

Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) Report on the Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

Geneva, 28 April to 9 May 2025

1. Introduction

The 17th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Basel Convention, 12th Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, and the 12th Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention convened from 28 April to 9 May 2025 at the Geneva International Conference Centre, Geneva, Switzerland. The theme of the COPs was *“Make visible the invisible: sound management of chemicals and wastes”*. 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.

Prior to the COP, a Pre-COP for the three conventions was held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands from the 12 to 13 March 2025. Present at this meeting were Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.

Represented at the COP to the Basel Convention are Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Republic of Marshall Islands and Vanuatu. For the COP to the Stockholm Convention, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, RMI, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were present. From the represented countries, only Fiji and Kiribati are not yet a party to the Rotterdam Convention and therefore did not attend sessions for this COP.

2. List of Delegates and SPREP Support

COUNTRY MEMBERS			
Country	Name	Position/Organisation	Email Address
Cook Islands	Halatoa Fua	Director – National Environment Services	Halatoa.fua@cookislands.gov.ck
	Temarama Anguna-Kamana	Secretary Head – Ministry of Agriculture	Temarama.anguna@cookislands.gov.ck
Federated States of Micronesia	Cynthia H. Ehmes	Assistant Secretary – Department of Environment, Climate Change & Emergency Management	cehmes@decem.gov.fm
	Patricia Pedrus	Deputy Assistant Secretary – Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management	pattipedrus@gmail.com
Fiji	Jimmy Gaunavou	Senior Environment (MEA) Officer – Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	jimmy.gaunavou@environment.fj
Kiribati	Rokonimaeu Eritaia	Chemical and Hazardous Waste Management Officer – Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Agricultural Development	r.eritaia@melad.gov.ki

Marshall Islands	Moriana Phillip	Director – Environmental Protection Authority	morianaphillip.rmiepa@gmail.com
Palau	Alzena Fleetwood	Ozone Depleting Substances Coordinator – Environment Quality Protection Board	alzenaaldrin@gmail.com
Tonga	Lupe Matoto	Director – Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change & Communications	Lupe.matoto@gmail.com
	Mafileo Masi	Deputy Director – Department of Environment and Head of Waste and Pollution Control Division	Mafileo.masi@gmail.com
Tuvalu	Penivao Moealofa	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Chair)	pmoealofa@gov.tv
	Epu Falega	Director Waste Management	efalega@gov.tv
	Soseala Tinilau	Director Environment	stinilau@gov.tv
Vanuatu	Roselyn Bue	Ministry of Climate Change	Roselyn.bue21@gmail.com
	Tom Maimai	Ministry of Climate Change	compliancemocc@gmail.com
	Herwit Benua	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Livestock and Biosecurity	Herwitaru12benua@gmail.com
	Andrea Volpato		av@chemav.com
SPREP SUPPORT			
Anthony Talouli	Director, Waste Management and Pollution Control Programme		anthonyt@sprep.org
Kathleen Taituave-Afereti	Environmental Law and Policy Officer, Legal Services and Governing Bodies Department		kathleent@sprep.org
Leanne Moananu	Communications Support Officer, Communications and Outreach		leannem@sprep.org
Renee Kamu	ISLANDS Pacific Child Project, Finance and Administration Officer		reneek@sprep.org

3. Pacific SIDS Coordination

The coordination of the Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) at the COP was led by Tuvalu as Chair for the PSIDs. It is the first time the Pacific have coordinated as PSIDs at the BRS COP. Mr. Penivao Moealofa from the Tuvalu delegation chaired the PSIDS meetings with guidance and support from Mr. Anthony Talouli on behalf of SPREP.

Regional meetings were held on Sunday 27 April 2025 and the first PSIDS meeting was conducted on this day which was followed by the Asia Pacific Group (APG) meeting. Some of the key objectives for the first coordination meeting was to welcome delegates, outline schedule and order of the meeting of the COP and organize Leads to follow each contact group that were formed under the mandate of the three conventions.

