AOSIS Statement at the opening plenary meeting of COP, CMP, CMA, SBSTA and SBI

2 December 2019 (10:00am-1:00pm)
Madrid, Spain

Speaker:
Ambassador Lois Young
Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations in New York and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States

Madam President, Distinguished Chairs, Excellencies and Colleagues,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, a group of 44 low lying small island and coastal developing states, which face the greatest risks from escalating climate change impacts. Despite 30 years of consistent advocacy, tireless engagement and action within our means, global inaction and inadequate commitments signal a willingness to sacrifice the very existence of small island developing states.

2. The IPCC’s trifecta of Special Reports is a striking case for urgent climate action in line with the Paris goals.

3. The Special Reports on 1.5°C, on Climate Change and Land, and on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate confirms that we are approaching our last window of opportunity to act decisively!

4. The messages from these reports are compelling and irrefutable.
   a) Climate change is happening at an unprecedented pace, which, if not mitigated, will compromise sustainable development, and trigger irreversible losses.
   b) We are at or near limits to adaptation.
c) Urgent and large scale action for mitigation is required to secure the future of humanity as we know it.

5. Yet, our commitments are woefully insufficient. Current NDCs and other commitments place us on track towards a world more than twice as warm as the devastating 1.5 threshold.

6. We are disappointed by inadequate action by developed countries and outraged by the dithering and retreat of one of the most culpable polluters from the Paris Agreement. In the midst of a climate emergency, retreat and inaction are tantamount to sanctioning ecocide. They reflect profound failure to honour collective global commitment to protect the most vulnerable.

7. With our very existence at stake, COP 25 must demonstrate unprecedented ambition to avert ecocide. The challenge is so great, COP 25 must trigger “Our Decade of Ambition.”

8. COP 25 must foster ambition by triggering enhanced NDCs and long-term low greenhouse gas emission strategies that prevents us from breaching the 1.5-degree tipping point.

9. We must secure a deal on Article 6 that is consistent with our 1.5 goal. Article 6 must transcend mere offsetting and deliver an enhanced stream of resources for the Adaptation Fund. We cannot allow carryovers of Kyoto units to dilute post-2020 ambition.

10. As we advised in 1989, ambitious climate action must address loss and damage. The escalating scale and frequency of devastating natural disasters caused by climate change confirms that loss and damage is more than economic losses for islanders. Lives, identities and whole communities are being destroyed. Just three months ago, Hurricane Dorian, which UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres described as ‘Category Hell’, ravaged The Bahamas. This resulted in more than seventy persons losing their lives, and more than one thousand are still missing. This is Loss and Damage for us! Alarmingly, such extreme weather events will become even more intense and frequent.

11. Ambitious mitigation will minimize loss and damage. So, the WIM Review must yield a robust fit-for-purpose mechanism. We must standardise the quantification of loss and damage risk and support a programme of long-term risk assessments in particularly vulnerable developing countries.

12. The entire climate finance landscape must be reformed to operate nimbly to respond to the needs of developing countries. Notably, the GCF’s focus should be expanded to address loss and damage. For us, this requires a dedicated emergency response window with an
expedited approval process to enable decision-making within seven days after loss and damage from extreme weather events.

13. We must ramp up the momentum towards fulfilling the 2020 climate finance pledge of US$100 billion. We must also set a bold new climate finance goal that reflects our ambition for a 1.5-degree world.

Madam President, Distinguished Chairs, Excellencies and Colleagues,

14. AOSIS extends its full support to the President of COP 25 to deliver bold and ambitious outcomes.

15. AOSIS also extends sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Spain for their hospitality, and yeoman efforts in enabling this COP to take place as planned.

16. The world cannot afford to lose any more time. Let us seize this opportunity to facilitate heightened global ambition and decisive action in 2020 and beyond. Let’s be partners and create “Our Decade of Ambition.”

Browse: The AOSIS Decade of Ambition Campaign Card and Video

Contact: Dr Tyrone Hall | Tel: 437 333 8414 | Email: tyrone.hall@aosis.com

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) is the most consistent champion for climate action. Formed in 1990 and currently Chaired by Belize, AOSIS is a group of 44 low lying small island and coastal developing states facing insurmountable challenges to our sustainable development due to the escalating impacts of climate change.

###