



Statement by South Africa during the First Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States

22 January 2024

South Africa welcomes this First Preparatory Committee Meeting to discuss the organizational, procedural and substantive preparations for the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, whose status as a special case for sustainable development due to their ecological fragility, vulnerability to severe effects of climate change and high debt levels, was formally recognised by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

The theme for the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States is, Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity. This theme is indicative of key concerns of SIDS, which are resilient societies and economies that are characterised by economically engaged populations connected to the global market.

South Africa is supportive of the upcoming 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which seeks to build upon the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy, and the Samoa Pathway to address the structural and external challenges of SIDS to achieve the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDGs 2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17.

The SDG Summit of last year gave us cause for concern due to our collective shortfall in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda represents an opportunity for all of us to course-correct our previous developmental missteps. That is why South Africa continues to champion all international initiatives that seek to bring us all back on track toward achieving the 2030 Agenda such as the Secretary-General's Stimulus Plan, the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund, reform of international financial architecture, and the use of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) as a supplementary feature for access to low-cost and long-term financing and debt relief.

It is South Africa's belief that if we can succeed on these initiatives, then will all be a giant step closer to realising the 2030 Agenda. For their part, SIDS will be a step closer on their *Course Toward Resilient Prosperity*.

To conclude, South Africa conveys its well wishes to Antigua and Barbuda for a successful 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, and looks forward to participating meaningfully in the deliberations of this First Preparatory Committee Meeting.

Thank you.