

Statement by Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) under Agenda Item 20: Sustainable Development at the Second Committee

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Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

Agenda Item 20: Sustainable Development

19 October 2015

Distinguished Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Let me begin by aligning ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished representative of South Africa on behalf of G77 and China.

2. We would like to firstly register our appreciation to the Secretary General for his reports, on this very important subject.

Mr. Chairman,

3. We cannot overemphasise the importance of development that has to be sustainable: development that takes into account in a balanced and integrated manner, the economic, social and environmental dimensions. One of the landmark decisions of this year is the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), which recognized that sustainable development is about eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combatting inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion. It further recognizes that they are all linked to each other and are interdependent.

4. The 2030 Agenda is a milestone document that will undoubtedly shape our development path for the next 15 years. Our discussion today is critical to understand the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We, the small island developing states, had raised our voice, expressed our concerns throughout the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. And now is the time to put words into action.

5. We have always maintained that the SAMOA Pathway is our departure point for all SIDS related issues. The implementation of the outcomes of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda need to be streamlined with commitments made under the SAMOA Pathway for any, or all of the processes to be successful. Of vital importance is the accelerating progress on the unfinished MDGs, including the yet unachieved Goal of Environmental Sustainability.

6. Being ably equipped with the SAMOA Pathway, SIDS were able to constructively participate in the highly important conferences thus far this year, namely the Sendai Conference on Disaster Risk Management, the Addis Ababa conference on financing for development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We greatly look forward to the 21st Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC, where we shall constructively contribute to the establishment of a legally binding instrument under the UNFCCC that is applicable to all, which will call for lowering emission levels, adaptation, mitigation and climate financing.

Mr Chair,

7. This year, we look forward to further putting into action, the commitments made to SIDS in the SAMOA Pathway. Last year, we launched a comprehensive review of the United Nations (UN) system support to SIDS, in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of such support, and to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach by the UN system. The aim of this review is to further improve and strengthen the overall effectiveness and delivery of support for SIDS. We look forward to receive the complete report before the end of the seventieth session, so that the special case of SIDS would not only be articulated in words but also reaffirmed in action.

8. This year, we also look forward to launching the Partnership Framework, as articulated in paragraph 101 of the SAMOA Pathway. One of the key takeaways of the Third International Conference on SIDS was the need for genuine and durable partnerships as a key means of implementing the sustainable development priorities of SIDS. The Partnership Framework is envisaged to follow up and review the more than 300 partnerships that were announced in Samoa last year, as well as to seek and encourage new partnerships. And we hope that this key component of the SAMOA Pathway will be realized and operationalized this session.

Mr Chair,

9. For SIDS to realize any agenda on sustainable development, the matters of climate change must be addressed. Climate change is the greatest hindrance to our sustainable development, and for some an existential threat. This is why the SIDS have been consistent in their call for a strong legally binding climate agreement in Paris under the UNFCCC that is applicable to all, which seeks to keep the increase in the global average temperature below 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. Ambitious action is needed, and needed fast!

10. Recent disasters in the Commonwealths of Dominica and the Bahamas, and earlier this year in Vanuatu, Micronesia and other Pacific countries, clearly highlight our extreme vulnerability to disasters. Disasters clearly affect SIDS disproportionately, and we continue to grapple with the effects of disasters, some of which have increased in intensity, and some of which have been exacerbated by climate change. Therefore, as pointed out in the 2030 Agenda, there is a critical need to build resilience, strengthen monitoring and prevention, reduce vulnerability, raise awareness and increase preparedness to respond to and recover from disasters.

11. Additionally, we further highlight the need to find alternative measures to measure development that better suits the particularities of SIDS.

Mr Chair,

12. The Secretary General's report on Agenda 21 has stated the key role HLPF will play in ensuring coherence between all follow up and review processes, including that of the SAMOA Pathway. The need to ensure coherence between the follow up processes of the 2030 Agenda and the Programmes of Action for countries in special situations was further iterated in paragraph 82.

13. The SIDS have engaged actively in this year's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) session. We welcomed that this year we had a dedicated session of the HLPF to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. This was an important session, as it gave us the opportunity to reflect on the key implementation challenges to the SAMOA Pathway, as well as the ways in which SIDS priorities will be ensured in the 2030 Agenda. We urge that the HLPF continue devoting time to the implementation of SIDS priorities, and the follow up and review of the SAMOA Pathway.

Mr. Chairman,

14. AOSIS remains committed to working with the international community to ensure that the commitments made are realized, in our quest to achieve sustainable development.

I thank you.