

ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)
INTERVENTION STATEMENT
on
Poverty Eradication, Building Shared Prosperity and Promoting Equality
Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
Education and Life-long Learning
for
11th Session of Open Working Group on Sustainable Development
5 May 2014

Thank you Co-Chairs for giving me the floor.

I am honored to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Bolivia on behalf of G77 & China.

Co-Chairs,

First, thank you for the updated working document on the clusters of focus areas. We welcome the changes made on the document with the clear understanding they do not prejudice the formulation of the final list of SDGs and targets.

We have submitted our preliminary views on the revised document, and would like to underscore the vital need for the SDGs to be action-oriented, global in nature, and applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities, and levels of development.

In this regard, we underscore that SDGs and corresponding targets must reflect the needs of countries with special circumstances and unique vulnerabilities, such as SIDS..

Moreover, the SDGs must integrate the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced manner, and be sufficiently ambitious if we are to achieve our shared sustainable development objectives that have gone unmet for far too long. We know that this will require adequate means of implementation, including clear commitments for when and what level of support will be provided.

Co-Chairs,

For today's discussion, I would like to highlight the following points:

1. Poverty Eradication, Building Shared Prosperity and Promoting Equality.

- The unfortunate reality today is that we will not be successful in addressing poverty unless we recognize and respond to the additional challenges climate change poses to our efforts.
- We therefore call for integrating ambitious climate change mitigation and adaptation targets across the SDGs.
- Central to this task must be to build resilience in developing countries against natural disasters that have been already been exacerbated by climate change and will continue to worsen.

- Strengthening our ability to reduce the impacts of disasters and rebuild after they occur must be central to our efforts,

Promoting equality, as agreed in Rio +20, is central to our sustainable development efforts. The targets for addressing poverty of opportunities are welcomed, but we must recognize the need to address the root causes of the crisis.

For example, RIO +20 recognized that promoting universal access to social services could make an important contribution to consolidating and achieving development gains and social protection systems that address and reduce inequality and social exclusion are essential.

- Additionally, there is inextricable link between economic growth and equity. As inequality in wealth widens within society there is clear evidence of a corresponding slow-down in economic growth. In other words, income and wealth inequality hurts economic growth. Ending the cycle of poverty demands that we close this gap.

2. Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition

We would welcome targets that:

- address the protection of ecological system that supports food production.
- reduce vulnerabilities of countries that are primarily net food importers by stressing the crucial role of healthy marine ecosystem, sustainable fisheries, and sustainable aquaculture for food security and nutrition and in providing for the livelihoods of the people of the SIDS.
- address limitation of export restrictions on staple food products as well as the development of robust insurance schemes for farmers and fishers, in particular small scale farmers and fishers, support for any economic losses resulting from natural and human induced disasters especially those exacerbated by climate change and to cater for food shortages.
- Policies are of overriding importance in determining food security, particularly for countries in special situation. This applies, in particular, to policies on the pricing of farm inputs and outputs, which plays a central role in determining the direction, character, and rate of agricultural progress and sustainability. We therefore welcome targets that address policies with growth, sustainability, stability, equity, and efficiency objectives to take account of the inherent instability of agricultural output because of weather and biological exigencies, equitable distribution of the benefits of agricultural activities, efficient use of resources, and maintaining adequate level of production through conservation and renewable resources.

Education and Life-long Learning

3. We welcome targets that:

- stress more equitable distribution of educational opportunities and reduction of existing inequalities based on gender, economic status, and geographic isolation.
- aim at greater internal efficiency of the educational system, through a reduction of the waste of resources caused by students dropping out or repeating grades, and improved quality of education.
- improve greater external efficiency of the education system, through an increase in the relevance of schooling to the job market, so that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to find employment.
- develop and maintain an institutional capacity to formulate and carry out educational policies and to plan, analyze, manage, and evaluate education and training programs and projects at all levels.

- promote the use of telecommunication and ICT infrastructure in education, namely distance learning, to bridge gap from geographic isolation as in the case of isolated countries such as SIDS.
- Integrate knowledge and skills in educational curricula, including climate change and formal education for migration of people with dignity given the impact of climate change.

Thank you.