Daily PSIDS coordination meetings convened from 8.15am to 9.00am. These coordination meetings provided the opportunity for PSIDS to discuss agenda items or issues that were of interest or priority to the Pacific and consolidate a common position if possible. The Leads of each contact group also provided briefings on the progress of discussions and obtained inputs from the members to interventions that were to be delivered on behalf of the Parties present.

4. Leads for the Contact Groups and Conventions

Leads/Support	Contact Group
Epu Falega	Basel Convention: a) Technical Guidelines b) Legal Clarity Matters c) Strategic Framework & PIC Procedure
Andrea Volpato	
Kathleen Taituave-Afereti	
Soseala Tinilau	
Halatoa Fua	Stockholm Convention a) Listing b) Compliance
Jimmy Gaunavou	
Soseala Tinilau	
Anthony Talouli	
Penivao Moealofa	Rotterdam Convention a) Budget Contact Group b) Listing
Temarama Anguna-Marama	
Halatoa Fua	
Anthony Talouli	
Penivao Moealofa	Joint Issues: a) Financial Mechanisms b) Resource Mobilization c) Technical Assistance
Alzeena Fleetwood	

5. Summary of PSIDs Positions

5.1 Basel Convention

- a) **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.
- b) **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.

- c) **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.
- d) **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.
- e) **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.

5.2 Rotterdam Convention

- a) **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.
- b) **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.
- c) **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.
- d) **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.

- e) **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.
- f) **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.
- g) **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.

5.3 Stockholm Convention

- a) **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.
- b) **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.
- c) **New POPs Listed:** The SC COP expanded the list of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) by adding three new substances:
 - **Chlorpyrifos:** Listed with time-limited exemptions),
 - **Long-Chain Perfluorocarboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs):** Recognized for their widespread environmental persistence and harmful effects.
 - **Medium-Chain Chlorinated Paraffins (MCCPs):** Noted for their hazardous characteristics and extensive industrial applications.

5.4 Joint Decisions and Cross-Cutting Issues

- a) **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.

- b) **Financial Resources:** Despite advocacy, the global Resource Mobilization Strategy was not agreed, limited to African and Latin American regions.
- c) **Gender Action Plan:** The COPs adopted a new Gender Action Plan, promoting gender balance in implementation.
- d) **Illegal Traffic and Trade:** Enhanced coordination to combat illegal trade of chemicals and waste was agreed.
- e) **Cooperation with Minamata Convention:** The BRS Conventions will continue to cooperate with the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

6. Engagement of PSIDs with the Rotterdam Convention Secretariat

On Thursday 24 April, the Secretariat to the Rotterdam Convention met with the Pacific delegates to discuss gaps and challenges faced by the Pacific countries in the implementation of the convention. The delegates underscored a number of problems faced at the national level in relation to implementing the Rotterdam Convention and these are highlighted as follow:

- a) Absence of robust legislation to domestic obligations or requirements under the Rotterdam Convention;
- b) Lack of capacity to conduct monitoring and carry out the functions designated national authority in the different processes such as notification and Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure;
- c) Lack of enforcement and compliance measures; and
- d) Inability to conduct testing on the presence of various chemicals nationally.

Furthermore, assistance was sought from the Secretariat in the following areas:

- e) Capacity building on the Rotterdam Convention, national plans, risk evaluations and needs assessments;
- f) Enhancing capacity in import and export reports and notification procedures;
- g) Legislative models and development of new regulations;
- h) Update national chemicals profile (Fiji and Tonga);
- i) Awareness and advocacy for the stakeholders, public and communities on the harmful effects of chemicals and pesticides;

7. Lessons Learned

The 2025 BRS COPs provided valuable insights for the PSIDS delegation, highlighting both successful strategies and areas for improvement in future engagements. The lessons learned have been categorized into five key areas: Coordination, Negotiation, Strategic Partnerships, Diplomatic Engagement, and Resilience in Textual Negotiations.

