



**Statement by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) for the Intergovernmental consultations on the declaration for the 2022 UN Conference to support the implementation of SDG 14.**

1 February 2022 (10:00am – 1:00pm, 3:00pm – 6:00pm)  
General Assembly Hall

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) [, in alignment with the statement delivered by the Group of 77 & China].

AOSIS wishes to congratulate H.E. Ms. Keisha McGuire, the Permanent Representative of Grenada on being appointed in her role as the co-facilitator for this process. At the same time, we are very pleased to welcome back H.E. Mr. Martin Bille Hermann, the Permanent Representative of Denmark to his role as co-facilitator. We are confident that with your able leadership and guidance, we will be able to adopt a robust Declaration at the UN Oceans Conference this year.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the postponement of the Conference, is a stark reminder of why we need to diversify our economies, enhance resilience, and strengthen the science-policy interface. The objectives of this Conference, which include scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation, has vast potential to accelerate equitable, ecological and economically attractive growth for sustainable recovery as we endeavour to , get back on track to attaining our Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, AOSIS looks forward to the Conference in Lisbon this year, and stands ready to support Portugal and Kenya to ensure its success.

Although the pandemic interrupted our deliberations on this document in 2020, significant progress was made during the preceding informal consultations. AOSIS therefore strongly supports the approach to resume work with the latest revised version of the declaration. We are pleased to note that the text was further enhanced following the last round of written submissions. In particular, AOSIS welcomes the recognition of the cultural significance of the ocean, the commitment to take further actions to address matured

targets, the role of relevant traditional knowledge, and recognition of the particular capacity challenges of SIDS and LDCs.

However, we do recognize that it is important for the Declaration to reflect relevant developments that took place over the last 2 years, and we also see room for further strengthening the text as we move ahead:

1. We believe that the Declaration should address the importance of enhancing science-based and innovative approaches that can be used in **sustainable recovery, particularly in the context of augmenting the blue economy and advancing nature-based solutions for oceans**.
2. With momentum building towards a global instrument to address plastic pollution, we welcome the reference to marine plastic litter as a specific action area. In addition to eliminating the discharge, and reducing additional pollution, we believe that scientific approaches and innovation should also be developed, focusing on **remediation of marine plastic litter** that is already in the ocean.
3. The Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) is another critical process for SIDS. The fourth session was postponed due to the pandemic. While the declaration recognizes its importance, we believe it should also emphasize **the urgency of concluding this process**, which has now spanned for almost a decade.
4. Recognizing that actions are already being undertaken by various instruments, processes and mechanisms, we believe it is critical to streamline and maximize the impact of actions that emerge from this Conference. In line with the language from the 2017 Call for Action, it should be recognized that these **actions reinforce and do not duplicate existing efforts**.
5. AOSIS is also of the view that measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change should **include disaster risk reduction and post disaster recovery** from ocean-related extreme weather events, which our islands continue to experience frequently.
6. Last but not least, AOSIS strongly supports the language on establishing effective partnerships, which underpins the SAMOA Pathway as well. To bring the language more in line with existing frameworks, we believe that greater visibility should be provided to **“genuine and durable”**

**partnerships,** rather than ones which may perform well, but cannot be sustained.

We look forward to hearing further views from other delegations on the text, and assure you that AOSIS will work constructively to ensure an ambitious and unanimous outcome at the end of the process.

I thank you.