ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

SUBMISSION

Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to the topic of the first global dialogue in 2024.

MANDATE(S)

Encourages Parties, observers and other non-Party stakeholders to submit views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to the topic of each dialogue via the submission portal four weeks before each dialogue, noting that the submissions may include information on incentives and national policy approaches for action and support, and recognizing that submitting views well in advance of each dialogue facilitates their integration into the organization of the dialogue;

Decision 4/CMA.4, para 14 FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/L.16, para 9

22nd April 2024

Introduction

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on matters related to the topics to address the overarching mandate of the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP), which is: to urgently scale up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade (…) in a manner that complements the global stocktake (GST) (1/CMA. 3 paragraph 27). In relation to this overarching mandate, AOSIS would like to remind all Parties and non-Party stakeholders of the **urgent and pressing** need to scale up mitigation ambition and implementation efforts to be aligned with the 1.5ºC goal in what is the critical decade for action, as defined by climate science, to ensure the future of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

We are collectively still way off track to halving global emissions by 2030. Keeping the 1.5°C warming limit within reach requires peaking of global greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 and accelerating global mitigation efforts through rapid, deep, and sustained

reduction in global emissions. AOSIS stresses the importance of the MWP in helping Parties to develop and unlock actionable mitigation pathways that yield science-aligned emissions reduction outcomes across critical sectors of the economy. In this context, AOSIS acknowledges the important contribution of "**Cities: buildings and urban systems**", as per the topic put forward by the co-chairs of the MWP. Given the broad scope of the topic, AOSIS would like to highlight the intersection between cities, sustainable urban systems and energy resilience, and their relevance in setting the world on a path to 1.5˚C with no overshoot.

AOSIS reiterates that the MWP's global dialogues and investment-focused events are instrumental in helping Parties to forge pathways for mitigation action that align with limiting warming to 1.5ºC. These platforms serve as vital arenas where technical insights are translated into actionable solutions on the ground. It will be critical in 2024 that Parties and non-Party stakeholders contribute their experiences and perspectives on opportunities, challenges, and barriers pertinent to the topics addressed in the dialogues, especially concerning 1.5ºC-aligned mitigation actions, and the associated financial, technological, and capacity-building needs, for cities, buildings, and urban systems, at local, regional and global scales. Critically for AOSIS, this must include identifying clear linkages between the opportunities to transform cities, buildings and urban systems and the implementation of mitigation elements of the first Global Stocktake (GST) outcome from COP28, particularly its energy package.

AOSIS acknowledges the commitment of the co-chairs of the MWP in advancing discussions under this crucial mandate. However, it is disheartening to note that the topics we proposed were overlooked. Nonetheless, AOSIS remains confident that the MWP global dialogues will consider the unique circumstances and needs of SIDS and will yield inclusive tangible outcomes that are reflected in the CMA.6 decision at COP29 and help get emissions onto a 1.5ºC pathway. This will be an important part of shaping deliberations at COP29, including through the High-level Ministerial Round Table, and in informing the ambition and implementation of Parties' forthcoming Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Strategies (LTSs).

AOSIS Priorities

In reference to our submission on 31 January 2024, AOSIS **stresses the synergy** between the MWP and the GST decision, highlighting the MWP's role in incorporating GST outcomes into future planning. In 2024, AOSIS priorities for the MWP remain focused on implementing key GST mitigation elements, especially those outlined in Decision 1/CMA.5 Paragraphs 28 and 33. Key areas in this regard include:

1. **Linking NDC targets with net zero emissions commitments:** AOSIS urges all Parties to submit ambitious NDCs aligned with the 1.5ºC goal, and with long-term strategies to meet net zero strategies.
2. **Global energy transition to phase out fossil fuels:** Discussions under the MWP should accelerate efforts to implement the agreement in the GST outcome to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems, reduce non-carbon dioxide emissions, and transition in a just and equitable manner to renewable energy sources, in line with the goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

3. **Eliminating fossil fuel subsidies:** AOSIS repeats its previous calls for G20 countries to lead the phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies, redirecting funds towards energy transition initiatives.
4. **Scaling up partnerships for renewable energy**: AOSIS calls for increased collaboration, particularly with developing countries including SIDS, to accelerate renewable energy solutions, in support of "Tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030".
5. **Protecting nature and ecosystems:** AOSIS encourages Parties to action and support efforts related to "conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems towards achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal, including through enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and by conserving biodiversity"

AOSIS stresses the importance of these areas in speeding up decarbonization and reaching our agreed climate goals in line with the latest science. Accordingly, a key focus of the global dialogues and investment-focused events in 2024 should be on identifying actionable solutions and investment pathways for cities, buildings and urban systems that will contribute to the transformation needed to implement the mitigation elements of the GST outcome. Large cities and urban areas in major economies, particularly the G20, must demonstrate early and continuing leadership in delivering this transformation.

The opportunities are already well documented by the IPCC (AR6 WGIII report), as well as by initiatives such as the C40 which focuses specifically on cities. For example, measures linked to the GST mitigation elements include: accelerating the energy transition of cities to renewables and divesting from fossil fuels, decarbonization of buildings, reforming urban planning policies and regulations to influence demand and investment decisions, transforming transport and waste management systems in cities and urban areas, and decarbonizing industrial sectors that are integral to city and urban infrastructure (e.g. steel, cement).Such measures are all centered upon cities reducing the amount of energy they use and switching away from fossil fuels.

