



**Statement by the Republic of Maldives
on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States
at the first Intergovernmental Consultations on the zero draft of the Habitat III Outcome
Document**

18 May 2016

Distinguished Chairman, Excellencies, Colleagues,

1. Thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the Distinguished Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. I would like to start by thanking the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for the HABITAT III for their hard work in bringing together such a vast array of issues into this document, consolidating information from the past 20 years, while looking forward to the next two decades.
3. AOSIS has compiled initial reactions to the document; these are our general comments that identify areas of agreement, and where we see space for strengthening the document. These comments are by no means comprehensive; they offer a first step in engaging with the document and outline many of the SIDS priorities in the New Urban Agenda.

General Comments

4. Overall, this text provides a useful starting point, covering a wide breadth of issues. It is important this be a global agenda, and as it states in the Declaration, “universal in scope.” In order to “leave no one behind” we should continue to identify new ways to reflect the wide diversity of governance arrangements, sizes and shapes of cities and human settlements in the text. Strengthening the inclusivity of the document is of particular importance to SIDS as many island countries have entire populations less than many global cities. Many SIDS are very remote, with islands isolated even from one another, let alone neighbouring states. Some SIDS feature smaller populations spread over hundreds of dispersed islands, while others are city-states; each of these different realities provides opportunities, but also many challenges, including for service delivery, transportation of essential goods, and disaster risk reduction. Therefore, we should ensure that the document, as well as any mechanisms for implementation or capacity development resulting from the New Urban Agenda, includes cities as well as all human settlements.
5. In addition we are looking to strengthen the language referencing urban-rural linkages and integration to be universal. For example, urban-rural linkages often include land-sea linkages

for many states, not only SIDS, and it will be important to have effective territorial management from land to land and land to sea to implement this New Urban Agenda.

6. There is potential, in this regard, for stronger references to the relationship cities and human settlements have with oceans and seas. The language within the zero draft focuses on land based mobility; however, many economic, transport, and food systems (food systems being another issue which could benefit from further detail in the text), have clear linkages to marine and fresh water resources. Therefore, as we work collaboratively through these negotiations, we shall identify opportunities to highlight land-to-sea proposals in the text.
7. We welcome the references throughout the text to the other global agendas and frameworks, including the SAMOA Pathway, 2030 Agenda, Addis Ababa Agenda, Sendai Declaration and Paris Agreement. It is important, however, that we not only include these terms but also make clear how these linkages will work in practice. As such, the text should reflect an encouragement for coordination and coherence.

We thank the Bureau for chance to bring forward our first thoughts and will present general comments pertaining to specific sections in the coming days.