Statement Delivered by
Antigua and Barbuda at
the
Third Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.
Agenda Item 4

14 November 2023
Nairobi, Kenya

Agenda Item 4 Intervention

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda wishes to express its gratitude to the Government of Kenya for their hospitality in hosting this most important meeting, and to you Mr Chair and the Secretariat for your hard work in preparing the Zero Draft for our consideration.

Mr Chair, we consider the Zero Draft as a good basis for negotiation and wish to highlight the following elements:

1. **Capacity Building Technical Assistance and Technology Transfer**

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda aligns itself with the SIDS position and wishes to emphasise that it supports the utilisation of existing regional and sub-regional centres for capacity building, technology transfer and technical assistance that have been established under Conventions to which many of us are Party.

In particular, the Basel Convention has developed guidance in relation to plastic waste that are undergoing validation in a number of Caribbean member states. In the case of Antigua and Barbuda, the various modules of the current plastic waste guidance are being evaluated with the assistance and support of the Basel and Stockholm Convention Regional Centre for the Caribbean located in Trinidad and Tobago that is actively engaged in work relating to plastics.

Also, there are several Regional Activity Centres established under the Cartagena Convention within the wider Caribbean region duly supported by the Caribbean Environment Programme office in Jamaica.

The currently modalities are well established and provide a means of effective implementation of the proposed instrument.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda supports cooperation and coordination between our treaties and their secretariats to avoid duplication of efforts.

2. **Chemicals and Polymers of Concern**
The Government of Antigua and Barbuda aligns itself with the SIDS position, and further wishes to emphasise that the new instrument must allow for the further elaboration and characterisation of the chemicals and polymers of concern, to include, harmful, unnecessary, and problematic chemicals and polymers of concern to elaborate prescribed action based on the degree of risk to human health or the environment. The stringency of measures should reflect the risk of harm the chemical or polymer poses. Therefore, hazardous chemicals and polymers with conclusive scientific evidence of adverse and/or hazardous impacts on human health and the environment should be targeted stringently via elimination.

Further, the activity of compiling the annexes and determining phase-out schedules/timeframes must also be based on strong scientific evidence of impacts. Measures should take into account the availability of safe, accessible, efficient, economically feasible, environmentally friendly and sustainable alternatives, including those based on the knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, as well as the possibility of cooperating and/or coordinating with existing relevant frameworks or conventions which cover the relevant substances.

Therefore, Antigua and Barbuda further emphasise the SIDS proposal for the formation of a Subsidiary Body that shall consider up-to-date scientific evidence in order to facilitate the amendment of Annexes that address polymers, plastic products, additives and chemicals of concern. Such institutional mechanisms shall compile, develop, and update the lists of chemicals and polymers over time and are vital to ensure that issues of potential concern are assessed and prescribed actions taken by the Governing Body.

3. Primary Plastic Production

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda supports a modulated approach to tackling the production of primary plastic polymers. Such an approach takes into consideration national circumstances, particularly those of Small Island Developing States.

Moreover, modulated, responsible and sustainable production seeks to ensure that the upstream management of primary polymers does not exceed anticipated targets with a view to limiting the occurrence of plastics in the environment.

SIDs such as Antigua and Barbuda are disproportionately affected by the volume of marine plastic litter, microplastics and chemicals that negatively impact our coral reefs and hence our economy, and human health due to ineffective downstream management.

We must recognise that there are also questions about what processes and assessments, including consideration for socioeconomic impacts on SIDS and broader sociocultural concerns, must ultimately inform the development of potential reduction targets, whether it be agreed as a common global target implemented nationally by all Parties or a global aggregate goal with contributions from all Parties, in all cases reflecting the highest level of ambition.

Mr Chair, we look forward discussions on this matter to impart our views on the approach to the life cycle management of plastics and to engage on measures to protect the interest of island states.

4. Waste Management

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda aligns itself with the SIDS position and supports the development of an instrument that includes provisions to enable the acceleration of the collection, sorting,
recycling and sound disposal of plastic waste.

To this end, there must be strong, ambitious binding obligations, coupled with effective provisions on means of implementation for SIDS, including priority access, and access to technology for waste management and recycling. Further, provisions for capacity building, technology transfer and technical assistance are important considerations that should be intrinsic to the instrument to allow for the institutionalisation of measures to address the growing problem of effective waste management and to provide a means of building capacity towards the sound management of chemicals and waste associated with plastics.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda deems it necessary to facilitate the transition from unsound waste management practices that may lead to the emissions and releases of hazardous substances to more environmentally sound solutions. Such practices must be based on sound scientific evidence and facilitative of a just transition.

This delegation recognises the importance of enhancing national and regional recycling programmes in the life cycle approach to plastic waste management.

The development of guidance provided under this provision could also include measures for the design of facilities that ensure the safe and environmentally sound management of waste.