



**Statement by Belize on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States
at the Ceremonial Meeting to mark the formal handover of the chairmanship of
the Group of 77 from the Arab Republic of Egypt to the State of Palestine**

15 January 2019
United Nations, New York

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies and Colleagues,

It is my honour to join you at this meeting in my capacity as the Belize Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), to mark the formal handover of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China, from the Arab Republic of Egypt to the State of Palestine.

First, I would like to thank Egypt, as the outgoing Chair, for its exemplary leadership, dedication and organization throughout the processes that we engaged in last year, 2018. From the various outcome documents that we negotiated here at the United Nations, the first meeting of the intergovernmental conference on BBNJ, the work in the Committees of the General Assembly and the formulation of the Paris Rulebook, the Chair has clearly made every effort to ensure that the interests and concerns of the Group were captured and reflected.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat of the G77 for the support that year after year it continues to provide to the Group, preserving the Group's institutional memory and orderly functioning, so that we are guided in a consistent manner and able to draw on our strengths, while maintaining flexibility as the need arises.

Secondly, I wish to welcome the State of Palestine as the new Chair of the Group, and to express our full support for your leadership in the year ahead. We are embarking on an important year, during which we will continue to deliberate on important reform issues at the United Nations, engage in Conferences including on the BBNJ, the HLPF, the ECOSOC Forum, as well as the UNFCCC, and most importantly for AOSIS, undertake the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway on the 27th September 2019.

I wish to highlight specific areas where AOSIS will lean on the Group of 77 and China for their solidarity and support.

The first, as I mentioned, is the review of the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway and its Partnership Framework which coincides with the 30 year anniversary of AOSIS. The review will coincide with the end of the first four-year cycle of the high level political forum which serves as the principal forum for the monitoring of the SIDS agenda. It will also coincide with the convening of the Secretary General's Climate Summit. Each of these occasions presents an opportunity for reinforcing international political solidarity for SIDS as a special case for sustainable development and targeted new initiatives for SIDS.

Secondly, as AOSIS Chair, Belize intends to be at the forefront of a drive for greater climate ambition consistent with the Paris Agreement objectives. Belize views 2019-2020 as a critical period for ramping up ambition on climate action. This is a challenge not just for small island developing states, it is a challenge for all developing countries in the Group of 77 and China. We must work together to ensure that we realize the ambitious long term goal of the Paris Agreement and so safeguard the larger sustainable development agenda. A critical component of that work will require forward thinking on climate finance and other means of implementation to ensure that we have the tools necessary to match the ambition we need. These are key priority issues for AOSIS and Belize is committed to strengthen AOSIS advocacy and engagement in multilateral decision making processes especially in relation to them.

Third, oceans governance is a matter of high priority for the SIDS. AOSIS is committed to working with the Members of the Group of 77 and China to ensure that our shared concerns particularly with regard to equitable use, capacity building, and technology transfer are reflected in the draft treaty for the BBNJ.

Mr. Chair,

While we recognise that we are a diverse group, our strength has always been finding a common voice in order to preserve our solidarity, and ensure that the interests of developing countries are not diluted in the UN processes that take place in New York and elsewhere. We are confident that under the leadership of

Palestine, the Group will continue to build on these strengths, and maintain the solidarity that we have always demonstrated.

Finally, I assure you of our full and constructive engagement and cooperation with the objective of completing 2019 with successes and achievements.

I thank you.