

**BELIZE**



**AOSIS STATEMENT  
UNFCCC COP 25**

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**MADRID, SPAIN**

Madam President, Minister Carolina Schmidt;

Ministers,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand here representing the collective voice of 44 low lying island and coastal countries whose existence is on the line.

Steady, unrelenting rise of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, with no end in sight, conscribe us to an unrecognizable and insecure future.

And humanity, as we know it, will be no better off for it.

A planetary crisis is upon us and none can find solace in political exceptionalism from what Nature has in store for us.

The demise of earth's life support systems will be indiscriminate.

Rising seas, apocalyptic storms, prolonged droughts, scorching temperatures, rampant wildfires, disappearing biodiversity on land and in oceans - sadly I can go on. These are impacts that no one, no country can escape. These threaten global security and stability and jeopardize the prosperity of all peoples.

Where I come from, that threat is not distant, it is our reality.

Belize finds itself in a state of emergency because of an unforgiving and profoundly costly year long drought

The Bahamas, like Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and many other Caribbean isles are still recovering from hellish hurricanes Dorian, Maria and Irma that ravaged their shores and setback hard earned development gains.

Across the Pacific and Indian Oceans, islanders are facing inundation. Whole islands, people's homes, are at risk of disappearing much sooner than previously predicted.

The time to act decisively and meaningfully is rapidly running out!

We have squandered twenty-five years in zero sum debates even as our indecision accelerates the literal burning and collapse of our world. Our children are in the streets marching while leaders of big nations are dithering and retreating from their responsibilities.

We do not have the luxury of another twenty-five years. We hardly have a decade to take decisive and meaningful climate action.

We still can, and we must!!

The Paris Agreement sets the foundation for us to achieve net zero emissions and to hold temperatures to below 1.5 by mid-century. It promises the means by which we can help one another, especially the weakest amongst us, to face the unavoidable impacts of climate change; and to invest in a future where our children can enjoy the very dreams we once had.

That is why we must respect and fulfill our commitments under that Agreement.

The small island nations that I represent embrace our duty to act consistent with the Paris goals and to honour our responsibility to future generations.

At the Climate Summit in September, we responded without hesitation to the Secretary General's call for bold and ambitious plans.

We resolved to bring forward our NDCs in 2020 hand in hand with our ambitious partners.

We resolved to achieve 100 percent renewables by 2030 and also joined the call to raise ambition for climate adaptation and resilience.

We made it clear that investment in our climate future is an investment with global benefits as we collectively learn how best to protect our people in the face of the worsening climate crisis.

Madame President,

Even though the Members of the Alliance of Small Island States contribute less than 1 percent of global emissions, we are stepping up to enhance climate action in the short term and to demonstrate the rapid and far-reaching changes that are needed and that are achievable over the longer term to move to net zero emissions. We are leading by example.

I can assure you that SIDS have been and will remain the vanguard of climate action and the benchmark of ambition.

But we cannot do this on our own.

Our capacities to sustain ourselves are rapidly and uncontrollably eviscerating. We are already experiencing irreversible loss and damage, and if, in the next decade the world fails to take aggressive action to curb emissions, the future of our people and our nations hangs in the balance.

The science is irrefutable and compelling. After a century and a half of industrialization carried on outside of our control, the point of reckoning is now. We stand or else we fall.

I am here to make a solemn appeal.

On behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States I urge all nations to join us to prevent irreparable and worse yet, irreversible harm to our planet.

We have the privilege of our office as leaders and with that an overriding responsibility to protect the people who have placed their trust in us.

We have a choice, but that choice must be ambitious lest we bequeath an inhospitable planet beyond repair to our children.

I urge you to look past the immediate political challenges and the divides that have set us apart these past 25 years and prevented decisive action.

I urge you to look beyond where we are now and to the world, we want to gift our children and succeeding generations.

I urge you to uphold that vision and let us make the 2020s “Our Decade of Ambition”. This is indeed our last opportunity to secure a 1.5-degree world. We must raise climate ambition to define a climate legacy that will guarantee a life of dignity, prosperity and a cleaner world for succeeding generations.

It is not too late! We must lead and we must act now. Thank you.