

## TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSIONS

Name of country (for Members of the committee)	Palau
Name of organization (for observers to the committee)	Environmental Quality Protection Board (EQPB)
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### I. Substantive elements

#### 1. Objective(s)

a) What objective(s) could be set out in the instrument?

<p><b>Proposed Objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ End plastic pollution.</li> <li>○ Turn it off at the tap: develop a strong foundation to end plastic pollution by stopping the production of single use and unnecessary plastics;</li> <li>○ Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop strict control measures to protect human health, the climate system, and the environment;</li> <li>✓ Eliminate problematic and unnecessary plastics: chemicals added makes recycling a challenge;</li> <li>✓ Design plastics that can be recycled minus greenhouse gas emissions;</li> <li>✓ Eliminate unnecessary chemicals in plastics (<i>studies show that over 10,000 chemicals are found in plastics of which 2,400 are toxic to human health</i>);</li> <li>✓ Ban chemicals of concern;</li> <li>✓ Develop/design plastics with the downstream in mind, i.e., understanding of the capacity of Island nations to address plastic waste;</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ End-of-life management of plastics: develop clear downstream measures to address collection, sorting and transfer, recycling, export of plastic waste for final disposal;</li> <li>○ Address legacy waste: manage plastics that have not been reused or recycled, including existing pollution plus marine plastic pollution;</li> <li>○ Move from linear to circular economy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promote a non-toxic circular economy for plastics;</li> <li>✓ Develop means for island nations to participate in the circular economy;</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Develop clear global rules with defined targets, responsibilities, penalties, and actions;</li> <li>○ Develop clear mechanisms for small islands to participate in EPR and Polluter Pay schemes to address plastic waste and marine plastic pollution;</li> <li>○ Clearly define mandatory obligations of plastic producing countries to address the whole life cycle of plastics including upstream, midstream, and downstream;</li> </ul>
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- ✓ Fund studies and development of recycling technologies that do not result in more pollutants or greenhouse gas emissions;
- Mandate marking and tracking of fishing gears to incentivize retrieval of lost gears;

**Explanatory Text:**

Palau is a large ocean nation in the north Pacific. Climate change is the biggest threat to our environment, biodiversity, and our economy. Plastic waste exacerbates climate change impacts thereby threatens our lives, environment, and our livelihoods.

As a non-producing country, we are downstream in the plastics lifecycle as we import many products in plastic containers. The *Palau State of the Environment Report (SOE) 2019* highlights the fact that the total waste generated is increasing as the gross domestic product (GDP) grows. This report points to the fact that the increase in waste generated is outpacing the 3R programs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Added to this are the plastics of unknown origins that wash up on our shores daily.

Palau has a sophisticated waste management system and a newly opened national landfill (2021). The landfill was built based on a survey of locally generated waste. The huge quantities of plastics that wash up on our shores are not traceable. There is no one to take responsibility for the pollution, but us. We must put it in our landfill, shortening the lifespan of the facility.

In addition, Palauans have grave concerns about the environmental, social, cultural, economic, human health and, food security impacts, of plastics pollution. This further exacerbates the climate change impacts we are already experiencing. We cannot manage this challenge without looking at this issue comprehensively, from sourcing of plastics to the end-of-life cycle management, and remediation of releases.

We have a robust national agenda that includes legislations; and recycling and solid waste management facilities. The Palau Recycling Act, better known as the CDL or Container Deposit Law was passed in 2006 followed by implementation in 2009. The CDL established a recycling program and a beverage container deposit fee as well as created the Recycling Fund to financially sustain the recycling program. Among other things, the CDL defined “deposit beverage container” to include polyethylene terephthalate and high-density polyethylene and the size of container of “less than or equal to thirty-two (32) fluid ounces”. To further strengthen the law, the Beverage Recycling Regulations were amended in 2019. One of the things the amendment did was remove the 32-ounce limit on drink containers thereby increasing opportunities for recycling of beverage containers.

