



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

Plenary Segment of the Summit of the Future

22 September 2023
General Assembly Hall

Esteemed Colleagues, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both an honor and a profound responsibility to address you today at the Summit of the Future, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). As we gather here, under the banner of a shared tomorrow, we stand at a crossroad where our collective will and wisdom seek to shape the future; a future not just for the benefit of a few, but for all.

Small island developing states are not mere dots on a map. We are vibrant symphonies of life, rich with history and culture, whose resilience and courage stand as a testament to both the beauty and fragility of our world.

Yet, our stories are tinged with urgency.

The challenges faced by small island developing states are not isolated; they are intertwined with our global destiny. We know, as we reaffirmed at the Fourth International SIDS Conference earlier this year, if we save the smallest and most vulnerable among us, we save the world.

Therefore, multilateralism is not just a principle—it is a practical necessity for addressing the challenges before us. By coming together, we can forge solutions that no single nation could achieve alone for present and future generations.

First and foremost, we must confront climate change. For SIDS, coastal erosion, increasingly severe weather events, and rising sea levels are not distant concerns. They are an immediate and severe reality. It is not enough to simply acknowledge the risks; we must act decisively.

Let us breathe life into the Paris Agreement with renewed vigour, ensuring that our collective efforts are not just a whisper but a clarion call to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This means investing in climate adaptation and resilience infrastructure, sharing technology, capacity-building initiatives, and ensuring that financial resources are directed where they are needed most.

Beyond the immediate threats of climate change, lies an economic tempest of its own. SIDS are often left adrift to face global uncertainty amidst a swelling tide of debt, economic fluctuations and external shocks.

To address this, we must champion transforming global governance, including the reform of the international financial architecture, to correct deeply entrenched imbalances and promote international partnerships that can drive resilient prosperity. Debt relief and access to concessional financing, including through the use of the multidimensional vulnerability index, can give SIDS the breathing space we need to anchor our economies in stability and invest in our future.

Lastly, it has become abundantly clear that artificial intelligence and digital technologies can be a game changer in solving our common challenges. Yet, significant barriers continue to persist for SIDS in harnessing its full potential as the pace and misuse of such technological advancements seem to only expand the divides between us.

It is integral that we take vital steps towards a more inclusive and secure digital future for SIDS. By bridging this digital gap, we can improve sectors vital to our communities, share best practices, mitigate risks, and unlock new opportunities for growth and digital transformation, including through the SIDS Center of Excellence.

In closing, the future we envision, enshrined in the Pact for the Future and its Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations, must be one where no one is left behind. Therefore, as we chart our course towards the horizon of our shared fate, let us sail together with a spirit of unity and compassion. Let us ensure that small island developing states are not merely heard but are actively supported to realize our own aspirations.

May our actions be a beacon of hope, reflecting the strength and will of our collective humanity, so that every country, no matter how small, finds its place in the sun.

I thank you.