin by thanking you for producing a concise draft agreement in time for us to review it carefully before today's meeting. AOSIS is prepared to proceed as agreed, but the text does not contain a number of essential elements needed to meet our group's concerns and set the world on track to avert the worst impacts of climate change.

The Convention explicitly recognizes the particular needs and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States. Yet, the Co-Chairs' Non-Paper would write SIDS out of such recognition. This is both perplexing—and unacceptable.

In what has become a grim routine for this process, we begin these talks as yet another devastating storm churns over the Philippines. One of our members - the Bahamas – will now be forced to rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricane Joaquin, which battered the islands for 3 days, washing away scores of homes and flooding countless acres of agricultural land with salt water, caused at least \$60 million USD in damage. Earlier this year, Cyclone Pam and Typhoon Maysak, left a trail of destruction across Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, and the Federated States of Micronesia with record-breaking tropical storms.

Meanwhile, and for only the third time in recorded history, an extensive coral bleaching event that spans our membership – from the Pacific to the Caribbean to Africa and the Indian Ocean — is now underway and could result in the loss up to 5% of the world's reefs this year alone. Powerful storms, more frequent and intense flooding and droughts, the loss of ocean habitats that form the foundation of our marine-based tourism industries, and other climate impacts are eroding the fabric of our economies and societies.

Co-Chairs,

The principles and provisions of the Convention are the bedrock of our work and must be honored if we are to reach agreement on issues that have life and death consequences for our members. The particular vulnerability of small island developing

States has long been recognized in this process and our needs and concerns must continue to be both recognized and addressed explicitly in our negotiating text.

First, based on the report of the Structured Expert Dialogue on the 2013-2015 Review of the long term goal, our existing long term global goal must now be strengthened to below 1.5 degrees. The report of the SED indicates that significant climate impacts are already occurring at the current level of global warming and additional levels of warming will only increase the risk of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts. We have the evidence base needed to enhance the global goal to below 1.5 degrees and the Co-Chairs' text must reflect this reality through a clear option of a below 1.5 degree goal.

Second, the Paris agreement must establish medium and long-term emission reduction pathways that are capable of delivering a limitation of temperature increases consistent with this strengthened below 1.5 degree goal.

Third, the agreement must demand ambitious performance from Parties through internationally legally binding, quantified mitigation commitments that increase global ambition over successive commitment cycles.

Fourth, the agreement must substantially enhance the ability of SIDS and other countries to contribute meaningfully to emission reductions, and to respond to the impacts of climate change through substantially scaled up means of implementation. In 2009, developed countries pledged in Copenhagen to provide at least USD\$100 billion a year by 2020 to help developing countries meet the cost of adaptation and mitigation. This commitment must be honored and form the floor for financial support going forward. In the context of adaptation, to be responsive to the needs of SIDS and LDCs, this financial support must be primarily grant-based.

Fifth, the Paris agreement must now secure an international mechanism to address loss and damage as part of our permanent climate architecture. This mechanism must be mandated to develop approaches to address irreversible and permanent loss and damage resulting from human-induced climate change and to report back to the CMA possible solutions within a defined time frame. While loss and damage rightfully has a place as a separate Article of the Co-Chairs' text, that Article must now be populated with appropriate language that does not look to voluntary support or humanitarian assistance as an answer, as the Co-Chairs have proposed.

Finally, Workstream 2 under the ADP has already produced a useful set of good practices and policy options for ramping up ambition in the pre-2020 period. The Paris outcome should build upon these successes through a decision that strengthens ongoing efforts to scale up voluntary multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation under Workstream 2. The appointment of two high-level champions, supported by an expert team, can improve a link between technical and political discussions, to galvanize

support for ambitious, near-term action. Workstream 2 is not an academic exercise. It must be about implementation.

Co Chairs

The time for talk is vanishing rapidly, and the key components of the climate treaty we need to avert a global calamity are not yet in plain view.

As the countries most vulnerable to climate change, SIDS are acutely aware that a weak deal in Paris could well be a far worse outcome than no deal at all. We encourage you in your work this week to ensure that the concerns of SIDS remain utmost in your minds and find appropriate reflection in our negotiating text for Paris.

Thank you.