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

Part II. Item 11 Existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

Nairobi, Kenya – 15 November 2023

Final

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

Co-facilitator,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), we align ourselves with the statement made by Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

PSIDS supports the provisions in this item for Parties to assess, identify, and prioritize accumulation zones, hotspots, and sectors that are most affected by existing plastic pollution and the threats to species or habitats taking into account the full life cycle of plastics. These provisions allow Parties to take effective mitigation and remediation measures taking into account existing international agreements and promoting safe environmentally sound remediation activities.

PSIDS proposed for the provision to take into consideration the special circumstances of SIDS and to include the engagement of the local population, communities, and citizens. We see value in including language to ensure that SIDS do not suffer a disproportionate burden in relation to these remediation activities, which deal with waste that originates far from our shores.

The PSIDS also proposes for the governing body to be guided by traditional knowledge of Indigenous People, and local knowledge systems, to address existing plastic pollution apart from the best available science. The existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, has negatively affected the Pacific region’s environment, biodiversity, and human health.

It has been argued by experts that plastic such as abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear is the deadliest form of marine pollution threatening 66% of marine animals and 50% of seabirds. This confirms that SIDS with large EEZ and vulnerable marine ecosystems are extremely prone to the effects of plastic pollution.

We will provide suggested language.

Thank you.
Suggested language:

1. Parties shall cooperate to:
   a. assess, identify and prioritize accumulation zones, hotspots and sectors:
      i. most affected by existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment; and
      ii. where quantities and types of litter pose a threat to species or habitats taking into account the full life cycle of plastics.
   b. take effective mitigation and remediation measures, including clean-up activities for the accumulation zones, hotspots and sectors identified, taking into account the provisions in existing international agreements including those relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, [taking into account Special Circumstances of SIDS]; and
   c. promote engagement of the local population and citizens safe and environmentally sound remediation activities, including through engagement with local population, communities, and citizens.

2. Each Party should make publicly available information on common plastic pollution types and practices and behaviours that lead to plastic pollution, to raise awareness and prevent further plastic pollution, including littering in coastal and freshwater areas.

3. The measures taken to implement the provisions of this Article shall be reflected in the national plan communicated pursuant to [part IV.1 on national plans].

4. The governing body* shall, at its first session, adopt:
   a. indicators to identify accumulation zones, hotspots and sectors; and
   b. guidance on best available techniques and best environmental practices, developed on the basis of best available science, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous people, and local knowledge systems, to address existing plastic pollution, with a view to ensuring the clean-up activities do not have potential for negative impacts on the environment, biodiversity and human health.