



**Statement delivered by Grenada**  
**on behalf of AOSIS at COP-16 Opening Plenary**  
**Cancun, Mexico – 29 November 2010**

Thank you very much Madame President.

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, a grouping of 43 members, that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
2. We are already suffering greatly from the changing climate that brings us more extreme weather events, warming oceans, and rising seas, that threaten our limited land resources, in a context where we do not have the financial or technological capacity to effectively respond.
3. I want at the outset to associate this statement with the statement of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
4. Madame President, we are here in the beautiful city of Cancun, famous for its sun, beaches and seas. But the scientific literature tells us that there could be a dark cloud over the future of this beautiful city if we do not succeed in limiting warming. 120,000 years ago, the Cancun coastline was swamped by a rapid 2metre rise in sea level when the world was likely at most 1 degree Celsius warmer than today ... note Mr. Chairman, below 2 degrees above preindustrial levels.

5. Madame President, the story of what happened to the coasts of Yucatan 120,000 years ago is the story of a rapid disintegration of an ice sheet under global warming. When we see the observed accelerating loss of ice from Greenland and the West Antarctic that is happening today and we read what the science is telling us happened in the past, we are deeply concerned.

6. So as we meet today, in this beautiful venue, we have the choice of whether we are going to preside over a repetition of this history, or whether we are going to have the courage and the strength to ensure that such a catastrophe does not happen here again.

7. Madame President, the evidence is all around us!

- It is in the record temperatures that the world has experienced in 2010 that will make it one of the hottest, if not the hottest year on record;
- It is in the wide range of extreme events that occurred throughout the world during 2010 that the WMO has described as "**an unprecedented sequence of extreme weather events**" that "**compare with, or exceed in intensity, duration or geographical extent, the previous largest historical events**" – events like the floods in Pakistan, and the extreme temperatures and forest fires in Russia to name a few;
- It is in the rapid melting of the ice sheets of Greenland and the Antarctic that scientists are struggling to explain;

- It is in the sea levels that are rising faster than the IPCC has projected ... and on and on ...
8. Madame President, Climate change is happening at a rate that is unprecedented and, if unchecked, could bring significant destruction and damage to many vulnerable countries around the world!!
  9. Just last month, in the Caribbean, at the same time as AOSIS was hosting one of our informal meetings in Grenada in preparation for this COP, Hurricane Tomas destroyed over 50% of the GDP of St. Lucia in a few hours.
  10. Earlier this year, in the Pacific, Cyclone Pat struck the second most populated island in the Cook Islands, resulting in damage or destruction of 80% of the houses on that island.
  11. In addition, Madame President, scientists are telling us that the growth of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are set to resume, increasing by about 3% this year after a reduction in 2009 due to the global economic crisis; and even more worryingly, they are saying that improvements in the carbon intensity of the energy sector are slowing down, with the rate of improvement now under half of the long-term trend.
  12. Madame President ... is this the future that we are planning here in Cancun?

13. Our emphatic answer is No! We CAN do better!... and we MUST to do better! ... we have to work with an heightened sense of urgency ... because business as usual MUST end or WE in small islands states will surely meet our end as viable states....

14. And herein lies our challenge in Cancun ... for we acknowledge that we cannot complete all of our work here in Cancun.

15. So for us Madame President, our collective challenge here in Cancun is to produce outcomes that will generate immediate action on the ground, in our countries to begin the process of while laying the basis for completing our unfinished work in South Africa, one year from now.

16. Madame President, we need action now:

- We need action that will radically limit the growth of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere; and peak global emissions by 2015.
- We need action that will provide the needed financial, technological and capacity building support to our countries to cope with these adverse impacts of climate change, including the loss and damage that we suffer, examples of which I have just given you in the experiences of St. Lucia and the Cook Is.

- We need action to bring global emissions down to a level that will allow the SURVIVAL of our countries, our people and our cultures. ,

17. And, Madame President, we have to lay the basis for completing our work in South Africa next year.

18. To do this, Madame President, two critical outcomes are necessary here in Cancun:

a. We need a decision here that the main outcome of the LCA process will be a ratifiable legally binding instrument e.g. a Protocol. We have introduced an AOSIS Protocol onto the COP agenda and look forward to the deliberations on that agenda item.

b. We also need a decision on a work programme aimed at concluding that Protocol in South Africa ... a work program with clear milestones, that would result in the adoption of a new Protocol under the AWG-LCA.

19. Madame President, these two outcomes are feasible if we commit to them now.

20. We are also looking forward to the discussions under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice. These discussions address significant items of interest to us, including discussions on the financial mechanism of the Convention, on adaptation, on national

communications, on research and systematic observation and on capacity building.

21. We note the inter-relationships between agenda items of the different bodies and strongly urge that arrangements be made to avoid duplication of effort, and to enable small delegations to participate effectively.
22. We are aware that this will require significant effort from all parties, and we are ready to support you Madame President, in your work over the next two weeks.
23. We sincerely thank Mexico for all the efforts that it has made to ensure that this COP delivers significant positive results.
24. And we look forward to working with you in ensuring that when we leave here at the end of next week, that we can look back on Cancun as the place where we, as an international community, CHOSE to ensure that the most vulnerable among us will not be destined to the pages of history , and where we demonstrated a collective will to rise to the occasion, in the common interest of all humanity.

I thank you, Madame President