



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

First Meeting on the intergovernmental negotiations of 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).

6 March 2025
Economic and Social Council Chamber
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, and wishes to provide the following additional views that are specific to small island developing states (SIDS).

At the outset, allow me to express our congratulations on your appointment as co-facilitators of this important process. We are particularly pleased to see a fellow small island developing state steering our negotiations once more, and you can count on AOSIS' usual support and cooperation.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

First, AOSIS believes that the Ministerial Declaration should be concise and action-oriented. It should utilize the format of previous HLPF Ministerial Declarations, with priority focus given to the specific goals under review, their interplay with other sustainable development goals, and concrete measures to accelerate their implementation.

Second, the Declaration should reaffirm our recognition of SIDS as a special case for sustainable development, including their unique challenges and needs stemming from their special circumstances. As such, it is important that the HLPF Ministerial Declaration provides a strong message of support to SIDS, and we request the retention of last year's standalone paragraph on the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) as a basis for our discussions.

Third, poverty remains a core issue to small island developing states. The compounding impacts of climate change, disasters and economic shocks, combined with our inherent challenges, continue to constrain, and in many cases reverse, our progress to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. Therefore, we must retain a strong commitment to the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda in the Declaration.

At the same time, climate change remains one of our greatest challenges. While SIDS contribute less than one per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, we bear the brunt of its impact. As such, addressing this crisis lies at the very center of our sustainable development challenges, and therefore our actions must be framed within this urgent context.

Lastly, AOSIS' unwavering commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law is matter of record. We, therefore, reiterate the call, as stated in the 2030 Agenda, for the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures.

On the goals under review, **Distinguished Co-facilitators**, AOSIS remains concerned that the uncertain global landscape and its related shocks continue to negatively impact SIDS and our ability to achieve the SDGs.

In this regard, the Ministerial Declaration should advance the achievement of universal health coverage and enhance the prevention, preparedness and response to health emergencies, including climate change-related health impacts. SIDS need greater action to build resilient health infrastructure, address mental health issues, and reduce non-communicable diseases.

On SDG5, the Declaration should lend more focus on ensuring the protection of women and girls from violence, increasing women's leadership, and investing in youth policies and programmes that address academic underperformance, especially of boys in school.

The global economic and financial landscape continues to pose a significant challenge for our economies. Therefore, AOSIS will welcome actions on improving economic growth and job creation in SIDS through economic diversification, promoting productive capacities, preventing "brain drain", and leveraging non-traditional sectors, such as the creative economy.

The High-level Political Forum must also build on the momentum and commitments stemming from the Third UN Ocean Conference with effective actions to restore, conserve and sustain our marine ecosystems. As negotiations on the Conference's outcome are ongoing, AOSIS would propose using placeholders for the paragraphs related to SDG14 in the HLPF Ministerial Declaration, pending finalization of the Declaration of the Ocean Conference.

Lastly, AOSIS underscores the importance of including strong language that focuses on long-term and comprehensive solutions that accelerate the means of implementation by creating more fiscal space and promoting technical assistance, technology transfer and capacity building in SIDS. This includes the use of the multidimensional vulnerability index to inform access and allocation decisions, reform of international financial architecture, and the inclusion of SIDS in international financial governance decision making.

In closing, **Distinguished Co-Facilitators**, AOSIS looks forward to working on the draft declaration in a constructive manner to ensure that we address the challenges that lie before us. We are confident that the international community can find common ground to reach agreement, once sufficient time and space is allowed for the full ventilation of views and opinions by Member States.

We were particularly pleased with last year's process, which allowed for line-by-line text-based negotiations that were inclusive, transparent and engaging. This provided an opportunity for all delegations, including smaller delegations such as ours, to participate fully and effectively. AOSIS would therefore request the use of this "best practice".

As we work towards a focused and action-oriented Ministerial Declaration, it is our hope that the outcome of this process represents a resolute and unwavering pathway to achieve the SDGs everywhere. Again, please count on AOSIS' constructive engagement and cooperation towards this end.

I thank you.