



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

Presentation of the elements paper for the ministerial declaration of the 2025 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF).

28 March 2025
Conference Room 4
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Distinguished Co-facilitators,

I have the honour to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

AOSIS aligns with the statement delivered by Iraq, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, AOSIS expresses our appreciation for the substantive elements paper, which we believe provide a good basis for constructive discussions on the declaration. Of course, we understand that the elements paper is not intended to be a zero draft, but a guiding document.

Distinguished Co-facilitators,

First, AOSIS welcomes that the declaration will utilize the format of previous HLPF Ministerial Declarations, with priority focus given to the specific goals under review. This format will allow us to structure the document logically, beginning with the principles that underpin our efforts and the overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda. This should include eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, as well as reaffirming climate change as one of the greatest challenges of our time.

On the first section, bearing in mind the role of the HLPF in reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, AOSIS would propose that focus should be placed on the interconnectedness of the three dimensions of sustainable development- economic, social and environmental, instead of the three pillars of the United Nations. The latter would introduce new elements, such as international peace and security, which sit outside the scope of the Forum.

Similarly, AOSIS would be grateful for more clarity on the element regarding creating synergies with the upcoming outcome documents for FFD4, the Ocean Conference and the World Summit for Social Development. As these negotiations are on separate tracks, it is important that our negotiations on the declaration does not preempt any of the outcomes of each of those processes, two of which are at an advanced stage.

On Section II, AOSIS welcomes the integration of the recognition of the needs of countries in special situations, which has featured in every declaration to date. Small Island Developing States are recognised as a special case for sustainable development, including most recently in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS. Our inherent vulnerabilities highlight the need for special, targeted assistance.

AOSIS also reiterates the call on States, as reflected in the 2030 Agenda, to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

We also welcome the reference to urgent and ambitious climate action. However, such action should be in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement. Further, efforts should cover climate mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and the means of implementation, including financing to developing countries, especially those particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as SIDS.

Lastly, on the issue of the interlinkages among the SDGs, we believe we should avoid the practice of only highlighting the linkages between the goals under review. For instance, achieving SDG 3 also requires addressing SDG 1 and SDG 2 on poverty and hunger, respectively. Recognizing the interconnected nature of all the SDGs, their interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs is more practical, rather than engaging in a debate on which SDGs are relevant to each other.

On Section III, Goals under in-depth review, AOSIS would encourage that the reviews on the SDGs reflect the trends and gaps on specific targets, followed with a specific suite of actions to accelerate implementation.

Under SDG 3, we welcome the inclusion of key elements, such as international cooperation in the health sector, building resilient health infrastructure and addressing mental health issues. AOSIS would reiterate that the Ministerial Declaration should also lend focus to the addressing the high burden of non-communicable diseases in developing countries.

Under SDG 8, AOSIS wishes to reiterate that the elements under this goal should focus on promoting economic growth and full and productive employment. We believe that elements regarding economic diversification, promoting productive capacities, preventing “brain drain”, and leveraging non-traditional sectors, such as the creative economy, are valuable elements that can accelerate progress under this goal.

On SDG 14, the Declaration should also reaffirm the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as a legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources. AOSIS also welcomes the recognition that this goal remains the least financed. In this regard, accelerating ocean action requires new, additional and predictable means of implementation, in particular accessible and highly concessional finance, especially for SIDS.

On SDG 17, AOSIS wishes to reiterate that without the means of implementation, the SDGs will remain out of reach. We welcome many of the elements reflected in the paper, some of which can be further strengthened and elaborated. For example, we would propose a reference to the adoption of resolution 78/322 of 13 August 2024 on the multidimensional vulnerability index and call for the full and effective implementation of its mandate.

Lastly, on the issue of domestic resource mobilization, AOSIS recognizes this as an important element of financing. However, we would urge caution on its categorization as the most sustainable source of financing for development, which is not an agreed view.

On the section regarding the voluntary national reviews, AOSIS will also be grateful for the co-facilitators clarification on the term “territorial priorities and needs”. We are not familiar with it or its meaning in this context, and it can be misinterpreted in a manner that is inconsistent with established international law and agreed frameworks.

In conclusion, **Distinguished Co-Facilitators**, AOSIS looks forward to receiving the zero draft of the declaration and working in a constructive manner with you and all delegations. We will provide specific suggestions during the line-by-line text-based negotiations as we move forward.

Once more, it is our hope that the outcome of this process will result in a focused and action-oriented Ministerial Declaration, reflecting the international community’s resolute commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind.

You can count on AOSIS’ full constructive engagement and cooperation towards this end.

Thank you.