Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, (AOSIS).

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Dominican Republic, a fellow small island developing state, on its election as a non permanent member of the Security Council; and to commend you, President Danilo Medina Sanchez, for the bold decision to start your tenure in the Security Council with a debate on a topic that encompasses an issue that is, irrefutably, a defining issue of our time.

I can say this with absolute conviction because I represent a group of countries on the frontline of climate change.

If the people from our islands and low lying coastal states could sit with us here today, they would tell you about the daily challenges they are confronting to sustain their humble livelihoods - salt water intrusions that infiltrate their drinking water and water for irrigation; farmers forced into more debt as they try to adapt to changing rainfall patterns; fisher folks, as marine life migrates to areas beyond their traditional grounds, forced to go further and further afield in order to get even one day’s catch; and families, confronting rising seas and super hurricanes, denied home, work, and sadly, sometimes their loved ones.

This reality is being replicated across the globe at an alarming pace and with unprecedented impacts.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its Special Report on 1.5°C concluded that the effects of human induced climate change are worse than
previously projected and that the associated risks have increased immensely for our ecosystems, economies and social wellbeing.

What we witness thus in the conflicts over scarce resources, the large scale displacement of people and loss of territory are the manifestation of the associated risks referred to in the Special Report of the IPCC. These are the experiences of the climate-vulnerable in our world today whose already fragile hope for peace and security continue to deplete.

The IPCC findings confirm that without drastic systems transitions, the current human induced global warming trajectory will cause severe and often irreversible impacts to our planet, with inevitable humanitarian consequences.

Mr. President, faced with these prospects and the impacts already having dire consequences for people and planet, we have but one urgent global imperative and that is to ACT.

Our first line of response to climate change and to attenuate climate-related risks is definitive ambitious climate action in line with the science of 1.5°C.

Of paramount importance is ensuring that developing countries have the support they need to adapt; and, where our adaptive capacities have been exhausted, that we have the support to address loss and damage.

We reaffirm that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and its related process including the Paris Agreement, is the primary forum for negotiating and coordinating the global response for mitigation, adaptation, finance and loss and damage related to climate change. AOSIS underscores that increased near-term ambition is urgently required to limit global warming to 1.5°C. We also underscore the urgent need for remedying the persistent funding gap for adaptation, with a larger share of public and grant-based sources of finance reserved for adaptation; and likewise we emphasize the need for a strong international mechanism to address loss and damage.

Mr. President, we urge that the summary of this debate, issues an urgent call to the international community to take the ambitious action needed in line with the Paris Agreement goals and 1.5°C pathways. The summary should also call upon our developed country partners to marshal the necessary resources so that developing
countries, in particular SIDS, can be assured access to adequate predictable and additional finance, technology and capacity building. It is imperative that the commitments and obligations undertaken whether under the Paris Agreement or other international convention relating to climate change are fully implemented.

Mr. President,

Notwithstanding the necessary climate action and support under the UNFCCC, we must also acknowledge that climate change has multidimensional implications even outside of the purview of the UNFCCC, and therefore must be addressed in a coordinated and concerted manner across all relevant frameworks, mechanisms and UN bodies.

As such, it has become increasingly necessary for the Security Council to have a more comprehensive understanding of the international peace and security risks arising from climate change and climate-related disasters, to be in a position to act appropriately.

We are pleased to note initial efforts to include climate risk assessments in the reports of the Secretary-General to the Council, as well as efforts to provide information and training to peacekeeping operations on climate security risk implications. AOSIS urges the Council to use this debate to muster the political will so that these initial efforts can be standardized and improved.

To this end, we propose three factors for consideration.

A preliminary factor is to ensure that the work of the Security Council in ascertaining risks is guided by the best available science on climate change including but not limited to the findings from IPCC Assessment Reports. A second related factor is the need for the improvement of the analytical capacities of the United Nations system in order to assess climate change related security threats according to the specific circumstances, needs and situations on the ground. The third factor is the need to coordinate the work of other UN entities and international organizations so as to improve the UN System’s overall capacity to support states and other stakeholders, including the most vulnerable groups such as women, youth and indigenous communities, to mitigate those threats. In this way, the UN System including the Security Council is better positioned to identify the security threats arising from climate change impacts, to prepare for them and to
harness complementary roles towards the prevention of escalating those threats to international peace and security.

Mr. President,

A more comprehensive understanding of the implications of climate change on international peace and security must be seen as a critical link in the chain of a global response to climate change. That response includes action to mitigate global warming through more ambitious emission reduction targets; action to build resilience to disasters; and action to adapt, both in the short term and long term to the impacts of climate change.

Because of their inter-linkages and interdependence, further steps are required to defragment the UN System so as to harmonize these actions and to ensure that our chain of response suffers no gap or weakness.

Climate Change is an issue which transcends not only nations and borders, but also customary institutional norms and mandates. It is a fundamental threat to the future of our planet and the existence of all humanity as we know it. We hope that this debate will constitute a stepping stone to reinforce the global response to climate change with the Security Council resolved to do its part.

I thank you.