

Record of public statements on asbestos in the Pacific - 2016 - 2017

Date	Country/Rep	Quote/source
2 May 20017	Cook Islands Tonga Samoa RMI Kiribati	PIC INTERVENTION ON ASBESTOS – COP of the Rotterdam Convention, Geneva Full text attached
5 May 2017	Kosi Latu, SPREP	<p>"The Rotterdam Convention has failed small island developing states. In light of this, I urge SPREP's Pacific island members to consider support for a regional mechanism to address the influx of hazardous substances into the Pacific region. A Pacific-wide ban on asbestos, for example, would protect our islands from being used as dumping ground for asbestos-containing products that other countries around the world will not accept on account of their own national bans."</p> <p>http://www.sprep.org/waste-management-pollution-control/sprep-director-general-calls-for-pacific-regional-action-on-hazardous-substances</p>
8 May 2017	Tonga - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Environment, Hon. Siasia 'O. Sovaleni.	<p>Furthermore, Hon. Sovaleni praised the role that the Tongan delegation has played in speaking out about the need for the Rotterdam Convention to impose tighter controls on the import and export of chrysotile asbestos:</p> <p>"It is very pleasing to see Tonga taking a lead role in the Pacific push to prevent dangerous asbestos from being imported into our islands without our knowledge or consent. It is however, very disappointing to note that this move has – for the sixth consecutive time – been blocked by a small number of Parties despite support from the majority."</p> <p>Hon. Sovaleni also supported recent comments from the Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment programme (SPREP), Mr Kosi Latu, on the need for Pacific island nations to band together to address the influx of hazardous substances into the Pacific region:</p> <p>"If the Rotterdam Convention cannot protect small island developing states then we must work together to protect ourselves."</p> <p>http://www.mic.gov.to/news-today/press-releases/6677-</p>

		deputy-prime-minister-pushes-for-greater-protection-against-hazardous-chemicals-and-waste
24 October 2016	Nauru	<p>Ms Mavis Depaune, Acting Secretary of the Department of Commerce, Industry and Environment in Nauru explains that addressing asbestos is a high priority for Nauru:</p> <p>"The Government of Nauru is committed to taking action to address the issue of asbestos and has already commenced activities, in coordination with the government housing project, which involves the removal of asbestos from dwellings across the island. This training from PacWaste will ensure that these activities are undertaken in a manner which will ensure the health and wellbeing of workers and the people of Nauru."</p> <p>http://www.sprep.org/waste-management-pollution-control/nauru-takes-action-on-asbestos</p>
12 September 2016	European Union	<p>Head of Cooperation at the European Union Delegation for the Pacific, Mr Christoph Wagner said that the European Union would welcome any move from Pacific Island nations to join 57 other countries, including all member states of the European Union, to ban asbestos:</p> <p>"Preventing the future import and sale of asbestos products would help to protect the health and wellbeing of communities across the Pacific region."</p> <p>http://www.sprep.org/waste-management-pollution-control/hospital-fire-highlights-need-for-pacific-wide-asbestos-ban</p>
12 September 2016	Solomon Islands	<p>Dr Melchior Mataki, Permanent Secretary for the Solomon Islands Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology, explains the first priority was to ensure the safety of clean-up personnel and the general public:</p> <p>"We know for a fact that new building materials containing asbestos are being sold at retail outlets in Solomon Islands. Often these materials are not even labelled as containing asbestos, so people purchase and use them without knowing the potential health risk that they pose."</p>

		http://www.sprep.org/waste-management-pollution-control/hospital-fire-highlights-need-for-pacific-wide-asbestos-ban
12 September 2016	WHO, Western Pacific region	<p>Dr Rokho Kim of the World Health Organization (WHO) explains that asbestos related diseases are responsible for more than 100,000 deaths each year:</p> <p>"WHO recognises that the most efficient way to eliminate asbestos-related diseases is to stop the use of all types of asbestos – this is because there is no safe threshold of exposure. If regulations are not implemented to prevent the import of asbestos in the Pacific then it will continue to be used in both residential and non-residential locations across the region."</p> <p>http://www.sprep.org/waste-management-pollution-control/hospital-fire-highlights-need-for-pacific-wide-asbestos-ban</p>
June 2016	General public	<p>In a 2016 online survey, conducted by PacWaste, 81% of survey respondents (representing 14 different PICTs) supported a Pacific-wide ban on asbestos containing materials. The remaining 19% stated that didn't have a strong opinion. There were no objections recorded.</p>