Statement by the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) at INC-3

Agenda Item 4

Nairobi, Kenya – 13 November 2023

[Check Against Delivery]

Delivered by: Palau on behalf of the Pacific Small Island States

Mr. Chair,
Palau has the honor to speak on behalf of the 14 Pacific Small Island Developing States. We align with the statement delivered by Samoa on behalf of AOSIS, and that of the Philippines on behalf of the Asia Pacific group.

We express our gratitude to the people and government of Kenya for their hospitality. We are also thankful to UNEP for welcoming us to the place where our process was initiated. We commend your leadership and the continued outstanding support provided by the INC Secretariat, including in the intersession.

Mr. Chair,
We recognize the achievement of compiling the rich submissions provided by Members and observers during the intersessional period. As the discussions on Saturday highlighted, and as captured by the summary of the co-facilitators of contact group 3, there are many elements that need further discussions and unpacking. We look forward to further engaging on these matters in the contact group under the modalities suggested by the chair.

The Pacific SIDS journeyed from the other side of the world to engage in INC 3, with some of us traveling over 50 hours. This is a testament of our commitment to this process, reaffirmed last week by our leaders at their annual Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting. We traveled far because, as highlighted by the President of Kenya, 23 million tonnes of plastic are released to the environment with more than half or 14 million tons of plastics ending up in our ocean every year, and this is expected to double by 2030\(^1\) under a business-as-usual scenario. We cannot let this happen. Plastics entering the region are polluting our life support systems and

\(^1\) according to the report From Pollution to Solution: a global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution, released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in October 2021
impacting our peoples’ cultural, economic and social ties to the environment and ocean, including threatening our peoples’ food security and human health. Plastic pollution also undermines critical economic sectors of our societies, including tourism and fisheries. Moreover, this problem, which starts in many cases far from our shores, generates tremendous public costs, including for waste management. This is why we have prioritized our limited resources to robustly engage here.

While we agree that the invention of plastic has helped improve lives around the world, this cannot be an argument to lessen the ambition of the future treaty.

The modern world is addicted to plastic. This is a fact. The first step to stop addiction is to admit there is a problem. We did that with UNEA 5/14. Now is the time to set the plan: quit the addiction, change our habits, and clean up.

This is why this instrument must address the full lifecycle of plastic: with measures applicable to upstream, midstream and downstream stages, including legacy plastics. And to ensure that even the smallest States can fully engage and meet the strict obligations we are hoping to set, by taking full account of the special circumstances of SIDS, including, among others, through the provision of adequate means of implementation. This planetary crisis, which is compounded by climate change and biodiversity loss, can lead to the demise of our human race, and requires nothing less than a revolution. A revolution in how we produce, in how we consume, and in what we tolerate. And the revolution must start now.

For the sake of time, I will refrain from detailed text on our priorities and positions. My group is eager to start work on the substance tonight in the contact groups you have established, and to use the 0-draft as the basis for our discussions. I take the opportunity to thank you and the secretariat for producing this document well in advance to enable us to prepare. We look forward to a constructive week which will inform the development of a first draft well in advance of INC 4.

I thank you.