



## ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

STATEMENT BY MS. THILMEEZA HUSSAIN,

DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF

THE MALDIVES TO THE UNITED NATIONS,

ON BEHALF OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)

DURING CLOSING SESSION THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF

THE UNCSD

08 MARCH 2011

*check against delivery*

Co-Chairs,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

AOSIS aligns itself with the statement made by Argentina on behalf of the G77 and China.

AOSIS wishes to address several issues that have arisen in the past two days' meetings.

Co-Chairs,

We are negotiating the future of the world's environmental governance framework. The importance of this process cannot be overstated. The themes of this conference will guide the world for perhaps the next decade, if not more. They will safeguard the biodiversity of our ecosystems, define our interactions with ancient forests, and protect the rich life of our oceans and coral reefs. This conference will guide the development of countless peoples and survival of many others, especially those living in the islands.

Due to the time constraints of the past two days, all delegations who wished to address this meeting were not able to take the floor. As a result, the discussion, while very rich, has not satisfactorily addressed the concerns and views of all parties.

Co-Chairs,

We believe without full and widespread participation from representatives of the various positions in negotiations of the outcome document, an equitable result cannot be expected. Considering the small delegations and limited capacity of our missions here in New York, it will prove to be extremely difficult for the small island states to engage fully and effectively in the process to this effect we call for resources



and funding to be provided for technical experts of the Small Island States to travel and participate in the negotiations.

AOSIS would like to thank the bureau for the draft proposal. We would further request that the delegation and group submissions be published on the website as official input, much as questionnaire responses from member states have been.

The Rio+20 process must explicitly address the needs of SIDS. Our development strategies – the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy – are grounded in the outcomes of the original Rio conference. Yet many flaws remain in their design and especially their implementation – flaws that seriously impact our ability to realize a possible 'green economy' and to sustainably develop.

The sustainable development process for SIDS must therefore remain on the agenda. The Member States of this Assembly have already acknowledged the gaps in implementation of the BPOA and MSI in the various review processes, as well as in the adoption of the Political Declaration (resolution A/RES/65/2) during the 65<sup>th</sup> General Assembly session in 2010. They have also acknowledged that these implementation gaps originate in the unique and particular vulnerabilities of small island States, and reaffirmed their commitment to supporting SIDS' sustainable development efforts. We therefore do not need another review session, but rather a process that addresses these implementation gaps by devising concrete, operational ways to fill them.

Furthermore, the processes themselves – and the Rio+20 focus on 'green economy' in general – are not enough to completely address the needs of SIDS. Our existence as island peoples gives us a unique perspective and a unique connection with the oceans. Although we are certainly dependent on our oceans, fisheries, and corals, our relationship with the ocean goes beyond that: it is central to our identity as SIDS. Much as the forests are considered lungs of the world, our coral reefs are the lifeblood of our societies and indeed of the oceans themselves. Conservation, sustainable management, and protection of ocean resources – including but not limited to fisheries, corals, and marine ecosystems – is of primary importance not only to us but to the global community as a whole. One of the central focuses of the Rio+20 process must therefore be a 'blue economy': we must halt the downward spiral of the condition of the world's oceans before it is too late.

For greater synergies, there is also the need to integrate the discussions from the 26th session of the UNEP Governing Council, including on green economy and international environment governance, into our work here.

AOSIS looks forward to accomplishing a bold agenda in Rio that would pave the road for the survival of the smallest and the most vulnerable. Thus, throughout the process we look forward to contributing with our partners on these issues in an extensive, fully engaged and representative process.