ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

AOSIS Submission

Submission by Palau on behalf of the Alliance of Small Islands States on views from Parties on the topics to be discussed as part of the Mitigation Work Programme – Fifth global dialogue and investment focused event

Monday 14th April 2025

The Alliance of the Small Island States (AOSIS) acknowledges the significance of the 5th Global Dialogue under the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Program in advancing equitable climate action. The AFOLU and Waste Sectors are critical for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) due to their direct links to climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and emission reduction potential.

SIDS have demonstrated commitment to integrating Waste and Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sectors into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, despite facing challenges such as limited financing, technical capacity and exposure to external technological dependencies. Therefore, this submission highlights key opportunities, challenges and recommendations tailored to ensure that SIDS specific contexts are adequately considered in global mitigation efforts.

Mitigation in the Waste Sector: Investing in the circular economy

A number of SIDS are seeking to promote circulate economy approaches so as to minimise waste and pollution by using natural, customary products and long-life materials.

- **Coverage:** While specific data on AOSIS countries is not detailed, globally, about 67% of NDCs include mitigation measures related to the waste sector[1], for Pacific 7 out of 8 updated Pacific NDCs include specific actions or targets for the Waste sector[2]. For LAC region, 50 % of countries have included measures addressing methane from the waste sector in their NDCs, including the following island nations: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Haiti[3].
- **GHG Reduction Potential:** Waste-related projects in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu could save over 4.8 million metric tons of CO_2 equivalent (tCO_2e) by 2030 if fully implemented[4].

1 https://transparency-partnership.net/system/files/document/NDC%20Brief%20-%20Circular%20Economy%20and%20Solid%20Waste%20Management.pdf
2 https://www.spc.int/updates/blog/blog-post/2024/06/regional-ndc-hub-highlighted-at-unfccc-sb60
3 https://www.ccacoalition.org/events/webinar-enhancing-ndcs-integrating-waste-methane-strategies-and-opportunities-support-latin-america-and-caribbean?utm_source=chatgpt.com
4 https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/65fe8370-ea9b-474f-9396-48a94d78e892/content

- **Vanuatu Case Study:** Since 2018 Vanuatu has banned single use plastic items including: shopping bags, polystyrene takeaway boxes and plastic straws. This has led to a 90% reduction in lightweight, single-use plastic bag usage in 2020 compared to 2018. In 2020, a second phase of the policy added seven more items to the list of forbidden plastics, which now covers cutlery, single-use plates and artificial flowers. The latest survey, conducted in 2023, shows that banned items have dropped from 35% of all litter surveyed (in 2018) made up just 2% of litter (in 2023).

AFOLU Sector Integration

- **Coverage**:
    - **Mitigation**: Similarly, 60% of Pacific countries include agriculture in their NDCs, while 64% address forestry[5]. Four updated NDCs (e.g. Samoa, Tonga) including concrete measurable AFOLU targets. In Caribbean islands, AFOLU mitigation options represents an urgent necessity. The Dominican Republic, for example, has included several AFOLU measures in its NDC, such as the Cacao NAMA (146,648 ha, reducing 2.2 million tCO2eq), the Coffee NAMA (75,102 ha, reducing 5 million tCO2eq), and an increase in reforestation to 15,000 ha/year. These projects seek to reduce emissions and promote sustainable practices in agriculture and forest management[6].
    - **Adaptation**: The AFOLU sector is also key to climate resilience, with initiatives focused on forest restoration and the adoption of climate –resilient agricultural and livestock practices, strengthening food security and sustainability. In the Pacific, Samoa is targeting a 26% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 (compared to 2007) through agroforestry expansion and forest cover increases.
- **Quantitative Targets:** Pacific countries like Samoa and Tonga have set measurable AFOLU targets (e.g., forest cover increases), whereas some developing countries NDCs still use vague metrics like "halving deforestation rates"[7].

The Fifth Global Dialogue under the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme presents a critical opportunity to reframe climate action in the SIDS context through a lens of equity, contextual relevance, and technological justice. We emphasize the unique opportunities and challenges for SIDS in implementing forest-sector mitigation solutions while advocating for a just transition.

We recognize the invitation to Parties and Observer States dated April 4, 2025, indicating that the Fifth Global Dialogue will focus on enabling mitigation solutions in the forest sector, drawing on national and regional experience, and that indicative areas for discussion being considered by the co-chairs may include:

[5] https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/65fe8370-ea9b-474f-9396-48a94d78e892/content
[6] https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/Dominican%20Republic%20First%20NDC%20%28Updated%20Submission%29.pdf
[7] https://www.recoftc.org/special-report/Report-COP26-land-use-sector/how-ambitious-are-asia%E2%80%93pacific%E2%80%99s-nationally-determined-contributions

- best practices and solutions to address challenges and barriers to mitigation action in the forest sector, in particular to implement Article 5 of the Paris Agreement, and
- approaches to enable means of implementation for actions and solutions in the forest sector, particularly to implement Article 5 of the Paris Agreement

We further recognize the call for views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers. In this context, the key areas of focus for the Fifth Global Dialogue and investment-focused event under the Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme, should address the following specifics to SIDS.

