

Agenda item 12.2: Other Business

Supporting Pacific Small Island Developing States to conclude an international legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution including in the marine environment (Government of Tuvalu)

Purpose of Paper

To provide an update to the 32 SPREP Meeting from the Chair of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (P-SIDs) on the status of negotiations to conclude an international legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution including in the marine environment.

To request SPREP members to support the call of the Pacific- Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) Chair on the UNEP Executive Director, UNEA Chair, and INC Chair for the resumption and conclusion of a globally binding instrument to end plastic pollution including in the marine environment prior to the conclusion of the UNEA7.

Background

The *Pacific Regional Declaration on the Prevention of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution and its impacts* was signed by SPREP Environment Ministers in 2021. This declaration highlighted the fact that notwithstanding that the Pacific island countries are not plastic producers and contribute as little as 1.3% of global plastic pollution, the region was grossly and disproportionately affected by its impacts.

The Declaration urged all UN Member States at UNEA's Fifth session to support the establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to negotiate a binding global agreement covering the whole life cycle of plastics.

Subsequently the resumed fifth session UNEA-5.2 in 2022, UNEA adopted *Resolution 5/14*, establishing the INC to develop a binding global treaty on plastic pollution, addressing the entire lifecycle of plastic, with the goal of completion by the end of 2024.

From 2022-2025 the INC convened six rounds of negotiations. At INC 5.2 in August 2025, the INC was unable to conclude a global agreement and while there has been speculation on further negotiations, the future of this work is unclear.

From the 26-29 August, 2025 The *Sixth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific* was held in Nadi. This meeting gave participants chance to agree on the priorities to advance for adoption when the UNEA meets in December. During the Ministerial segment, many countries urged making progress towards a plastics treaty with Tuvalu, the Cook Islands and Mongolia requested a resumption and conclusion of negotiations by the end of the year.

The Pacific Islands Imperative for a Global Instrument remains

The P-SIDS are grateful for the support and assistance that has supported and enabled their participation in the INC process in particular from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand.

The P-SIDS believe that an ambitious global agreement is only way the peoples of the Pacific Islands Region can be protected from the transboundary impacts of plastic pollution on the marine environment as well as the impacts on human health attributed to chemicals of concern in plastic products as well as microplastics imported into their jurisdictions.

In the INC process PSIDS have:

- reaffirmed the importance and rationale provided in the 2021 *Pacific Regional Declaration on the Prevention of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution* for the need to conclude a global agreement;
- repeatedly raised concerns that it is extremely unjust for Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) to face the brunt of yet another global environmental crisis it contributes minimally to;
- noted the broad support among INC members especially the High Ambition Countries including seven Pacific Island countries for an instrument covering the full life cycle of plastics including production, product design, releases and leakages;
- reinforced the critical need for an international agreement that provides the means of implementation that recognises the special circumstance of PSIDS to remediate and remove existing pollution the Pacific Island marine environments in areas both within and beyond areas of national jurisdiction;
- Provides for PSIDS new, dedicated, adequate, predictable, and accessible financing to combat plastic pollution;
- supports a global listing of the most problematic chemicals and products of concern to assist the Pacific SIDS in their efforts to identify the products that are harmful to human health and the environment [noting the limited capacity in the Pacific Island region] and the need for a dedicated body of scientific experts authorised by the COP to do so.

The Meeting:

- 1) Notes the update provided by the Chair of PSIDS to the 32 SPREP Meeting on the status of negotiations to conclude an international legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution including in the marine environment.
 - 2) Noted and supports the call of the PSIDS Chair urging for a majority call from UN member States to the UNEP, UNEA, and INC Heads to convene a special session of the INC to resume the negotiations to adopt a global agreement to end plastic pollution including in the marine environment that addresses the full life cycle of plastics, prior to the conclusion of UNEA7.
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