

# **Morocco Statement at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States**

**January 22, 2024.**

Distinguished co-chairs of the preparatory committee,

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

-Morocco aligns itself with the statement made by the G77 and China and we are pleased to actively engage in the works of this preparatory committee in view of the fourth international conference on Small Island Developing States.

-Beyond raising awareness, political action is paramount in order to address the challenges facing SIDS, especially those related to the growing phenomenon of climate change and the issue of Sea level rise affecting most coastal areas.

- For Africa, Rising sea levels are already leading to coastal erosion, increased flooding, and saltwater intrusion, affecting communities, agriculture, and infrastructure.

- In this regard, Morocco, spearheaded by King Mohammed VI, continues investing in regional efforts to strengthen the climate resilience of African island states. Since the 1st African Action Summit convened on the sidelines of COP22 in Marrakech in 2016, three African Climate Commissions were launched and operationalized, including one dedicated to Small Island countries, which is chaired by the Seychelles.

-Morocco continues its support to this Commission, in order to ensure institutional financial support in the fields of blue and green economy and enhancing technical, scientific and financial support of Small island countries to help them adapt to the impacts of global warming.

-The international community is only now beginning to contemplate what climate change is causing to coastal countries and especially to SIDS. Currently, international law provides only limited guidance on how to engage with gradual uninhabitability and disappearance of a country's landmass under the tideline. When adopting the UN Charter in 1945 and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982, sea level rise was not even contemplated as an issue, because climate change was

not anticipated, certainly not at the rate and scale of current epic proportions.

-In this vein, Morocco welcomes the timely initiative by the President of the General Assembly to convene next September, a high-level plenary meeting on addressing the existential threats posed by sea level rise during the GA High Level Week.

-Morocco has also been strengthening cooperation in the field of integrated Coastal Zone Management for sustainable development in string partnership with SIDS by presenting every 2 years, since 2019, with a wide support from member states, the first United Nations resolution on strengthening Cooperation in the field of integrated Coastal Zone Management, aimed at promoting sustainable development of coastal zones including in Small Island States.

-To conclude, let me reiterate that Morocco fully contributes to the initiatives and programs in support of the sustainable development priorities of SIDS.

-The convening of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Antigua and Barbuda is a unique opportunity for the international community to show stronger solidarity and support for SIDS.

-Morocco will continue working constructively in the intergovernmental consultation process on the basis of our strong solidarity with Small Island Developing States in Africa and around the world.

Thank you.