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Green Climate Fund still not addressing needs of most vulnerable: AOSIS

New York -- 21 August 2020 -- While the Green Climate Fund Board this week approved a number of small island developing states projects, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) remains very concerned at the lack of funding available given the economic blow from COVID-19, and the GCF's focus on climate mitigation rather than the desperately-needed funds for adaptation.

Despite being amongst the most vulnerable, SIDS still only represent less than ten percent of total requests for GCF Funding, with funding trends still skewed towards mitigation. In the current batch of proposals, three quarters of the GCF funds will be allocated to mitigation while only 25 percent will go to adaptation.

Another worrisome trend is the overwhelming volume of funds being channeled through international access entities (85%), sidelining the ability of direct access entities from developing countries to expand and strengthen access to finance.

Only three of the projects approved at this week's meeting came through the new, Simplified Approval Process (SAP), a GCF initiative spearheaded by SIDS Board Members, designed specifically to make the process more accessible to smaller nations.

"While the GCF's new procedure was supposed to facilitate greater Small Island Developing States' access to the fund, it is clear that it's not working - we need real reforms that translate into actual approvals," said Ambassador Dr. Aubrey Webson, Antigua and Barbuda's Permanent Representative to the UN.

AOSIS noted that the pandemic was exacerbating small island states' vulnerabilities, and more than ever they need institutions like the GCF to help build resilience.

"COVID-19 risks entrenching many small island developing economies permanently in debt. The importance of the Green Climate Fund and the role it can play in accelerating transformative climate action in this present decade cannot be understated," noted Ambassador Dr. Satyendra Prasad of Fiji.

For the current replenishment cycle, SIDS expect to see a clear strategic plan and programming responses that have a more targeted approach to vulnerable countries, with particular attention to adaptation needs and loss and damage responses.

"There is a globally-recognized climate and economic urgency that needs to be translated into an improved GCF that delivers in speed and scale and is responsive to the dire needs of small island developing states," said Ambassador Prasad.

AOSIS also noted that by meeting virtually, the GCF Board had demonstrated that it was possible to get work done on climate despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

"You just need commitment. The UK, as the incoming COP President could do well to take this example on board in its bid to keep climate momentum alive in the hiatus created in postponing COP26 to the end of 2021," said Ambassador Prasad.