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# MALDIVES

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**Opening Statement by H.E. Dr Ali Naseer Mohamed,  
Ambassador, Maldives Mission to the United Nations,  
at the Opening of the First Session of the SIDS4 Preparatory  
Committee  
22 January 2024  
Venue: TBC**

Thank you, Ambassador,

1. At the very outset, allow me to thank you all, for electing me as a co-chair of this Preparatory Committee. It is a distinct honour and privilege to be elected to lead the discussions here at this Prep Comm, and to ensure that the path to St John's is smooth, free from major bumps and to ensure that the outcome of SIDS4 is an outcome that we can all be proud of. I look forward to working with Ambassador Schwalger and the rest of the Bureau to deliver a fruitful outcome from this process.
2. I also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Thilmeeza Hussain, former Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the United Nations for her hard work and tireless efforts to guarantee the success of this Prep Comm and the SIDS4 Conference.



Excellencies,

3. I had the honour of attending the SIDS Conference in Barbados when we adopted the Barbados Programme of Action, in 1994. I also had the privilege of being the Chair of AOSIS, and therefore playing a key role in the adoption of the SAMOA Pathway, in 2014. Today, I sit here, as one of the co-chairs of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth SIDS Conference. I am here with a renewed hope, and a strong determination, to ensure that this SIDS Conference delivers for the SIDS, and for all UN Member States.

Excellencies,

4. SIDS account for approximately 20% of the UN Membership. However, the challenges that they face often get drowned out in the cacophony of wider international issues. This is a systemic problem, and one that we must endeavour to address coming out of the SIDS4 Conference.
5. In this regard, access to finance that is adequate, and easily accessible is essential to ensure that challenges faced by SIDS can be addressed in a comprehensive manner. We must take note of the efforts by small island developing States to champion the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index. Such an Index will provide much needed information on the status of the countries and ensure that assistance reaches those who need it the most.

Excellencies



6. Just months ago, our representatives were huddled together in rooms much like this, pouring over reams of paper, attempting to finalise the outcome document of COP28. For all its achievements, including the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund, we must acknowledge that even today, the available climate finance is nowhere near the amount needed to adequately address the effects of climate change. We must strive to encourage Parties to meet their financing commitments, not only for the Loss and Damage Fund, but also under the pledge to channel 100 billion dollars a year towards addressing climate change.
  
7. However, finance can only do so much. It cannot ensure the success of projects, nor can it ensure that projects are beneficial to those who it is aimed at. To ensure that development reaches those who need it, and that the development that is delivered is the development that is needed, SIDS need information. They need valuable data. Much of this data remains unaccounted for. Therefore, we must strive to enhance data collection and sharing, with a vision towards improving the assistance and development that is delivered to SIDS.
  
8. We must also not forget the key role of science, technology, and digitalisation in ensuring future-proof development for SIDS. In the coming days we have a unique opportunity to shape the way in which science, technology and digitalisation can be enmeshed into the development of SIDS. It will be an opportunity to lay the groundwork for what can be the future of development for all states.



Excellencies,

9. It is time that SIDS take the helm of their development journey. SIDS need to be the authors of their own stories. They need to be able to decide what the future holds for them. This can only be attained by developing capacity in SIDS. In ensuring that the productive populations in SIDS are adequately supported and supplemented. Our mantra should be, “From SIDS, For SIDS”. This is the only way, in which we can ensure that the development of SIDS is truly sustainable, and truly transformative.
  
10. It is also extremely important to ensure that the development of SIDS comes from genuine partnerships. As is often noted by Chair of AOSIS, and Permanent Representative of Samoa, Ambassador Luteru, the special circumstances of the SIDS does not take away the potential to be equal partners. It does not take away the potential to collaborate in pursuing mutual gains for both SIDS and all countries. It is only through mutual respect and shared opportunities that SIDS, and partners can grow together, reaping the benefits of genuine, and shared partnerships.



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## Excellencies,

11. We must learn from our mistakes. To do that, we need a good monitoring and evaluation mechanism to supplement the Programme of Action that comes out of SIDS4. Without such a mechanism, we will be hard pressed to identify the successes we achieve, or gauge how far away we are from the goalposts. Without a monitoring and evaluation mechanism we will not know to correct our bearings, should we go off course. I am sure, that we do not want to come back to this room in another 10 years, and ask, what have we achieved? That would be a failure on our part.

## Excellencies,

12. The task ahead of us, in the next three days, is challenging, but achievable. We must remember what we are here for – we are here to negotiate a new programme of action for small island developing States, for the next 10 years. Therefore, our utmost responsibility should be to ensure that the path that we draw for the SIDS, ultimately guides them to progress, to resilience, and to sustainable development.
13. To that end, we must engage actively, discuss openly, and negotiate in good faith, to ensure that the outcome of the SIDS4 conference, truly addresses the challenges faced by the SIDS. Whether it is resilient economies, safe and prosperous societies, a secure future, or the protection of the environment and the sustainability of the planet – we must find solutions. And those solutions must be equitable, fair, and just.



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I thank you.