



**Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States
at the High Level International Conference on International
Decade for Action
“Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028**

19 June 2018

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Dear Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

I would like to begin by thanking Tajikistan for hosting this High-Level Conference on the International Decade of Water for Sustainable Development – we are grateful for the opportunity to participate and share our views. I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and align with the intervention from the Group of 77 and China.

The challenges on this vast issue continue to grow. The United Nations Secretary General has noted in his report on the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals that: “unsafe drinking water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene continue to be large contributors to global mortality,” and that “water scarcity, flooding, and lack of proper management of wastewater hinder social and economic development.” Countries also continue to report insufficient financing to meet the WASH targets.

Water is a central priority for small island developing States (SIDS). Our water systems face numerous vulnerabilities, many of which are posed by and intensified due to climate change. Many SIDS simultaneously face drought and flooding due to changing rainfall patterns, as well as saltwater intrusion into limited groundwater sources, which is linked to sea level rise, flooding, and natural disasters. Our oceans and seas play a vital role in the water cycle and the climate system, and therefore threats to ocean sustainability can further erode our water systems, further hurting water supplies.

These issues, as well as several others, are cited by our recent agendas and frameworks as key priorities and carry with them commitments and deadlines for action. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda, the SAMOA Pathway, and others speak to the necessity of water for all aspects of modern life and therefore the necessity of water to achieving sustainable development. It is important to highlight the interlinkages and synergies between all of these agendas in order to help us move beyond our traditional silos of work. As water demands continue to grow, it will be important to both increase water efficiency and improve sustainable water management.

We cannot overstate the importance of moving forward with the action plan for the Decade of Water, as without the realisation of means of implementation and other methods of support, it will increasingly be difficult for many countries to achieve progress towards the sustainability of water resources, including the specific targets outlined in SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation.

For SIDS, our limited financial, human and physical resources, remoteness, and dispersed populations hinder our efforts, alongside the growing impacts of climate change and increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters. We continue to seek increased capacity building for data collection and analysis to first develop baseline data, and then to support the development of evidence-based policy and monitoring processes. Improvements in data capacity, however, require increased knowledge sharing and training, and access to technology and funding.

This need for capacity building in SIDS, supported by knowledge sharing, access to best practices, technology, and funding, is why we created the SIDS Partnership Framework. It exists to ease the creation of and provide support to partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society, to help address our many shared challenges while also highlighting our many areas of experience and success. We encourage new engagements and partnerships, and welcome opportunities such as this conference as

a space to not only speak to our ongoing challenges, but also our areas of expertise.

The realisation of the goals and aspirations of the 2030 Agenda require our collective efforts, especially to ensure that no person, and no country is left behind. The agreement for new decade on water confirms our collective desire to see improvements around water accessibility and sustainability. So, let us take bigger steps forward and engage more actively so that by 2028 we can report on our progress, rather than our failures.

I thank you.