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

Part II. Item 2 Chemicals and polymers of concern

Nairobi, Kenya – 15 November 2023

Final

Delivered by: Cook Islands on behalf of the Pacific Small Island States

Thank you Co-facilitator,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) and align with the statement by Samoa on behalf of AOSIS, and support their suggestion of merging Items 2 and 3. In this statement, PSIDS will speak on our ambition in relation to chemicals and polymers of concern.

PSIDS strongly urges each Party to take necessary measures to not allow and to eliminate the use of the chemicals, groups of chemicals, and polymers of concern in the production of plastic polymers, plastics, and plastics products that have the potential to harm the environment and human health.

This supports the necessary measures to not allow and to eliminate the production, sale, distribution, import, or export of plastic polymers, plastic, and bio and plastic products containing a chemical, group of chemicals, or polymers to be listed in part 2 of Annex A.

We also support the common provisions that look at measures to control and minimize the adverse impacts of plastic pollution on human health and the environment at any stage of the life cycle, or to hinder environmentally sound management.

Studies have shown that polymers accumulate in the food chain, posing risks to wildlife and humans, an issue critical for PSIDS who depend heavily on marine resources for food. The presence of hazardous chemicals in plastics can complicate recycling processes and result in the release of toxic substances during waste management practices.

We support the safe management and minimization of exposure to both humans and the environment with a precautionary approach to environmental management that can be beneficial for PSIDS taking into consideration the special circumstances of SIDS. The option is favorable for PSIDS as it supports transparency and information sharing that is important for the Pacific Islands countries, where technical expertise and resources for risk assessment may be limited.
Lastly, PSIDS supports reporting on progress and taking precautionary measures that are taken to resist the use of hazardous substances that reflect a proactive and precautionary approach to chemical management. This is crucial in the context of the Pacific where new and emerging chemical risks could have severe implications on our fragile ecosystems, leading to detrimental impacts on our human health and the environment.

In conclusion, the position taken by PSIDS on Chemicals and Polymers of concern reflects a deep understanding of the scientific evidence regarding the risks associated with hazardous substances in plastics. It also considers the unique vulnerabilities and circumstances of the region, emphasizing the need for precaution, transparency, and proactive risk management to protect human health and the environment.

Thank you.

AOSIS Recommended Merge Option

**Control of Hazardous, Problematic and Avoidable Chemicals, Polymers, and Plastic Products, including single-use plastics and intentionally added microplastics**

1. Each Party shall eliminate or not allow the production, sale, use, distribution, import or export of chemicals or polymers used in plastic production or plastic products that are hazardous to human health or the environment at any stage of the plastic lifecycle, as defined and listed in [Annex], not later than the respective dates in the Annex.

2. Each Party shall take measures, as appropriate, to not allow, to phase down or to otherwise regulate the production, sale, use, distribution, import or export of chemicals or polymers used in plastic production or plastic products that are problematic because they disproportionately contribute to plastic pollution, especially in the marine environment, or they have properties that may hinder their safe and environmentally sound management, including their reusability, repairability, recyclability and disposal, as defined and listed in [Annex], except where the Party has a registered exemption for the relevant product(s) under [Annex].

3. Each Party shall take measures, as appropriate, to not allow, to phase down or to otherwise regulate the production, sale, use, distribution, import or export of chemicals or polymers used in plastic production or plastic products that are avoidable because they can be easily substituted for more sustainable alternatives, as defined and listed in [Annex], except where the Party has a registered exemption for the relevant product(s) under [Annex].

4. Each Party shall eliminate or not allow the production, use, sale, distribution, import or export of plastics products containing intentionally added microplastics, as defined in [Annex], except where an exception is specified in part IV of annex B.

5. The Science, Technology and Economics Panels (STEPS) shall recommend to the Conference of the Parties by its first meeting, a list of the characteristics of hazardous, problematic, and
avoidable chemicals, polymers or plastic products referred to in paragraphs 1-4 above. In preparing these recommendations, the STEPs shall consider sound scientific, socioeconomic, and sociocultural assessments and the availability of safe, accessible, efficient, economically feasible, environmentally friendly and sustainable substitutes, including those based on the knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

6. The STEPs shall recommend to the Conference of the Parties at each session, chemicals, polymers, or plastic products, their associated targets and timelines on the Annexes listed in paragraphs 1-4 above.

ADD to Part II, Section 4: Exemptions

4bis: small island developing states, and other states that are dependent on imported polymers or plastic products, may register extensions to exemptions without approval of the Conference of the Parties, until such a time as there are sufficient polymer and plastic product supplies available to the Party at costs equal to then current levels.