



ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

14TH APRIL 2025

CONFERENCE ROOM 3

OPENING STATEMENT

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor of taking the floor on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

We would like to first extend our sincere appreciation to the Co-Chairs for their leadership and guidance as we embark on this critical phase of implementing the BBNJ Agreement. We also wish to express our gratitude to the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea for their efforts in preparing for this Preparatory Commission and the documentation provided.

AOSIS members have demonstrated remarkable leadership in advancing the BBNJ Agreement, with FSM being the first country to sign, and Palau the first country to ratify. Now, more than half of the states that have ratified the agreement are SIDS, underscoring our commitment to this agreement. We call on all Member States who have not yet done so to join us in ratifying this landmark Agreement, as universal participation is essential to its effectiveness and success

As we begin our work, AOSIS would like to highlight **three key priorities** that are of particular importance to Small Island Developing States:

First, the institutional arrangements under the BBNJ Agreement must be robust and serve as the foundation for effective implementation of the Agreement. AOSIS envisions institutional arrangements that are effective, responsive, and capable of evolving with emerging scientific discoveries and traditional knowledge and technological advancements. These arrangements must recognize both established scientific understanding and traditional knowledge systems and be designed with transparency and inclusivity at their core, ensuring that all States Parties and stakeholders can meaningfully participate in decision-making processes.

Second, our aspiration for universal participation is only possible through the **operationalization of the principle on special circumstances of SIDS which** must be concretely embedded across all aspects of the Agreement's implementation. Our unique vulnerabilities, ecological fragility, limited capacities, and disproportionate reliance on ocean

resources demand specific considerations across all subsidiary bodies. AOSIS calls for dedicated SIDS representation in the institutional architecture, recognition in Committee mandates, monitoring frameworks and reporting requirements. Without structured mechanisms to ensure SIDS perspectives are integrated and addressed, our ability to effectively implement the Agreement will be severely hindered.

Third, adequate, accessible, new and additional and predictable financial resources must be secured to enable effective implementation. We must lay the groundwork for a financial mechanism that is responsive to the needs of developing countries, particularly SIDS. AOSIS emphasizes the importance of ensuring that financial arrangements are designed to minimize administrative burdens and maximize accessibility for those with limited capacity.

Just over two years ago, our "ship reached the shore". Now that we've arrived at this long-sought destination, we must move from the voyage of negotiations to the crucial work of implementation. Our vessel now rests in dry dock, where we must outfit it with the proper instruments and mechanisms to ensure it can fulfill its intended journey. Let us construct these institutional arrangements and rules with the same care and precision that built our ship, transforming the BBNJ Agreement from a vessel of promise into one equipped for effective implementation.

Distinguished delegates, AOSIS approaches this PrepCom with a spirit of pragmatism and determination. AOSIS is committed to working efficiently and effectively to complete the mammoth task ahead of us.

Thank you.