



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

General comments on the zero draft 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)

5 May 2025
Conference Room 2
10:00 am- 1:00 p.m.

Distinguished Co-Facilitators,

I have the honor to deliver the following statement 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 presentation of the zero draft of the Ministerial Declaration. We recognize your efforts to reflect a wide range of views and priorities expressed during the last meeting and believes that the draft provides a good basis for our forthcoming negotiations.

Distinguished Co-Facilitators,

AOSIS is grateful that several points previously highlighted in our comments on the elements paper have been reflected in the draft.

On the first section, bearing in mind the role of the HLPF in reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, AOSIS proposes that the declaration begin with a reaffirmation of our commitment envisioned in the Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing the urgency to act to realize its vision. We welcome the reaffirmation that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions remains the overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

AOSIS also welcomes the reference to climate change as one of the greatest challenges of our time. However, we propose that this reference be moved up to this section, as was the case in

last year's Ministerial Declaration, since the adverse impacts of climate change undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development. We also stress that climate action should be in line with both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement, and should address mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and the provision of means of implementation, including financing to developing countries, especially those particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, such as SIDS.

Lastly, AOSIS 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.

On Section II, AOSIS welcomes the recognition of the special challenges faced by countries in special situations, including SIDS, who remain a special case for sustainable development. Regarding the programmes of action for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, we welcome the reference to the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Islands Developing States and propose that each programme of action be addressed in a separate paragraph to highlight the challenges and needs of each group. In this context, we urge timely action to ensure that ABAS is fully and effectively implemented, with monitoring, follow-up and review.

On the issue of the interlinkages among the SDGs, AOSIS supports the recognition of the interconnected nature of all the SDGs, and not just those under in-depth review.

First, On Section III, with respect to the goals under in-depth review, we appreciate the reflection of several points advocated by AOSIS and would like to elaborate further on the following:

SDG3, while we welcome the reference to non-communicable diseases, we propose addressing this issue in a standalone paragraph that focuses on the need to assist developing countries to address the high burden of NCDs on achieving sustainable development.

Under SDG8, AOSIS generally supports the elements presented and will suggest that some paragraphs, in particular 35 and 41, could benefit from further refinement to ensure alignment with the SDGs. Additionally, regarding the term “cultural and creative economy”, we are not familiar with it and propose a slight amendment to “culture and creative economy” for clarity.

Under SDG14, AOSIS proposes beginning the section by reaffirming our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use and manage the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and to act decisively and urgently, scaling up ocean action in order to accelerate implementation of all targets of SDG14 as was done in the 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration, when the Goal was last reviewed in depth.

We strongly welcome the reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as the legal framework for ocean governance. However, AOSIS would prefer to not only recognize that this Goal remains the least financed of all the SDGs, but to ***express our deep concern*** in this regard, and to ***welcome*** the adoption of the BBNJ and encourage States to sign, and ratify, approve, and accept and accede the Agreement to ***ensure*** its early entry into force.

Further, we propose a reference to the need to increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.

Under SDG17, AOSIS strongly supports the reference to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 78/322 on the multidimensional vulnerability index and the clear call for the full and effective implementation of its mandate. This remains a longstanding priority for AOSIS.

We welcome the reference to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and propose to highlight that the AAAA is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda.

On the section regarding the voluntary national reviews, AOSIS urges caution against being overly descriptive about nature of each country's VNR. While we believe that there should be greater support for developing countries in the preparation of their VNRs, national ownership is central to the VNR process, and we should ensure that any recommendations respect this principle.

In conclusion, **Distinguished Co-Facilitators**, we once again thank you for laying a solid foundation for our forthcoming negotiations.

AOSIS remains fully committed to working constructively, through the Group of 77, in the hope of delivering a focused and action-oriented Ministerial Declaration; a Declaration that reaffirms our collective commitment to achieve sustainable development and the vision of the 2030 Agenda to ensure that no one is left behind.

You can continue to count on AOSIS's full engagement and cooperation.

Thank you.