AOSIS Statement
at the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the CSD15 New York
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AOSIS Position Paper on Climate Change –CSD 15

Mr Chairman

I have the honour to deliver the AOSIS position paper on climate change on behalf of the 43 members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

Challenges

The threat of global climate change represents the most serious environmental and development challenge confronting SIDS. The adverse effects of climate change, and associated phenomena including sea-level rise and the increase in frequency and intensity of hurricanes, cyclones and other weather events threaten the sustainable development, livelihoods and existence of SIDS, despite our negligible contribution to the problem. For many SIDS dangerous climate change is already occurring.

With the release of Part I of 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC and the Stern Review there is now scientific certainty that the opportunity to avoid irreversible and potentially unimaginable damage to the climate system will be lost if urgent and ambitious action is not taken. AOSIS seeks the proper inclusion of the following policy points in the final outcome of the CSD15:

Policy Options

Adaptation to the climate change is a major priority to SIDS and to this end the international community must:

- Fully implement all commitments on climate change contained in the BPOA and the MSI
- Support SIDS in the development and implementation of national climate change action plans through the provision of new and additional resources, technical assistance and capacity building.
- Assist SIDS to incorporate climate change adaptation concerns in national sustainable development plans.

- Provide technical and financial resources to assist SIDS to strengthen national and regional national climate change coordination mechanisms such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (CCCCC), and the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable
- Support cooperation for information sharing on adaptation technologies, development and transfer between African, Indian Ocean, Caribbean and Pacific SIDS
- Provide technical and technical support in areas of disaster preparedness, risk management and disaster mitigation.
- Develop new financial arrangements including a SIDS climate change funding facility to provide insurance to SIDS to recoup losses due to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise.
- improve access to, and transfer of, environmentally sound technology related to climate change
- maximize SIDS access to and use of the Clean Development Mechanism, in order to promote renewable energy sources and energy efficiency to achieve substantial technology transfer

Mitigation and adaptation go hand and hand. In this regard the international community must:

- fully implement the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol
- mobilize the widest public opinion and the strongest political leadership on future actions against climate change
- take further urgent action to reduce domestic greenhouse gas emissions, including through the development and increased use of renewable energy including wind, solar, biomass and wave action
- Give the highest priority to completing negotiations on a post-2012 Commitment Period by December 2008. The outcome of these negotiations should:
    - acknowledge historic contributions to present GHG concentrations in the atmosphere
    - lead to the achievement of substantial emission reductions in the shortest time frame possible stressing the need for substantial action through domestic policies, measures and action
    - significantly increase the level of resources available to developing countries, particularly SIDS, that is separate and apart from traditional ODA to assist these the most vulnerable countries to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change bearing in mind the recently released finding of Sir Nicholas Stern of the UK that delaying action will only increase the costs for adaptation

Comments on SG's report

1. It is critical that the recommendations highlight the fact that implementation must be a priority. All too often, assistance to developing countries is only provided to identify capacity constraints and needs, as well as to develop

activities and projects. If real and tangible benefits are to be realized, action must be taken and implementation of assessments and project activities is essential.

2. Any support being offered to SIDS needs to be both technical and financial in nature. There is reference in the document to 'low-cost and negative-cost adaptation measures' for SIDS and LDCs, this should be removed. Vulnerable countries require assistance in implementing all types of adaptation options; support should not be limited only to low-cost options. Additionally, lower cost options are usually based on best-case scenarios while responding to the negative impacts of climate change in almost all cases can only be served through the application of worst-case scenarios.

3. The paragraphs on adaptation are very general and are based on a series of assumptions that are not specified, but are critical for effective implementation. As an example, para 25 on agriculture references "… basic adaptation measures, such as altering planting dates and cultivar choices …". It asserts that these should be promoted, but does not make any reference to the lack of capacity in developing countries to do this. For such adaptation to occur, it will have to be preceded by significant capacity building and technology transfer activities in the form of research and development – none of which are mentioned in the document.

4. The paragraphs on climate change mitigation and energy (paragraphs 13 – 16) focus on finding ways to continue using fossil fuel by making it cleaner and/or more efficient. The discussion focuses on carbon dioxide capture and storage (para 13 and 14), energy efficiency (para 15), clean coal (para 16) and emissions trading and offsetting (para 17, 19). It is important to find and promote innovative ways to make fossil fuels less carbon intensive and more efficient as it remains the cheapest mean of producing energy for many SIDS. However, these innovations must not be at the expense of support for SIDS. Carbon dioxide capture and storage is still in its infancy as a technology that could provide an alternate to emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. It must first be proven that it is a good option for mitigation by being rigorously monitored for leakages to prove that the storage capabilities are permanent. Only when enough sites have being scrutinized and the monitoring procedures documented and properly reviewed can the technology be ready to be considered for the CDM. This will require another 3-5 year for complete verification. SIDS can support CSS for mitigation but not for CDM at this time.

5. These recommendations do not address the critical issue of reducing carbon dioxide emissions from source by finding alternatives to carbon dioxide and does not even once consider the use of any form of renewable energy e.g. wind, solar, ocean thermal, biofuels and the like.

Finally, Mr Chairman, the issue of SIDS participation in the CSD and climate change processes has to be addressed. We appeal for those who are able to do so to provide the necessary support to ensure full representation of SIDS in the CSD and UNFCCC

processes. Similarly, we appeal that CSD avoids the overlapping of its meetings with other important meetings such as the CSD15 and the next meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC next May.

Once again, SIDS and the proper representation of our concerns are being marginalized and undermined, and we urge that the matter is addressed, and avoided in the future.

Thank you