



**Statement by the Republic of Maldives
on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States
at the 48th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission**

7 March 2017

Madame Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. Madame Chair, at the outset we wish to extend through you our thanks and appreciation to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals (IAEG-SDGs) for its continued hard work building the global indicator framework in close and constructive collaboration with member states across all regions. The indicators will play a key role in helping to track progress on the ambitious goals we set for ourselves in the 2030 Agenda.

3. We take note of this year's report of the IAEG and the group's progress in 2016. We appreciate the indicators becoming increasingly clear and measurable. We appreciate that the IAEG agreed on a mechanism for updating the classification of the indicators as it is necessary to embrace an attitude of continual refinement towards the indicators, particularly based on feedback from national statistical offices. We also welcome that the report made mention of the HL Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for Statistics. We look forward to seeing outcomes of this group's work as its name suggests that it is working on many of the items most important to SIDS including coordinated capacity building, as well as partnerships. At multiple points the report recognizes the need to improve national statistical capacities and we urge follow up on this point.

4. We would also like to specifically note the global indicator framework, a critical part of the 2030 Agenda's follow-up and review process. The framework is only one of many components to the follow up and review process of the 2030 Agenda and it will continue to evolve. We hope to see the promised flexibility, enabling the framework to reflect changing circumstances, emerging issues and methodologies. There is significant room for improvement in many of the indicators, and thus the framework should remain open to adapting as we enhance our capacities and knowledge, but we need to start somewhere.

5. Therefore, we agree with the assessment of the UN Statistical Commission to adopt the framework. With target deadlines quickly approaching, some in 2020, it will be useful to

start putting the framework into practice. That said, many SIDS continue to lack the capacity to collect and analyse the data needed for the indicators and many even lack the baseline data. It is our hope that in moving forward with the Framework the specific needs of SIDS and other developing countries will be addressed by realizing the (long promised) coordinated capacity building support to national statistical offices and agencies.

6. It needs to be very clear how states can report back to the UNSC and other appropriate agencies with regard to what assistance they require and also with suggestions for improving the framework once it is put into practice. The inclusive representation of countries in special situations, which *span* the spectrum of statistical capacities, in each stage of implementation moving forward is vital. Every country will decide for themselves how to include the global goals and targets, along with the indicators, into their national plans and policies as national ownership remains a cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda, and the role of the UNSC and other partners is to enable and support the success of this process.

7. When it comes to applying the framework locally, we again emphasize the obstacles SIDS face and needs for capacity building: this ranges from a lack of human and financial resources, technical infrastructure, connectivity concerns, and the need to upgrade data collection and analysis capabilities, particularly for data segregation. We note with appreciation, the recognition of many of these issues in the report and urge that rhetorical commitments to provide coordinated resources and support from different UN programs and donor partners come to fruition. The initiatives already underway on this front are very much appreciated as SIDS continue to pursue strengthened local, national, regional and global improvements to our statistical systems. Our objective is to have the capacity to produce and use the data, with flexibility for national circumstances and priorities.

8. SIDS, as well as many other countries, value local and non-traditional methods of data collection and data. To reflect this diversity, capacity building cannot be generic, but built through genuine outreach. As we look to learn from the UNSC, we encourage other countries to learn from and accommodate the methodologies already available within SIDS.

9. Efforts to standardize data must consider the special circumstances of SIDS as well, because due to our relative small size and remote locations, we are often not included within existing data collections. Inclusiveness is important to ensure that we have a comprehensive and accurate picture in guiding the way forward.

10. Many indicators have already made inclusive steps to account for SIDS, and we encourage this to continue. We welcome new perspectives and best practices that could be applied to SIDS to further our development and integration of the framework into national plans and strategies.

11. I end this statement with a short note on the last steps of this indicator process - the reporting. As outlined in the 2030 Agenda, it is crucial that we avoid increasing the reporting burden on small states, something accounted for in the framework and we encourage realization of this commitment. We aim to avoid duplicative, unclear and unproductive reporting processes.

12. Madame Chair, you and the Commission can continue to count on SIDS as a constructive partner and we look forward to working with you closely as the Indicator Framework is rolled out.