

## Leading the way: Raising Ambition for 1.5°C-compatible Climate Action

Joint AOSIS-LDC Group event at Climate Week NYC  
8:00 - 9:30, 25 September 2020 | Microsoft Teams Platform

Closing Remarks by H.E. Lois Young, Permanent Representative of Belize and Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me begin by thanking all of the participants who joined us for this important side event during New York climate week. I would also like to express our sincere gratitude to our close friends at the LDC Group for co-organizing this event with AOSIS, and for being a consistent partner in advocating for climate action. We are also very grateful that Ms. Fekitamoeloa Katoa ‘Utoikamanu the USG of OHRLLS was able to join us to deliver the keynote remarks, and ASG Selwin Hart for moderating the discussions. We would also like to thank our panelists for joining us today.
2. Today’s dialogue makes one message abundantly clear: we **do not** have the **luxury of delaying** climate action; the time for ambitious commitments leading us to a 1.5°C world is now.
3. Each speaker and participant has underscored that the postponement of COP 26 is no invitation to postpone climate action. It cannot be! The scientific and political imperative is clear. We have **less than a decade** to reverse the trajectory of global warming and to get on track to 1.5 consistent pathways.
4. Many have acknowledged the signs of hope emerging from the recent announcements from China at UNGA and from the Secretary-General’s Climate Action Roundtable. But as my co-host and I have equally underscored, **we need more than signs** from major emitters. We need to see concrete plans on the table and **well before we get to COP26**. The deadline for submission of new NDCs under the Paris Agreement is this year. And truth be told, we have had that deadline in sight since 2015. So really there is **no excuse for dithering**.
5. SIDS and LDCs have already begun to come forward and we heard today from Jamaica and Rwanda - two of our frontrunners. Where then are our partners who talk the talk of ambition? What are you waiting for?

6. A **second message** that has been unanimous is that COP 26 cannot be yet another call for transformative action. **COP 26** is a **delivery point** for climate action and ambition on **all fronts - mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and finance**.
7. The **third message** that follows on from this is that the **intersessional** period between now and COP26, is the **critical moment of transformation**, spurred on by the global upheaval of COVID-19. We cannot continue in a business as usual fashion. **This is our CTRL-ALT-DEL moment**. The recover better mantra needs to manifest in stimulus and recovery packages that exact the change that will avert or at least soften the blow of the unavoidable climate and other environmental disruptions that lie ahead.
8. COVID-19 has magnified the entrenched inequalities of this world. SIDS and LDCs share some similar characteristics that pre-exist the pandemic. We are structurally disadvantaged, debt burdened, fiscally compromised, climate stigmatized, and economically marginalized. COVID-19 has exacerbated these endemic vulnerabilities and thrown us into an economic tailspin. At a side event I co-hosted with the Commonwealth Secretariat yesterday on COVID-19 impact for small states, there was a palpable sense of alarm that the vulnerable are stranded, left to fend for themselves whether it is with COVID or with climate.
9. There is a global **duty of care to protect the vulnerable** enshrined in the UN Charter and in the global development agenda; but right now the global institutions are in breach of that duty. The **fourth message** thus coming through from the SIDS and LDCs constituency is that the international system - the UN, the international financial institutions, as well as the G7 and the G20 - must respond to our urgent needs with **targeted immediate financial support** and we need to re-envision systemic **transformation** so that when future crises of this magnitude occur, because they will, the vulnerable will not be left destitute.
10. The **fifth message** coming out loud and clear is that even though the COVID-19 pandemic has presented us all with enormous challenges, it has also opened up **new avenues for cooperation and collaboration** especially with enhancing **climate resilience ambition**. Response and recovery measures, including stimulus packages and investments, should be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. We must also see the delivery of the 100B per annum

climate finance commitment by developed countries. Climate finance especially in light of the COVID 19 pandemic is particularly critical to SIDS and the LDCs, and we need concrete progress on access as well as on debt relief.

11. It is often at times of crisis that the global community has made the greatest strides towards common solutions. The spirit of multilateralism, solidarity and partnerships are more important now than ever to overcome the dual crises of climate change and COVID-19.

12. Current and future generations are relying on governments of the world to ‘get it right’. It is time for all countries especially the large emitters to step up to the plate and announce in 2020 more ambitious NDCs and plans for carbon neutrality by 2050.

13. We count on the able leadership of the incoming UK COP President to deliver a strong and ambitious outcome at COP 26, one that sends the right message to the rest of the world.

14. Thank you all again, and have a pleasant afternoon!