Statement by the Solomon Islands on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States on Agenda Item 4.4 at Plastics INC-1

[1 December 2022]

Time Limit: 5 minutes

Chair,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Pacific SIDS. As the Pacific SIDS, we call for an ambitious international legally binding instrument that addresses the core issues of plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, taking into account the special circumstances of small island developing states. At this early point in the process, we provide some overarching thoughts on the final provisions that could be included in this instrument.

On settlement of disputes - we support the general premise that all disputes must be settled by peaceful means through a robust, efficient and effective procedure that provides stability and clarity for the overall effective implementation of the instrument. The instrument could include specialized procedures for settling technical disputes and provide for the application of interim measures while disputes are being determined.

On adoption and amendment of annexes - while we still need to see how the larger pieces of this instrument fall, if the instrument is to contain annexes, then we call for procedures on the adoption and amendment of annexes that are consistent with the overall goal of this instrument. The procedure for amending annexes needs to balance flexibility, to accommodate growing data on the impact of plastic pollution on human health and the environment, with the need for stability and predictability in this instrument. In this vein, amendments to technical annexes, if they are included in the instrument, need to be based on the best available scientific information, as well as, in a rights-based manner, traditional knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, and local knowledge systems. Procedures for adopting or applying annexes, need to give adequate time for states, and especially Pacific SIDS, to make necessary changes on the national level, before those amended annexes become effective.

On entry into force - as we have learned in other fora, this issue is pivotal. While universal acceptance should always be the goal, we feel that in this context we need to balance universal acceptance with responsibility, partnership and commitment. Pacific SIDS feel that effective global action to address plastic pollution would only be realised through securing the commitment and partnership from those countries most heavily involved in plastics production.

For the Pacific, the best way to build universal acceptance is through the genuine and thorough engagement of states throughout the INC process. We call on all member states to
commit to open and frank dialogue about their priorities and concerns so that together we can create an instrument that prevents, reduces and eventually eliminates plastic pollution on our land and in our oceans and seas.

I thank you.