

## Thirty Second SPREP Meeting of Officials

2-4 September 2025

Sheraton Aggie Greys Hotel & Bungalows  
Apia, Samoa

*“Sustaining our Pacific Environment in Harmony with our Cultures”*

### **Agenda item 8.3: Report on Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm (BRS), and Minamata Conventions**

#### **Purpose of paper:**

1. To report on the outcomes of the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (BC-COP 17), 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (RC-COP 12), 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention (SC-COP 12) commonly known as the BRS COPs that was held from the 28 April to 9 May 2025 in Geneva Switzerland with the theme of “Make visible the invisible: sound management of chemicals and wastes”.
2. Provide an update on preparations on the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

#### **Background:**

3. Preparations for the 2025 BRS COPs began in March 2025 and April 2025 at the Pacific Sub-regional preparatory meeting held in Cook Islands and the Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand respectively where the delegates were taken through the entire agenda of the COPs as well as administrative announcements. All Pacific islands countries attended the Pacific preparatory meeting in the Cook Islands except for Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. Several BRS Parties from the Pacific attended the Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting including Cook Islands, Fiji, and Tuvalu.
4. SPREP organized two virtual briefing sessions in April to further prepare Pacific Parties for the BRS COPs. The main objective of the briefing was to confirm national and regional priorities and positions as well as agree on coordination arrangements during the COPs for communication and technical support.
5. The 2025 BRS COPs were held in Geneva, Switzerland from 28 April to 9 May 2025. A total of seventeen delegates from the Pacific attended the COPs nine (9) Pacific island countries Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. They were supported by SPREP working with Australia and New Zealand. A high-level segment of the COP was held on 30 April and 1 May, however, no representation from the Pacific were present for this event.

## Outcomes of the COPs

### Basel Convention

6. **Inclusion of Regional Conventions – Waigani Convention:** PSIDS strongly advocated for the inclusion of the Waigani Convention (Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region) alongside the Bamako Convention, as proposed by African countries under UNEP/CHW.11/CPR.1. PSIDS emphasized that the Waigani Convention is the Pacific’s regional instrument aligned with the Basel Convention, making it crucial for regional cooperation, coordination, and resource mobilization. This advocacy underscored the need for strong support, cooperation, and resource allocation to help PSIDS achieve the objectives of the Waigani Convention.
7. **Plastic Waste Management:** PSIDS actively supported further consideration and action on plastic waste management, aligning with the Pacific Region’s position in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee Meeting (INC) process for developing a global plastic treaty. PSIDS emphasized the critical importance of addressing plastic waste, which disproportionately impacts small island developing states.
8. **Annex IV Revisions:** The Basel Convention COP adopted revisions to Annex IV, which provides a clear definition of waste under the Convention, improving the tracking and regulation of waste. PSIDS welcomed the inclusion of R14 in the Annex, however, progress on this inclusion was limited.
9. **Strategic Framework for 2025-2031:** The BC COP adopted a Strategic Framework for 2025-2031, establishing specific goals and indicators for the environmentally sound management of waste. PSIDS played a pivotal role in ensuring that SIDS-specific language was incorporated into the Strategic Framework, particularly in Section II, which outlines Strategic Goals and Objectives. This inclusion reflects the unique vulnerabilities and needs of SIDS in achieving sustainable waste management.
10. **Textile Waste Initiative:** The COP launched a new initiative to explore how the BC can address textile waste, an emerging challenge for developing regions, including SIDS. Although PSIDS recognized the importance of this issue and advocated for greater prioritization, it was not initially on PSIDS’ radar before the 2025 BRS COPS, and there was no unified PSIDS position on textile waste management at the outset.

### Rotterdam Convention

11. **Kazakhstan’s proposal to amend Rule 16 of the Rules of Procedures:** Cook Islands on behalf of Tonga, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu delivered a strong intervention opposing Kazakhstan’s proposal to amend Rule 16. The PSIDS delegation argues that the amendment would significantly deviate from established procedural norms in international environmental law, imposing a fixed time limit on the duration of agenda items discussions regardless of their scientific merit, political complexity, or the level of Party support.
12. **Support for Listing of Chemicals:** Cook Islands and Vanuatu, representing PSIDS countries that are Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, delivered interventions supporting the listing of paraquat, methyl bromide and chlorpyrifos in Annex III of the Convention. PSIDS emphasized

that methyl bromide is already restricted under the Montreal Protocol, further justifying its inclusion in Annex III.

