

ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. PHILLIP MULLER,
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)
DURING THE "SIDS" SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR
THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
28 FEBRUARY 2011

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Distinguished Chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States. AOSIS wishes to associate itself with the statement by Argentina on behalf of G77 and China. We also wish to offer congratulations to you and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

Distinguished Chair,

AOSIS places the highest priority on the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) given its role as the primary body responsible for addressing the implementation and follow-up to SIDS-specific commitments, including the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI). While we are encouraged by last year's high level review of the MSI, we are concerned that there are critical gaps within the international system which must be addressed. In particular, until our partners have committed to work with us in defining specific benchmarks, goals and targets, we will be challenged to meaningfully measure our own progress on sustainable development.

We welcome the cluster of themes being dealt with in this year's CSD process, as we move from analyzing policy to implementation, AOSIS will continue to make known its priority issues within key thematic clusters during this week and into the CSD proper in May. Our small size, and geographic character as "sea locked" nations makes us particularly dependent upon maritime and air transport. Our high dependence upon environmental health demands intense focus on issues related to waste management and chemicals. SIDS serve as a flagship example of where global patterns of sustainable consumption and production need to be considered within the broad context of sustainable development; as an illustration, global fisheries – and thus particularly our sustainable development and economic bedrock – are seriously threatened in many instances by overfishing. As we move towards Rio Plus 20, SIDS join other partners in calling urgent global attention to oceans and fisheries.

But AOSIS has said all of this before, and it will do us all little benefit to merely recycle our prior statements.

This year is an implementation year.

Until the international community truly makes good to turn its commitments on sustainable development into local realities, all of the international commitments towards SIDS' sustainable development – protecting and growing our coastal and environmental resources, our fisheries, and our communities and sustainable livelihoods – will be only a tragic paper tiger.

Where success has taken root, we must acknowledge progress and internalize lessons learned, and build on our successful models. In many instances where gaps remain despite good intentions, understanding must be gained and efforts be redoubled. Too often, the international community – partners and multilateral institutions alike – have taken a "one size fits all approach" to SIDS and development - thus our unique structures and needs expressed within the MSI risk becoming distant memories. We would think that our development partners also have a vested interest in working with us to better ensure visible and measureable results.

Distinguished Chair,

For far too many sessions, the “interactive dialogue” of the CSD has been neither interactive, nor a dialogue. Perhaps member states can change this – and rather than talking past each other, perhaps we can use the CSD exactly as it was intended under the Rio process, to ask ourselves and our partners the hard questions on why we have sometimes “missed the mark” on sustainable development goals, especially those in the MSI. These are questions not always asked or answered in prepared statements, but through exactly the frank, honest and informal exchange, all once envisioned within the CSD. Nearly 20 years ago at Rio, we envisioned no less than a truly meaningful follow-up on sustainable development, and today our very sustainable development strategy – the MSI – rises or falls on the degree of success of the CSD.

Today, we stand ready for true engagement and bold ambition. We owe our communities no less.

Thank you.