



AOSIS Statement

Twenty-eighth session of the Conference of Parties to UNFCCC

9 December 2023

Dubai Expo City, UAE

HIGH LEVEL STATEMENT

Delivered by:

**Hon. Toeolesulusulu Cedric Schuster,
Minister for Natural Resources & Environment
Samoa**

- Thank you Mr. President.
- At the outset, let me thank the UAE as our host of COP28 for its hospitality.
- Excellencies and friends, Samoa is honored to speak on behalf of Small Island Developing States, and we align this statement with that made by Cuba on behalf of the G77 and China.
- AOSIS is a coalition of countries at the forefront of climate change facing devastating impacts associated with increased human-induced greenhouse emissions.
- The IPCC sixth assessment Report finding that strikes me most is, and I quote “*Vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected*”. This should be a key consideration for how we define inequity in this process and the basis on which we should make all of our decisions.
- We have come here with high hopes. We have come here with the aim of delivering positive outcomes for our people who deserve to live in dignity in the face of this climate crisis.

- Our hope was bolstered by adoption and capitalization of the Loss and Damage Fund, and the agreement to fully operationalise the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage. This COP will be marked in history by such monumental outcomes.
- They have, however, only made our hopes much higher. In this regard, let me outline our key asks from this COP.
- Mr. President, we are extremely concerned about the pace of the negotiations. Time is not on our side, and we must act fast and diligently with the limited time we have left here in Dubai.
- Mr. President, The first pillar AOSIS sees is delivery of a robust and effective outcome to the first Global Stocktake. We know that these stocktakes will happen every five years but this is THE ONE that matters for keeping the 1.5C limit within reach.
- ‘O le ala i le pule o le tautua’. This translates to “the path to leadership is through service.” We are all here today because of the commitment we have made to serve. This service must not end at our borders.
- To be true leaders, leaders who will change the world for the better, we must extend our spirit of service to all people. Those who are strong have a duty to lift up the vulnerable.
- The climate crisis is expanding the chasm between those who can afford to be resilient, and those who cannot. I implore you all - let this COP 28 be the summit where we leaders are remembered for turning the tide, taking a serious approach to keeping our commitments, and ramping up climate action in line with what the science tells us is imperative.
- The IPCC represents the best available climate science and it is clear that we can still limit warming to 1.5°C but this will require global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 and be roughly halved by 2030. Crucially, a target for renewables cannot be a substitute for a stronger commitment to fossil-fuel phase-out and an end to fossil fuel subsidies. COP28 needs to deliver both.
- Excellencies and friends
- We must never move away from what we all agreed at COP21 in Paris. The Paris Agreement establishes the framework under which we have agreed to operate. Different countries are at different stages in their development, and the Paris Agreement recognizes this by embedding within it the notion of implementation based

on national circumstances. We must remember this as we work toward our common goal of addressing the existential threat of climate change. We can and must achieve this goal despite our differences.

- In recognizing our differences, the Paris Agreement provides the means to help our vulnerable countries meet our common goals. This is through the provision of support, including financial support. While developed country Parties have assured us that their commitment to provide a floor of 100 billion US dollars per year by 2020 has finally been achieved, our world has changed faster than we could have imagined when that pledge was made nearly 15 years ago. The new collective quantified goal must be commensurate with the heavy burden that we are saddled with in our small island States as we strive to meet the common goals of the Paris Agreement. To do so, the NCQG process must pivot to a deliberative negotiation process securing an outcome at COP29 that is both fair and just.
- Mr. President, the specific needs and special circumstances of small island developing States are enshrined in international law as a special case for sustainable development. And sustainable development provides the context for all of our work to address climate change under the Convention and the Paris Agreement. We cannot afford to derail the recognition of SIDS and LDCs as by attempting to renegotiate Paris. We kindly ask everyone to respect this important and fundamental principle.
- Mr. President, adaptation remains one of the important priorities for SIDS, and we will not give up on it. We are disappointed that discussions on the GGA are not progressing, but we remain hopeful under your leadership on this important measure. We need to ensure that the Glasgow Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation ends with agreement on a robust framework that not only facilitates our ability to measure progress in achieving the global goal on adaptation but more importantly incentivizes consistent long-term action to adapt to climate change impacts on the ground - action that is backed up by the financial, technological and capacity-building support required to get the job done.
- As we celebrate the successful operationalization of the loss and damage fund, let us not forget why this Fund is so necessary for SIDS. We are way off course in meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement, in particular in limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5C. The IPCC's latest assessment report, corroborated by the

outcomes of the GST's technical assessment process, make this unequivocally evident. All is not lost though. We still have time to steer the ship back on course, and we must take advantage of the opportunity to do so provided by the first global stocktake.

- Honorable President, Excellencies and friends, we need to be bold in our actions. High ambition on measures to mitigate emissions coupled with adaptation interventions that are supported by the means to implement them are the only things that will get us to 1.5C. We must see a strengthened commitment, particularly from major emitters, for accountability in achieving the mandate and delivering on the elements of the Glasgow Climate Pact and Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan. We call for a phase out of fossil fuels in line with the best available science and the principles and provisions of the Convention and the Paris Agreement. Setting a target for tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030 would send a clear and needed signal to markets and investors but cannot be a substitute for a stronger commitment to fossil-fuel phase-out. Without these efforts we will be moving away from what we all agreed to in Paris. Collective action is what we need now. The task is big and can seem daunting, but it is not impossible. We must lean into international cooperation and multilateralism to pave the way to these new development pathways.
- To galvanize this international cooperation, we will need to send a strong message to the outside world, one that resonates beyond these four walls. This is why SIDS are calling for a high level political declaration in response to the findings of the global stocktake. We have a responsibility to send a clear message to the rest of the world on the actions that must be taken to accelerate and improve climate action. Without this, the outcomes of this first GST risk fading into obscurity.
- Excellencies and friends.
- In closing, it may seem that the ocean we must cross to achieve our goals is too vast, but as someone from a large ocean State, I can assure you that with a clear aim in sight, wise hands on deck and mutual trust in this ship called the multilateral process, our journey will end at the safe harbor we are all seeking.
- I thank you.
