



Statement

By

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Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

at

Preparatory Committee for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

08 February 2021

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States. Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment and the elections of the bureau members.

I also wish to thank the secretariat and in particular Under-Secretary General Ms. Utoikamanu for the work so far that has led us to this preparatory process. The Group also conveys thanks to the Government of Qatar, for agreeing to host the 5th conference.

Co-Chairs,

The 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) is of particular importance to AOSIS, as eight of our members are categorized as LDCs.

We therefore reiterate the importance of the full implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for these countries and also the importance of ensuring the nexus between the IPoA, the Samoa Pathway and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

While the 2030 Agenda provides an overarching framework for the realization of sustainable development, the Programme of Action for LDCs provides targeted approaches to realizing their development goals because of their unique circumstances.

The next 10-year Programme of Action will be adopted at the Doha Conference next year at a critical time, as the world recovers from the effects of COVID-19 and the related global economic crisis.

The economic outlook for SIDS and LDCs paints an unfortunate picture with a long road to recovery. In this regard, LDC5 must agree to a renewed partnership between LDCs, development partners and the UN system.

This new partnership must take into account the challenges faced as a result of the pandemic and the challenges they face on two sides – both in terms of the structural challenges as SIDS from which they will never graduate including limited access to resources, exposure and vulnerability in the face of climate change and extreme weather events, and remoteness to name a few, as well as the economic and social challenges inherent to their LDC classification.

AOSIS and the LDC group has historically been the driving force of ambition under the UNFCCC. As we outlined in our Joint Statement in September 2020, *“COP 26 must be a delivery point on climate action and ambition, on all fronts, in order to secure the survival of the poorest and most vulnerable, and particularly on finance.”* We therefore must appeal for the need for ambitious climate action to be key features in the programme of work for LDCs.

On the matter of graduation, many of the LDC-SIDS are being put forward for graduation. This is being considered at a time of much global uncertainty, COVID-19 have shown that these countries are still in need of tailored support and some have indicated the need to delay any their graduation.

For those of us as SIDS who have graduated, we are all too familiar with the effects of graduation and the lack of tailored support available to us. We therefore continue to reiterate that our focus throughout this process must reflect the true reasons for the establishment of this grouping - it was to ensure that these countries would not be left behind in poverty. Therefore, our focus today should not and must not be centered only on graduation, but on whether or not these countries are truly on a sustainable development path that would enable them to continue and build on without the specialized assistance they now receive.

Co-Chairs,

As you move this process forward in the coming months with the scheduled PrepCom meetings, the national, regional and global reviews should be used as a guide for a practical outcome. This also must include participation from the private sector, academia and civil society. This is important as it will enable a greater understanding of the gaps and challenges of implementing IPoA and will aide in a comprehensive preparatory process and the adoption of a new 10-year programme of support.

In conclusion Co-Chairs, you can be assured of the full support from AOSIS during this process as we continue to advocate on behalf of the eight member states of AOSIS who are LDCs.

Thank you.