



**Statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) at the
Briefing by the Secretary-General on his priorities for 2023
6 February 2023, New York**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and to align with the statement delivered by the Distinguished Permanent Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President,

AOSIS thanks you for convening this meeting so that the Secretary-General could provide us with his annual briefing on his priorities for the year ahead, and through you we wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his briefing and for his continued efforts to help steer this august Organization to respond to our current crises and challenges, which if faced frontally and together, can be surmountable.

We are especially thankful that you, Mr. Secretary-General, have been a strong and consistent advocate for SIDS and recognize our unique and special challenges. You have not only advocated for us, but you have also personally spearheaded and contributed to several initiatives in an effort to keep SIDS on the forefront of responses.

We are heartened to hear several of our key issues remain front and center on your priorities for this year. SIDS priorities remain centered around three pillars, namely Climate Change, Sustainable Development and Oceans, targeting specific areas of focus to deliver tangible results on the ground.

In August 2024, we will convene the 4th UN Conference for SIDS, and as you are aware we have already begun the initial preparatory process in an effort to ensure, firstly, that we have a successful close off of the SAMOA Pathway, which will guide us to a more focused and targeted development blueprint to move us forward in a Post-SAMOA Pathway. Here having a whole of UN approach to the reporting of the SAMOA Pathway, especially in the pooling of data and its analysis is critically needed.

As SIDS continue to grapple with:

1. the increased negative impacts of Climate Change, which threaten our very existence as small island nations. It is very disheartening to have to continue to hold on to the empty promises and pledges, while the major contributors to this climate change crisis continue to monitor and blame each other without fulfilling their obligations and commitments. We will continue to advocate for accelerating climate mitigation and adaptation measures at the UNFCCC, and we will do our part to ensure that the Loss and Damage Fund is operationalized and fully functional. However, Mr. Secretary-General, as we welcome your initiative to convene a Climate Summit this year, we believe the focus of the Summit should be centered on 'Climate Accountability', to track progress related to ambition in previous commitments particularly by the major emitters (especially in NDCs and commitments made at the last summit) and the need for corresponding ratcheting up through enhanced 1.5 aligned commitments primarily by updated NDCs. It should act as a precursor to the final outcomes of the GST and MWP with both backwards and forward-looking elements to ensure that 1.5 aligned collective action is taken within this decade in line with the best available science, especially by the major emitters. We need urgent action, no more stalling on delivering what is required. SIDS don't have the luxury of time.

2. high indebtedness and the negative impacts on external economic and financial shocks on our economies, especially noting the tremendous fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to the findings and recommendations of the High-Level Panel on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) for SIDS. After 30 years, it is finally time to shepherd in a new financial architecture that can truly address the needs of SIDS in a comprehensive manner. We also believe that there is enough evidence that financial institutions need to be overhauled in order to properly support countries in need and not put them in further decline. Here, Mr. Secretary-General, we hope you will utilize your convening power to address this with the IFIs and development banks.

3. the need to protect and manage our oceans, which is our lifeblood as small island states, we will therefore focus our attention on the BBNJ process and the Global Treaty to end Plastic Pollution.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General,

AOSIS is very concerned with the influx of the plethora of processes that instead of really providing solutions to our problems continue to rewrite and repackage the 2030 Agenda. These processes continue to address the issues above the needs of those furthest behind, going contrary to our commitment of reaching the furthest behind first. We are concerned that come 2030 if we continue along this trajectory we would have doubled and tripled the divide instead of narrowing it. In addition, continuing to highlight all our problems without allocating the means of implementation will get us nowhere. It is now the time to seriously finance development activities.

Serious times demand serious action.

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General,

Please be assured that AOSIS remains committed to do our part in making development progress that is sustainable and beneficial for all. We believe at the end of the day if any of us fail we would have all failed.

I thank you.