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**Statement by HE Ambassador Enele Sopoaga,**  
**Vice-Chairman of AOSIS, on behalf of AOSIS, on the outcomes of the Mauritius**  
**International Meeting**  
**High Level Segment**  
**13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**  
**22 April 2005**

**(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)**

**Mr Chairman**

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) at the High Level Segment of the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. This statement builds on the AOSIS introductory remarks on water, sanitation and human settlements already made in the course of this CSD session.

The AOSIS views that the MSI concluded three months ago, gives us a most important reaffirmation, namely that of integration. Water, sanitation and human settlements are very important topics for AOSIS. From physical and geographic perspective the special needs of SIDS can be observed. But it is also important that we bear in mind that the MSI has reaffirmed the special case for SIDS for sustainable development, and that SIDS must integrate sectors in order to achieve resilience building in the face of their vulnerabilities.

Water, sanitation and human settlements present us with just such opportunities for integration. For example in the smaller islands, having water catchment systems attached to housing is an important strategy, either with household storage facilities or aquifer recharge. It is also important to integrate water and sanitation, to reduce the amount of water used and to

avoid contamination of the aquifer. In this regard, there are some differences of situation between SIDS, in terms of how these challenges are actually expressed for individual SIDS. Our Member States will raise some of these particular regional or geophysical specificities as this High Level Segment progresses, in compliance with your various questions.

AOSIS is by no means complacent about these challenges. These sectors are very important for SIDS, and are underpinned in our view by the overarching issue of SIDS vulnerability. Any effort by SIDS to address actions and policies under these sectors must take our special situations and our vulnerability into account. Indeed it is the cross-cutting issue of resilience building which is to our groups so important.

The nexus of water and sanitation issues for SIDS is as I have mentioned very much related to our resilience building requirements. As noted in the preparatory meeting of CSD, water and sanitation have a particular set of elements that are peculiar to SIDS. Some relate to our finite size and catchment area for water, as well as for our possibilities for storage and disposal. Size and oceanic location do govern our water and sanitation regimes.

Global Climate change and sea level rise is a serious aspect in relations to water. The harmful effects of global climate change in islands require an immediate, urgent application of science and technology to provide coping strategies related to rising sealevel and the increased frequency and duration of droughts and floods. AOSIS strongly believes there is direct linkage between the effects of climate change and, sea level rise on water, sanitation and human settlements as foreseen in the UNCCC, the JPOA and the MS itself. After -the world have seen the serious devastations in small island developing States and many low-lying coastal areas from the effects of climate change and sea level rise on water, sanitation and settlements, it is most regrettable that this linkage is been down played in the decisions this august body are about to take. AOSIS calls for careful consideration of the issue.

Finally, as agreed in the MS AOSIS strongly believes the review sessions of the CSD should include a segment to review progress of the Strategy's implementation. We believe a special committee or ad hoc working group would be necessary to enhance such a review of the MS. To ensure the

success of the MS, AOSIS appeals for understanding and due consideration of this important need by this body.

I thank you Mr Chairman.