

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
Paris

29 November 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.

Let me begin by thanking you for your hard work over the course of the year. We have accomplished much together and we look forward to completing our journey here with a fair and effective agreement that meets the interests of all parties.

Co-Chairs,

At nearly every meeting this year, since we first gathered in Geneva, these negotiations have opened in the aftermath of record and sometimes deadly extreme weather events around the world. Our membership has been struck by deadly typhoons in the Pacific, Hurricanes in the Caribbean, record tides and floods off the coast of Africa and in the Indian Ocean. Climate change is here and it is getting worse.

What's more, the latest science confirms what we are seeing with our own eyes: The World Meteorological Organization reports that 2011-2015 has been the warmest five-year period on record and this year is on track to be the hottest ever. It also found that in 2014, sea level rise accelerated (3 millimeters) per year on average worldwide. This is around double the average annual rise of 1.6 mm in the 20th century.

Co-Chairs,

We must always be mindful that 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 Convention explicitly recognizes the particular needs and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States and the new agreement must maintain this status in order to ensure our protection.

Co-Chairs,

For AOSIS, the Paris Agreement must be a balanced package that includes meaningful outcomes on all of the pillars of our mandate from Durban - mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, transparency of action and support, and capacity-building – as well as loss and damage as a separate and distinct issue. In particular, we emphasise the following priorities:

First, 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 below 1.5-degree goal. The Agreement must demand ambitious performance from Parties through internationally legally binding, quantified mitigation commitments that increase global ambition over successive commitment cycles.

Second, in terms of finance, tackling climate change and adapting to its impacts will require significantly scaled-up, new, additional and predictable financial resources, starting from a base of \$100 billion USD per year by 2020, with provisions to enhance SIDS access especially to public, grant-based support for adaptation, given our unique challenges and the existential threat that climate change poses to us.

Third, AOSIS welcomes the treatment of Loss and Damage as a standalone article in the draft agreement, particularly since it was not initially referenced. However, it must be articulated in an actionable form. Parties should recognise the need to address Loss and Damage associated with climate change and establish a process or system that is actually capable of doing so. In this regard, the approach proposed by the G77 and China accomplishes these objectives.

AOSIS emphasises the role of the Convention in promoting the implementation of approaches to address Loss and Damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, which should include, *inter alia*:

- (a) Enhancing knowledge and understanding of comprehensive risk management approaches to address Loss and Damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including slow onset impacts;
- (b) Strengthening dialogue, coordination, coherence and synergies among relevant stakeholders;
- (c) Enhancing action and support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, to address Loss and Damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.

We look forward to engaging with Parties on this critical issue in the same spirit of the progress that we have made, thus far.

Finally, avoiding the worst impacts of climate change requires us to rapidly scale up and implement solutions in the near term. We believe Workstream 2 under the ADP, which focuses on pre-2020 ambition, has already produced a useful set of good practices and policy options for ramping up ambition. The Paris agreement should include a decision that strengthens the ongoing efforts to scale up voluntary multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation under Workstream 2. In particular, the link between the technical and political levels should be improved, so AOSIS has called for the appointment of two high-level champions, supported by an expert team, to provide overall political guidance to the line of discussions. Workstream 2 is not an academic exercise. It must be about implementation.

This meeting must be a turning point - our generation's last best opportunity to meet the climate change challenge and accelerate the urgent transition to resilient, low-carbon societies. It is imperative that we do what is necessary, not just what is politically expedient.

Thank you.