



GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS

Thank You and Kia Orana Chair,

The Cook Islands aligns fully with the statement delivered by Palau on behalf of AOSIS, and Tuvalu on behalf of PSIDS. We also stand firmly with the High Ambition Coalition and Friends to secure a meaningful and ambitious agreement.

We fully appreciate the pressure of time, but let us be reminded: true progress moves at the pace of inclusion.

With the release of the assembled text, the Cook Islands remains extremely concerned by its unchecked expansion. The draft reflects not progress, but duplication and contradiction—more about avoiding compromise than genuine negotiation. Brackets keep piling up, stubborn as plastic pollution itself.

We echo PSIDS: this process must now shift to genuine streamlining. That requires a clear, transparent mandate for co-facilitators to clean up the text and, where necessary, present options to Plenary. Proper process must be followed in a transparent and equitable way—no one should be left behind at this critical stage.

We support the call for greater use of flexible formats—Friends of the Chair, small groups, and informal consultations—with open participation to help break deadlocks and build convergence. We thank you, Chair, for the work program already provided on CG1 (articles 3–5), and request clarity on the way forward for article 6.

Chair, Pacific SIDS are large ocean nations with scattered communities and limited capacity. We contribute less than 1.3% of global plastic pollution, yet we live with its daily impacts. The special circumstances and needs of SIDS must be fully operationalised through support mechanisms, implementation flexibility, and prioritised financing and capacity-building.

This must also include the recognition and integration of traditional knowledge, including that of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Equally, the treaty must be guided by the best available science. Together, they are essential for shaping effective, inclusive, and lasting solutions. Early agreement on harmonised criteria for safety, sustainability, and key chemicals and products of concern will be vital to the treaty's success.

As a small island country with one of the largest ocean spaces per capita, the Cook Islands commitment to this process is clear: we want a treaty that not only enables ambitious global action, but supports countries like ours to implement it meaningfully on the ground.

In this regard, finance is critical. A robust, predictable, and accessible financial mechanism must be central—not peripheral—to this treaty. For SIDS and other developing countries, timely and adequate support will determine our ability to meet obligations and sustain long-term implementation.

Chair, we must be clear: this process cannot result in a narrow waste management treaty. We are not here to negotiate landfill standards. We are here to address a systemic, transboundary crisis—one that threatens human health, ecosystems, and future generations. The treaty must reflect the scale and urgency of that challenge, addressing the full life cycle of plastics, including chemicals of concern, and not simply their disposal.



We call on your steadfast leadership Chair. The time for hesitation has passed. Let's deliver the meaningful and ambitious treaty our people, our planet and our ocean—expect.

Meitaki maata e kia manuia.