



Solomon Islands
on behalf of the
Alliance of SIDS

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Collin D. Beck
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On behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

**At the
Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD-17
On the Thematic discussions on Africa**

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Madame Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS). AOSIS associates itself with the statement delivered by Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madame Chair,

Members of AOSIS and African nations face many common barriers and shared struggles in addressing barriers to turning the aspirations, goals and commitments towards sustainable development into viable realities. We share the view expressed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation that sustainable development continues to be elusive for many African nations, and that many nations, their communities and peoples have not benefited from globalization. At the risk of repetition, we note that "Africa remains the least developed continent" and the one most "not on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015." But the hard work of communities allows us to be encouraged by progress on a number of sustainable development related areas such as environment, agriculture, and science and technology; clearly, however, greater and more focused "scaling-up" sustainable development efforts are needed to ensure that reality reflects the political rhetoric.

Madame Chair,

SIDS have often been viewed as resting on the front line of climate change, due to our unique vulnerability and isolated geography, and have become an increasingly visible "face" of climate change. We ourselves recognize that climate change poses severe barriers to all developing

nations, most of which, including many in Africa, are ill-equipped to respond to these increasingly complex and pressing challenges.

In many SIDS and non-SIDS African nations, serious and severe barriers to achieving key MDGs are posed by the destabilizing threats of climate-change related water security, desertification and the more general impact of climate change upon agricultural production and the very existence of Africa as humanity's life-source.

In the spirit of south-south cooperation, AOSIS offers our solidarity to Africa in achieving appropriate international attention, which corresponds to the magnitude of the threat of climate change.

Clearly, combating/mitigating climate change is not an isolated policy goal, but an indispensable factor to be mainstreamed into all cross-sectoral planning. We seek greater South-South cooperation, including information-sharing, noting our own knowledge of climate change impacts, as well as the strategies we are developing to reduce our vulnerability.

Madame Chair,

AOSIS members also share with Africa the importance of beneficial cultural traditions, and we honor the fact that traditional communities continue to value conservation methods and sustainable use of natural resource ecosystems. Natural resources may help to benefit and strengthen rural communities as a tool for sustainability and eco-tourism; this may be as true for Africa as it is for all other SIDS. Indeed, for SIDS and Africa, the continued health of our coastal and marine ecosystems may serve as an important development pillar for food security and rural development. Overfishing, discarded or by-catch non-target fish and various forms of illegal fishing have reduced the ability of many rural communities to continue to benefit from that form of subsistence livelihood. Other economic practices, largely with interests external to African communities, have likewise threatened the viability, health and productivity of coastal areas; with little other alternative, many traditional subsistence communities have migrated to urban areas which lack the infrastructure to support them.

Madame Chair, greater international attention is needed on this issue, (of internal economic dislocation), given that it not only cuts across many sustainable development sectors, but that it is also a barrier to development shared by African nations and small island developing states alike.

Madame Chair,

The attention given to Africa today is not only appropriate, but may not be sufficient, and should not stop with this session. From the standpoint of SIDS, we understand all too well the challenges faced in turning global political commitment into meaningful reality. The international community cannot address sustainable development topics without considering their interconnected nature. Likewise, while we must recognize that there are unique geographic and economic challenges inherent to certain regions, greater coordination and solidarity is needed in addressing sustainable development on a cross-regional basis. Madame Chair, addressing the challenges of Africa, provides an excellent opportunity to bring together, our coordination, solidarity and integrated policy option.

I thank you, Madame Chair.