➢ Enhancing Mitigation opportunities in the AFOLU Sector

1. Support for forest and coastal ecosystem protection and climate-smart agriculture

The protection of forests and coastal ecosystems in Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) countries is critical to both mitigation and adaptation efforts, given SIDS' unique vulnerabilities and the ecological significance of these ecosystems for biodiversity. Several SIDS countries, like Belize, Suriname, Guyana and Papua New Guinea, possess vast natural forests that act as a carbon sinks, contributing to global climate stability. All SIDS possess coastal ecosystems that offer mitigation benefits and also serve as buffers against a range of climate impacts. International support is needed for the protection and restoration of these ecosystems, including for:

- Community-led Forest management, integrating traditional ecological knowledge into forest and mangrove conservation and restoration practices.
- Climate smart agriculture, recognizing the link between agriculture and deforestation, as well as the need for tools for an inclusive and fair transition to climate-resilient agriculture, for example, through the development of social protection programs to support farmers, policy frameworks that ensure equitable access to resources, markets and finance, and gender-sensitive agricultural policies for inclusive decision-making.
- Investment in data collection, monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems, as well as capacity building to support the assessment, maintenance and enhancement of forest cover.

2. Innovative Financing Mechanisms

To address challenges of limited financing, technical capacity and exposure to external technological dependencies, SIDS could benefit from the deployment of a suite of innovative modalities for resource mobilization that also mitigate against unsustainable debt, which could include:

- Blended finance models that combine public grants with private investments, tailored to micro-enterprise capacities.
- Simplified access to climate finance, particularly through grants rather than loans, and increased support from multilateral agencies to finance sustainable agricultural development projects

- Capacity building for the collection and management of data required to identify mitigation potential in the waste and AFOLU sectors
- Green and blue bonds as a sustainable source of debt capital for SIDS to finance innovative and new business opportunities
- Developing toolkits for debt for climate or debt for nature swaps in SIDS
- Development of financial tools to de-risk investments and improve insurance options in agriculture sector
- Financing for conservation and ecosystem services as a non-market modality in view of the mitigation potential of high forest cover and low deforestation countries that are SIDS.
- Initiatives to build capacity including through promotion of south-south cooperation programmes
- Results-based payments through initiatives such as REDD+ frameworks addressing reduced deforestation
- Simplified access to climate finance from multilateral, regional and bilateral donors and providers to finance sustainable agricultural and food security related projects
- Increased technical assistance to SIDS to develop project proposals and concepts related to sustainable land and water management including programs that promote agroforestry, investments in coastal and mangrove protection measures
- Analysis into the feasibility of insurance schemes for the AFOLU sector that take into account the realities of SIDS, including when setting premiums.

➢ Enabling Mitigation Solutions / opportunities in the Waste Sector

1. Addressing Waste Sector - through the Lens of Just Transition

This submission emphasizes the importance of a just transition framework for the waste sector that ensures SIDS are not relegated to being dumping grounds for obsolete technology from developed countries.

2. Technological Colonialism

Past failures—such as imported waste-to-energy systems incompatible with island logistics—highlight the risks of treating SIDS as dumping grounds for obsolete and inappropriate technology. This must be overcome by fit for purpose solutions co-developed by and for SIDS. Solutions must address:

- IP-Free Technology Transfer: IPCC AR6 WGII notes that restrictive intellectual property regimes hinder SIDS' access to climate technologies. This dialogue should start discussions around licensing waivers for such technologies for SIDS.
- Reject "one-size-fits-all" models, e.g., large-scale afforestation projects that disrupt fragile ecosystems. For example, the case of Belize, it needs fit for purpose waste technologies (e.g. decentralized composting systems, and capacity building for data management to address baseline gaps).

➢ Recommendations for Equitable Investment

1. **Shift to Bottom-Up Design**
    - Explore ideas such as "SIDS Labs" for scalable solutions like mangrove-carbon projects paired with coastal resilience measures.
    - Funding for SIDS-led innovation for waste and AFOLU sectors.
2. **Reform Finance Accessibility**
    - Establish a SIDS Technology Clearinghouse to vet and match appropriate forestry technology (e.g. low-cost drones).
3. **Amplify Regional Collaboration**
    - Leverage the Regional Programmatic Approach to Climate Action (RPACA) to pool resources for shared challenges in waste and AFOLU.
    - Propose blended finance models for example Belize's utility scale solar projects (100MW target by 2035) and regional pooling via the Caribbean NDC Hub for shared AFOLU and Waste Projects.

AOSIS recommends the following:

- A SIDS specific event/platform to discuss waste and Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) at the Fifth Global Dialogue and Investment-Focused Event under the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme is crucial for several reasons, including the unique constraints (Capacity and finance), and the need for tailored solutions to address them.

- Financial and technical assistance to implement sustainable land and water management systems including programs that promote agroforestry and, investments in coastal protection measures to mitigate saltwater intrusion into farmlands due to rising sea levels.

- Support to existing regional and national mechanisms in SIDS that can champion solutions in the context of the unique challenges faced by SIDS, in the waste, agriculture and forestry sectors. For example, the Regional Pacific NDC Hub supports Pacific SIDS in refining their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and developing implementation plans. It can be leveraged to focus on these key sectors and provide technical assistance and facilitate access to international funding for projects in these sectors.