7.1 Coordination and Preparation

- **Effective Daily Coordination Meetings:** PSIDS successfully held daily coordination meetings, ensuring a unified approach to interventions. This practice should continue, with an emphasis on designating clear Leads for each contact group to enhance communication and feedback.
- **Preparedness for Contact Groups:** PSIDS delegates demonstrated proactive engagement by actively participating in contact groups, leading discussions, and effectively inserting SIDS-relevant language into working documents. This was made possible by pre-determined coordination roles and pre-prepared intervention points.
- **Ensuring Continuity:** Future delegations should ensure that there are clear alternates or co-Leads for key contact groups, allowing for consistent representation even when primary delegates are occupied.
- **Communications and visibility:** Communications support from SPREP amplified our PSIDS voices at the COP. There was coverage of issues and national priorities presented by delegates in interventions which further promoted the visibility of members represented at the COP.

7.2 Negotiation Strategies

- **Building Strategic Alliances:** PSIDS successfully leveraged support from other SIDS (e.g., Maldives), developing country Parties (e.g., South Africa), and even unexpected allies like the Russian Federation. This underlines the importance of cultivating strategic alliances and being flexible in forming coalitions to support PSIDS priorities.
- **Standing Firm on Key Issues:** PSIDS learned the value of not conceding too quickly during textual negotiations. In several instances, maintaining firm positions until the broader room's sentiment was clear helped secure favourable outcomes. Future delegations should adopt a similar strategy – testing the temperatures of the room before making concessions.
- **Flexibility and Resilience:** Despite intense negotiations, PSIDS delegates were adaptive, adjusting their approaches based on emerging dynamics in contact groups. This flexibility is critical in multilateral negotiations.

7.3 Strategic Partnerships

- **Leveraging Support from SPREP:** The technical and legal support from SPREP was invaluable in guiding PSIDS through complex technical discussions. Strengthening this partnership with pre-COP capacity-building would further enhance negotiation capabilities.
- **Collaboration with Like-Minded Parties:** PSIDS found success in building coalitions with SIDS, developing countries, and even major Parties. This approach should be systematically planned for future COPs, with a focus on identifying potential allies in advance.

7.4 Diplomatic Engagement

- **Maintaining Diplomatic Composure:** PSIDS learned that being diplomatic, even when facing opposition, is crucial. Even when other Parties disagreed with the inclusion of PSIDS text proposal, a respectful and diplomatic tone was maintained, which helped avoid conflict and build credibility.
- **Strategic Use of Language:** The PSIDS delegation effectively used constructive language to build consensus, ensuring that the PSIDS' views were presented in a manner that encouraged dialogue rather than confrontation.

7.5 Bilateral Engagement

- **Maximizing Bilateral Meetings:** PSIDS recognized the importance of using the BRS COPs to engage in bilateral meetings with other Parties, donors, and key stakeholders who can support national priorities. Proactively scheduling bilateral in advance can ensure strategic discussions and secure commitments.
- **Leveraging Diplomatic Channels:** Future PSIDS delegations should strategically request bilateral meetings with major donors, regional organizations, and key international partners to advance national and regional priorities.

7.6 Resilience in Textual Negotiations

- **Proactive Text Proposals:** PSIDS were able to effectively insert SIDS-specific language into key working documents by being proactive in making textual proposals. This should be a standard approach, with pre-drafted text prepared for key agenda items.
- **Maintaining Consistency:** Even when facing opposition, PSIDS maintained their positions on critical texts, demonstrating the importance of being consistent and clear in textual negotiations.
- **Strategic Timing:** Waiting to assess the room's sentiment before making concessions or adjustments was a key strategy that proved successful. This approach should be reinforced in future negotiations.

8. Challenges

PSIDs faced several challenges during the 2025 BRS COPs, which impacted their ability to fully participate and advocate effectively for their regional priorities. These challenges include:

- a) **Limited Delegation Size:** With only one or two delegates from each country, PSIDS struggle to effectively follow all issues in parallel contact groups and plenary sessions.
- b) **Limited Technical Expertise:** Many PSIDS delegates lacked specialized technical expertise on complex chemical and waste management issues, limiting their ability to influence technical discussions and negotiations.
- c) **Insufficient Pre-COP Preparation:** Although PSIDS held coordination meetings, the absence of comprehensive pre-COP training limited delegates' understanding of complex negotiations and reduced their ability to draft and deliver effective interventions.