13. **Agreed Listings:** The RC COP successfully listed carbosulfan (a pesticide) and fenthion ultra-low volume formulations (a hazardous pesticide formulation) in Annex III, expanding the list of chemicals subject to the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure.
14. **Strategic Capacity Development:** PSIDS highlighted its support for the guiding principle of fostering a strategic, coherent, and coordinated approach to capacity development for the effective implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. This approach is critical for enhancing national capacities and ensuring compliance.
15. **Technical Assistance Plan (TAP):** PSIDS supported the Technical Assistance Plan (TAP) and emphasized the importance of ensuring sufficient resources for its implementation. PSIDS Parties urged the Secretariat to allocate resources from the proposed operational budgets for the biennium 2026-2027 and to advocate with relevant donor partners for additional support.
16. **Chemicals Not Listed:** Despite recognized risks, the RC COP could not reach consensus on listing mercury, methyl bromide, and chlorpyrifos in Annex III. This outcome highlighted ongoing challenges in securing agreement on high-risk chemicals.
17. **Enhancement of Chemical Review Committee (CRC):** The RC COP adopted measures to strengthen the effectiveness of the CRC, improving its capacity to review and recommend chemicals for listing in Annex III.

#### Stockholm Convention

18. **Opposition to Reopening the UV-328 Listing:** PSIDS, represented by Cook Islands, strongly opposed Ethiopia's proposal to reopen the previous COP decision on the listing of UV-328 in Annex A of the Stockholm Convention. In its intervention, Cook Islands highlighted PSIDS' concerns regarding the hazardous nature of UV-328, describing it as a persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic substance. PSIDS emphasized that UV-328 has been detected in marine species and seabirds in the Pacific region, posing significant exposure risks through marine food chains. This situation is particularly concerning for PSIDS, where many communities rely heavily on the ocean for subsistence and income. PSIDS further warned that reopening a previously adopted COP decision sets a dangerous precedent, undermining the integrity and predictability of COP decisions.
19. **Unprecedented Decision – UV-328 Listing Reopened:** Despite PSIDS' objections, the COP took an unprecedented step by agreeing to reopen the listing of UV-328 in Annex A. This decision allowed for a specific exemption for the use of UV-328 in water sealant tape and adhesives in the aircraft industry, creating a notable exception to the standard elimination approach under the Stockholm Convention.
20. **New POPs Listed:** The SC COP expanded the list of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) by adding three new substances:
  - a) **Chlorpyrifos:** Listed with time-limited exemptions),
  - b) **Long-Chain Perfluorocarboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs):** Recognized for their widespread environmental persistence and harmful effects.
  - c) **Medium-Chain Chlorinated Paraffins (MCCPs):** Noted for their hazardous characteristics and extensive industrial applications.

## Joint Decisions and Cross-Cutting Issues

21. **Technical Assistance Plan (2026-2029):** The COPs adopted a comprehensive Technical Assistance Plan for 2026-2029, which includes targeted support for SIDS. Tuvalu on behalf of PSIDs delivered a strong intervention emphasizing the importance of ensuring that the plan considers the “special needs of SIDS,” recognizing their unique circumstances and challenges in implementing the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions. This intervention highlighted the critical need for increased technical and financial support to SIDS to ensure effective implementation of the three conventions.
22. **Financial Resources:** Despite advocacy, the global Resource Mobilization Strategy was not agreed, limited to African and Latin American regions.
23. **Gender Action Plan:** The COPs adopted a new Gender Action Plan, promoting gender balance in implementation.
24. **Illegal Traffic and Trade:** Enhanced coordination to combat illegal trade of chemicals and waste was agreed.
25. **Cooperation with Minamata Convention:** The BRS Conventions will continue to cooperate with the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

## Update on Minamata Convention COP 5

26. The sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (COP-5) will be held from 3 to 7 November 2025 at Geneva, Switzerland.
27. A preparatory meeting for the Minamata Convention Parties in the Asia Pacific region has been planned for 23-24 September 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand.
28. SPREP will convene regional briefings for the Pacific commencing on the 17 September 2025 to further prepare Parties for COP-6 and provide on the ground support to Pacific Parties at COP-6 in Geneva through the Waste Management and Pollution Control programme team.

## Recommendation:

29. The Meeting is invited to:
  - 1) **Note** the outcomes of the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention, 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, and 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention;
  - 2) **Encourage** Parties to undertake necessary national actions to implement the outcomes of the BRS COPs; and
  - 3) **Note** preparations toward the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
  - 4) **Encourage** Members who are not yet parties to accede and implement the BRS and Minamata Conventions.