



**Statement by the Republic of Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States**

**High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the Auspices of ECOSOC  
ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review**

**7 July 2015**

**General Debate**

Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of South Africa, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. Since the decision to establish a universal, intergovernmental high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was taken at Rio+20, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have been fully engaged in the process, as this is of critical importance to us, especially since the HLFP is mandated to build on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission.
3. As we indicated during last week's segment, one of the key important strengths of the CSD was its role as the "sole forum to review the implementation of the outcomes of global conferences on Small Island Developing States". We see the HLFP continuing along this path by devoting adequate time to discuss the sustainable development challenges facing SIDS.
4. What do we mean by adequate time? Firstly, there must be **focus within the programme** for the consideration of the special challenges faced by SIDS, and the urgent solutions required to address these. SIDS are not only on the frontlines for natural disasters or the imminent threats posed by climate change. Challenges associated with our small size, narrow resource based, inability to achieve markets of scale, isolation and distance to markets, limited negotiating capacity are all challenges associated with our unique geography that must be addressed.
5. We were encouraged by not only the inclusion of the discussion on the SAMOA

Pathway on 1 July, on “translating vision into action”, but also by the deep interactive dialogue and the expressions of commitments to SIDS development, by partners and other stakeholders. As noted by several of the Panellists and lead discussants, SIDS remain a special case due to the very specific challenges facing them, which can easily erode all advances made in the passing of an economic, or environmental shock. This is why SIDS worked hard and dedicated so much, to the success of the SAMOA Pathway, which we are equally devoted to making a reality, so that not only no SIDS would be left behind, but no person in SIDS will be left behind.

6. Secondly, we are of the strong conviction that the HLPF must **not become a “talk shop” or a forum to “name and shame”** countries, but one that would provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels and have a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges, as in keeping with its mandate. SIDS have therefore called for the need for “peer-learning” within the HLPF, towards our common goal of poverty eradication through sustainable development.
7. The HLPF must be focused on **translating discussions in action**, policy impact and implementation through the UN system. There are copious lessons to be learnt from the CSD, and therefore we are extremely lucky and fortunate that the wheel does not need to be reinvented, but can be built upon.
8. The HLPF although positioned to be a vast repository of information on sustainable development indicators, must not only collect data, but must ensure its access to stakeholders as well as analyse the information gathered, and facilitate and be visionary to improving mechanisms, which will enhance this mandate. It is expected that the work of the HLPF will be extensive and will require significant resources, planning and implementation.
9. Keeping in mind, this enormous task, it is of paramount importance to ensure greater focus on **capacity building**, to ensure that countries are provided adequate policy-space and support to effectively participate and report on their development targets. Most importantly for purposes of review and followup, this includes capacity building towards data analysis and data collection, a much-needed requirement in SIDS. Special efforts have to be made to ensure that countries, especially developing ones, are not overburdened with reporting, creating reporting fatigue and disincentivising small nations to report.

10. Throughout last week's discussions, it was made abundantly clear that **no goal or target is separate**, that there are close inter-linkages across the goals and targets, that no one goal or target is more important or of higher priority than another, and that if we are to achieve the ambitious agenda before us, we must all own this process and commit to do our part, according to our means. We have to commit to work together in a bottom-up approach, engaging the poorest and the marginalized. We must commit to ensuring that everyone is brought to the table to be heard and contribute to the process.
11. We reiterate that adequate care must be taken to ensure **coherence and the necessary linkages**, with due respect for the separate mandates and scopes of the various processes, and noting that coherence does not and cannot mean one-size-fits-all. A coordinated and collaborative mechanism should be established to synergise the national, regional and universal reporting and reports to amplify the success stories and lessons and to review the constraints and externalities. The design of the review and follow-up should therefore take into account these very practical concerns for countries such as SIDS, and must be constructive and not be an opportunity to "name and shame".
12. We must continue to ask ourselves, how do we address and coordinate targets that do not have formalized platforms or mechanisms? How do we engage all stakeholders? Are there to be guidelines and rules binding the private sector to good conduct in relations to the sustainable development agenda? How do we keep everyone engaged and committed to this process, from the person in the street to the Governments and the international community?
13. Lastly, SIDS strongly believe that the HLPF must have agendas that are flexible and not rigid allowing it to be able to address emerging issues, and provide the appropriate guidance. It must maintain a bottom-up approach, be people-centered, and not only direct business from New York and from within these walls.

I thank you.