- d) **Coordination and Communication Gaps:** Real-time communication between PSIDS delegates was challenging, leading to inconsistent positions or missed opportunities to align messages across contact groups.
- e) **Limited Visibility and Advocacy:** PSIDS faced difficulties in making their voices consistently heard in fast-paced plenary discussions, where larger delegations often dominated.
- f) **Resources Constraints:** Financial limitations prevented some PSIDS countries from sending larger delegations or accessing essential technical and legal support.
- g) **Inadequate Access to Timely Information:** Rapid developments in contact groups or last-minute textual changes were not always effectively communicated to PSIDS delegates.
- h) **Complex Procedural Rules:** Understanding and navigating the procedural rules of the three conventions was challenging, especially when procedural manoeuvres were used by other parties.
- i) **Limited Influence in Key Negotiations:** PSIDS, as a small regional group, found it difficult to gain sufficient leverage in negotiations on critical issues, such as chemical listings.
- j) Beyond the COP, a key challenge for the region is not all Pacific countries are Parties to the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions. This limits our capacity to effectively amplify our voices collectively in matters concerning PSIDS.

9. Recommendations for the next COP in 2027

While BRS COP 2025 has been viewed as the most successful in terms of amplifying the Pacific voice, delegates have raised several key recommendations to enhance PSIDS effectiveness in preparation for the next Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2027:

- a) **Strengthening Pre-COP Preparation:** Organize comprehensive pre-COP capacity-building sessions on technical issues, textual negotiations, and procedural rules. This can be facilitated by SPREP with support from international partners.
- b) **Increase Delegation Size and Technical Expertise:** Encourage PSIDS countries to secure funding for larger delegations, including technical experts and legal advisers. More delegates will enhance PSIDS' ability to engage effectively in all contact groups and plenary.
- c) **Enhance Coordination and Communication:** Establish a real-time coordination platform (such as WhatsApp group or a shared online document) to ensure consistent messaging across contact groups. Designate clear leads for each agenda item and contact group.
- d) **Maintain Visibility in Plenary:** Develop a strategic intervention plan to ensure PSIDS delivers targeted interventions on key issues, with designated speakers for each agenda item.
- e) **Secure Targeted Technical Support:** Request SPREP and other partners to provide on-site technical and legal support during the COPs.
- f) **Leverage Strategic Alliances:** Build and maintain alliances with other SIDS, the African Region, and like-minded countries to amplify PSIDS' influence.
- g) **Advanced Unified Positions:** Develop clear PSIDS positions on key issues before the COPs, ensuring that all PSIDS countries can consistently advocate for these positions.

- h) **Regularly Review PSIDS Participation:** Conduct post-COP reviews to assess PSIDS performance and identify areas for improvement.
 - i) **Encourage Active Participation:** Urge members who are parties to each of the three conventions to participate in the meetings. More representation will enhance PSIDS' ability to effectively engage and demonstrate a unified Pacific voice.
 - j) **Strengthen SPREP's Advisory Role:** Request SPREP to present and provide advice for all CRPs (Conference Room Papers) before the next BRS COPs, allowing members to familiarize themselves with the content and develop national positions.
 - k) **Pre-COP Meeting Coordination:** Request SPREP to convene a pre-COP meeting to discuss each country's positions on CRPs and provide training on textual negotiations skills. Ensure adequate time is allocated to cover all key issues (i.e., a 5-days meeting will be sufficient).
 - l) **Consolidate PSIDS Positions:** Request SPREP to compile and share PSIDS' confirmed positions based on the pre-COP outcomes, ensuring a unified regional approach.
 - m) **Track Outstanding Issues:** Recap and monitor progress on outstanding CRPs where PSIDS have established positions, such as financial mechanisms, ensuring active engagement and advocacy.
 - n) **Advocate for SIDS Language Inclusion:** Continue to advocate for the inclusion of SIDS-specific language in the Basel Convention and other relevant documents.
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