



Statement by Nauru on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States

Second Session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action 29 April, Bonn, Germany

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies, Colleagues

Nauru has the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, a group of 44 countries that are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

AOSIS associates itself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf the Group of 77 and China, and the statements made by Nepal on behalf of the Least Developed Countries Group and Swaziland on behalf of the African Group.

Co-Chairs,

At the outset, let me also thank you for your leadership during this phase of the negotiations. You have set the stage for us to make essential progress this week and beyond. I assure you of our continued support and constructive engagement as we work expeditiously to close the emissions gap and fulfill other commitments laid out in the Durban agreement.

The time we have to act, it cannot be said enough, is rapidly slipping away for the members of the group of countries that I represent.

Scientists have warned that unless urgent and dramatic action is taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the next few years, well before 2020, I repeat, well before 2020, the opportunity to avoid catastrophic global warming in excess of 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels — to say nothing of the below 1.5 degree threshold supported by over 100 countries in this room — could be irrevocably lost.

The perilous circumstances we face were underscored last week when researchers at the Mauna Loa laboratory confirmed that atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide are on track to, this month, exceed 400 parts per million for sustained lengths of time throughout much of the Northern Hemisphere.

This ominous milestone is particularly unsettling for the citizens of small island and low-lying coastal states who have already experienced life-altering changes due to warming of less than one-degree Celsius, including stronger and more deadly tropical cyclones, prolonged droughts, the loss of mangrove habitat, and, perhaps most alarmingly, an acceleration in sea level rise. What's more, we know that coral reefs, which support many of our economies, and buffer us climate-related extreme weather events, are likely to stop growing if the 450-ppm mark is passed and start dissolving at concentrations beyond 550 ppm as ocean acidification intensifies.

In light of these harsh realities, we must achieve an ADP agreement that ultimately brings CO₂ concentrations back below these levels to limit warming below 1.5 degrees by the end of the century.

Co-Chairs,

It is in this context that AOSIS wants to emphasize--as we have done in our formal ADP submissions--that our work this week and in June must focus intensely on delivering concrete outcomes for the climate that sustains us all. We have no other formal process to address our concerns except this multilateral process and therefore failure for us is a direct threat to our very existence.

With a view to giving this focus to our work, we have all agreed to organize our discussions into two separate workstreams – Workstream 2 is tasked with identifying ways to raise mitigation ambition in the pre-2020 timeframe and Workstream 1 with elaborating the details of a protocol to be adopted by 2015 at the latest. Work in both workstreams must be driven by a sense of urgency, bearing in mind that our failure to act decisively now will require a reactive and vastly more expensive response later. Moreover, a failure to close the pre-2020 mitigation ambition gap will have profound implications for the scale and nature of obligations under the 2015 protocol. But despite these linkages, the discussions for both workstreams must remain separate. In this context, we reiterate our call for two distinct contact groups to ensure that the subject matter for the two workstreams is kept separate.

In terms of Workstream 2, we need to use our two sessions in Bonn to focus closely on specific and scalable mitigation actions and policies that can be deployed immediately, including those outlined in the UNEP gap report, and also look at strategies for overcoming implementation barriers, including the scaled up delivery of financial resources, technology and capacity building. We welcome the roundtables proposed by the Co-Chairs, but will want to bring more focus to our work as the year proceeds.

At the same time, we must expand the conversation beyond purely climate negotiators and work to engage those with on-the-ground expertise in the development and implementation of successful mitigation actions in this process—civil society, scientists, the private sector and experts from the relevant ministries within our governments..

Of course, the decision to raise ambition ultimately requires engagement at the highest level, so we are calling for a ministerial meeting on raising mitigation ambition at COP19 in Warsaw to help build the political momentum necessary for the adoption of more ambitious mitigation targets by developed countries and NAMAs by developing countries. We welcomed the announcement made by the UN Secretary-General in Doha that he will convene a leaders' summit in 2014, which will serve as an important decision point for countries to raise their ambition.

Co-Chairs,

We must also make progress in Workstream 1 on the core elements of the new legally binding agreement to be adopted in 2015. We know all too well that turning policy into action can be a painfully slow process, so the decisions we make today must be guided by the science, and sufficiently ambitious to protect the interests of future generations, as well as our own.

Our work moving forward should continue to build on the foundations of the Convention, including its fundamental principles and provisions. In the view of AOSIS, the outcome of the

process launched under the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action should be a Protocol under the Convention applicable to all Parties, to be adopted no later than 2015, which strengthens the multilateral rules-based and legally binding regime, based on science and designed to ensure the survival of the communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Being “applicable to all”, it will require universal participation and contributions from every Party.

As we see the alarming impacts of our past of inaction on climate change unfold before our eyes, and the very real economic, social and physical costs of this inaction grow larger, perversely, the solutions to the climate crisis are more accessible and less costly than ever before. Nevertheless there is an ongoing need for financial support and technology transfer and capacity building to developing countries. This is about political will, and our mandate from Durban makes it clear that this process “shall raise ambition”.

We urge all Parties to work with an increased sense of urgency this week and above all focus on doing our part to achieve an ambitious, comprehensive and meaningful outcome.

Thank you.