To highlight two related key findings from the IPCC AR6 WGIII Summary for Policymakers:

> *C.6. Urban areas can create opportunities to increase resource efficiency and significantly reduce GHG emissions through the systemic transition of infrastructure and urban form through low-emission development pathways towards net-zero emissions. Ambitious mitigation efforts for established, rapidly growing and emerging cities will encompass (i) reducing or changing energy and material consumption, (ii) electrification, and (iii) enhancing carbon uptake and storage in the urban environment. Cities can achieve net-zero emissions, but only if emissions are reduced within and outside of their administrative boundaries through supply chains, which will have beneficial cascading effects across other sectors. (very high confidence) {8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, Figure 8.21, 13.2}*

C.7. In modelled global scenarios, existing buildings, if retrofitted, and buildings yet to be built, are projected to approach net zero GHG emissions in 2050 if policy packages, which combine ambitious sufficiency, efficiency, and renewable energy measures, are effectively implemented and barriers to decarbonisation are removed. Low ambition policies increase the risk of locking-in buildings' carbon for decades, while well-designed and effectively implemented mitigation interventions (in both new buildings and existing ones if retrofitted), have significant potential to contribute to achieving SDGs in all regions while adapting buildings to future climate. (high confidence) {9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.9}

"Cities: buildings and urban systems" in the context of SIDS

- **Barriers & Challenges**

SIDS are characterized by towns rather than cities, face unique challenges stemming from their small land areas, which constrain their capacity to undertake large-scale infrastructure projects and impede urban expansion and development. Moreover, their reliance on imported fossil fuels for energy generation makes them susceptible to global oil price fluctuations, hindering the transition to renewable energy sources. These obstacles are compounded by limited institutional capacity and governance structures, which hamper effective planning and coordination, as well as data and information gaps that obstruct informed decision-making.

Furthermore, SIDS encounter multiple obstacles in their pursuit of climate resilience. Limited financial, technological and human resources pose significant hurdles, impeding capacity to invest in sustainable infrastructure and resilience measures essential for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Moreover, the susceptibility to extreme weather events, such as cyclones, exacerbated by sea-level rise, threatens infrastructure integrity and disrupts urban systems, further complicating resilience efforts. This is coupled with the effects of pandemics, which have pushed SIDS into growing debts and trade deficits, restraining governments' ability to increase finances for sustainable urban developments.

- **Opportunities**

Given the nature of the outlined barriers and distinct hurdles towards executing large-scale climate resilient infrastructure projects and urban expansion and development; cities, building and urban systems in SIDS present promising avenues for sustainable development and resilience-building despite these challenges.

AOSIS recognizes the opportunities through green infrastructure development of urban systems such as green roofs, permeable pavements, urban forests/vegetation and streets designs that foster less reliance on motorized

transport. These endeavors not only bolster resilience to climate change impacts like flooding and heatwaves but also contribute to biodiversity conservation, enhance urban aesthetics and reduce emissions. Additionally, SIDS have ample prospects to integrate the use of renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and biomass energy into their urban systems thus, further reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enhancing energy security, and lessening reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Implementing smart city technologies, such as smart grids, presents another avenue for advancing sustainable urban developments in SIDS. These technologies enhance urban efficiency, resource management, and service delivery by enabling better monitoring and management of energy, water, waste, and transportation systems, resulting in cost savings and environmental benefits. Furthermore, retrofitting current buildings and constructing climate-resilient buildings with features like passive design, natural ventilation, and storm-resistant materials enhances the resilience of urban infrastructure to extreme weather events. Building codes should ensure the safety of any retrofitting so that mounting structures can hold the weight and storm wind loads expected in SIDS. Engaging local communities in decision-making processes and capacity-building initiatives empowers residents to actively participate in sustainable development efforts, fostering social cohesion and resilience.

- **Actionable Solutions**

Ensuring actions align with the 1.5^{o}C goal requires SIDS to take holistic strategies that address these unique challenges. Among the actionable solutions essential for this endeavor is following green building codes and standards to enhance energy efficiency within buildings through measures like improved insulation, use of energy-efficient appliances, which can notably curtail energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Concurrently, advancing renewable energy integration by prioritizing solar, wind, and biomass sources can effectively decarbonize energy systems while strengthening energy security and resilience.

Moreover, investing in public transportation infrastructure, and creating green spaces and parks are integral components of sustainable urban development in the region. Implementing these measures promotes energy efficiency, reduces environmental impact, enhances biodiversity, improves air quality, and provides recreational opportunities. Additionally, promoting sustainable waste management practices, enhancing disaster resilience through risk reduction measures, and fostering community engagement in urban planning contribute to the overall goal of achieving sustainable development while preserving cultural identity and improving residents' quality of life.

Working together with communities and different groups is key for making sustainable development happen. By undertaking these actionable solutions, urban systems and buildings in SIDS can move closer to being aligned with the goal of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees. This will make them stronger, promote sustainable growth, and improve people's lives.