Statement by the Niue on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States on Agenda Item 4.3(b) at Plastics INC-1

30 November 2022

Time Limit: 5 minutes

Chair,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Pacific SIDS and we align with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of AOSIS.

In order to achieve the appropriate, efficient, sustainable, and practical implementation of the internationally legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, Pacific SIDS as the custodians of the world’s largest ocean basin, must have access to adequate support for the implementation of this agreement. There is a need for capacity building, knowledge and technology transfer, and financial support. Access to reliable and accurate data underpins all activities and is of critical importance to support and enable Pacific SIDS to safeguard our land and Ocean, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Pacific SIDS depend on the Ocean for food, transport, traditional practices, and economic opportunity. The increasing production and consumption of plastics is an issue that needs to be controlled to reduce plastic wastes in the Pacific Region. Plastic pollution adversely affects the health and well-being of the people and the biodiversity of marine and terrestrial ecosystems of the Pacific Region.

The future instrument must recognise that Pacific SIDS are the receivers of plastic either as imported materials, or through the transboundary movement of waste through the Ocean. The global consumption and mismanagement of plastic and plastic wastes is producing a devastating and debilitating impact on the Ocean, one of our primary food sources. As developing countries, we lack the access to appropriate technology, funding mechanisms, capacity and training to adequately implement necessary actions to combat the scourge of plastic pollution. The instrument must provide this support, whilst pushing to limit the creation of plastic upstream to reduce burden on Pacific SIDS who are most impacted by plastic pollution, and also most reliant on the Ocean, yet the least able to act to address these impacts.

The success of the instrument will require the provision of the means for implementation for SIDS in the implementation of obligations, reporting activities, addressing barriers to recovery and recycling, and in developing sustainable alternatives.

We as a region seek:
• assistance in developing the national tools to fairly transition to safe and sustainable alternative business models and materials;
• assistance in developing the national tools to transition to our common goal of a global and non-toxic circular economy;
• assistance in developing the methods to collect and analyse data to improve plastic material flows in our economies; and
• assistance in removing the legacy plastics that plague the Ocean that surrounds us, risking our livelihoods, our biodiversity and our ocean culture.

Pacific SIDS support the establishment of a scientific, economic, and technical body to advise the implementation of the instrument, including to facilitate the provision of means of implementation to developing country Parties to the instrument. It will also support evidence-based decisions, understanding impacts of chemical additives and toxicants, and the potential for these materials to impact the practicality of a sustainable circular economy for plastics. Our Pacific people are at risk from both the use, and the impacts of the significant plastic waste that end up in the Ocean, which is one of the primary food sources for the region.

Chair, finance, capacity building and technology transfer must be provided under the instrument, with dedicated provisions for prioritised support to SIDS. A suite of financial support mechanisms including stable sustainable funding and grants will be required to ensure the implementation of immediate actions to tackle plastic already existing in the environment, whilst necessary actions are undertaken to ‘turn off the tap’ and reduce the continued production of plastics that will then accumulate in the environment.

Pacific SIDS share the views of AOSIS, that discussions on the instrument’s financial mechanism and corresponding obligations should begin at the outset to establish roles and responsibilities with respect to each area of focus within the instrument. It is noted that different obligations may necessitate varied approaches and requirements in terms of enabling support for activities such as technology transfer, general implementation of obligations, and other associated full and incremental costs.

I thank you.