In November 2017, RPPL 10-14 or the Plastic Bag Use Reduction Act was passed into law to be implemented in 2019. This new law prohibits businesses from importing or distributing plastic bags to customers and authorized a plastics education program to inform the public on the destructive effects of plastic use as well as practical ways to reduce dependence on plastics. *“While plastic bags will still be utilized for various functions and activities, the Olbil Era Kelulau or National Congress believes this bill is an important first step towards total freedom from plastic consumption and a vital measure to protect “Pristine Paradise. Palau”.*”

Having the legislations and facilities in place is not sufficient to address the plastics that wash up on our shores daily. Palau, like many SIDS, has numerous challenges including limited capacity, resources, and funding. We need an ambitious and comprehensive global treaty, that includes control measures to protect our human health; the climate system and the environment; and to

promote a non-toxic circular economy for plastics. Furthermore, there is a need to establish Capacity Building and Technology Transfer Committees to ensure SIDS needs are met. A Finance Committee must also be established to designate a special funds to assist SIDS in the implementation pre/post entry into force. As well, subsidiary bodies under the COP must be established to address potential duplication of efforts and burdensome reporting linked with monitoring and evaluation.

## 2. Core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches

a) *What core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches would provide a comprehensive approach to addressing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, throughout the full life cycle in line with the future objective(s) of the instrument?*

- Clearly define mandatory obligations of plastic producing countries to address the whole life cycle of plastics including upstream, midstream, and downstream;
  - ✓ Fund studies and development of recycling technologies that do not result in more pollutants or greenhouse gas emissions;
  - ✓ Design plastics with developing countries and islands capacity in mind to ensure sound management of plastics at the downstream;
  - ✓ Funding for the exportation of marine litter plastics and other chemical wastes from islands with limited landfill capacity;
- Design:
  - ✓ Develop strict control measures to protect human health, the climate system, and the environment;
  - ✓ Eliminate problematic and unnecessary plastics: chemicals added makes recycling a challenge;
  - ✓ Design plastics that can be recycled minus greenhouse gas emissions;
  - ✓ Eliminate unnecessary chemicals in plastics (*studies show that over 10,000 chemicals are found in plastics of which 2,400 are toxic to human health*);
  - ✓ Ban chemicals of concern;
  - ✓ Develop/design plastics with the downstream in mind, i.e., understanding of the capacity of Island nations to address plastic waste;

## II. Implementation elements

### 1. Implementation measures

- a) *How to ensure implementation of the instrument at the national level (eg. role national action plans contribute to meeting the objectives and obligations of the instrument?)*
- b) *How to ensure effectiveness of the instrument and have efficient national reporting?*
- c) *Please provide any other relevant proposals or priorities here on implementation measures (for example for scientific and technical cooperation and coordination as well as compliance).*

- a) The development of a National Action Plan (NAP) will proceed the implementation of the instrument. The NAP will be a working document that articulates Palau's priorities and actions to be adopted to meet the objectives and obligations of the instrument. Palau's obligations at the international, regional, and national levels will be clarified to support the implementation of the instrument. Complementarity to other international, regional, and national level policies will be made clear.
- The development of the NAP will lead to discussions on the issues Palau faces regarding plastic waste and marine plastic pollution. Cross sectoral stakeholders including community members who are resource owners, will be targeted to participate in the development of the NAP.
- Adverse impacts of plastics on human health, the environment, economy, and food security will be highlighted to support the urgency of implementation. Gaps in national level policies, infrastructure, and human capacity will be identified and incorporated into the NAP. Activities to mitigate the impacts of plastic pollution will be developed and incorporated. Action plans to address the gaps will be developed and incorporated into the Plan.
- Methods for data collection will be defined to meet reporting obligations. Capacity building needs will be identified and strengthened to ensure Palau meets its obligation to the instrument. The NAP will direct the planning, implementation, and monitoring of plastic pollution through a clear vision and strategic actions.
- b) The design of the instrument must include clear means of implementation, that will enable Pacific SIDS like Palau, to fully implement the objectives of the instrument. This includes clear mechanisms for capacity building, technology transfer and funding support for plastic pollution prevention.
- The establishment of a Capacity Building and Technology Transfer Committee must be established to ensure SIDS needs, including limited capacity, resources, and funding are met. A Finance Committee must be established to designate special funds for SIDS to assist in implementation pre/post entry into force. Additional subsidiary bodies under COP must be established to address potential duplication of efforts and burdensome reporting linked with monitoring and evaluation.
- c) Financial and technical support for scientific studies to identify the source of marine litter that washes up on the shores of Palau. Study will include options of best management practices to address marine litter resulting in reduced pressure on Palau's national landfill.
- Capacity building to support the development of community action plans to address marine plastic litter. Activities must include regular survey and beach cleanups to identify and sort plastics to enable data collection. Data collected will be reported to the Environmental Quality Protection Board (EQPB) and incorporated into a national chemical and waste database to populate reports to meet Palau's obligations to conventions and the instrument.

## 2. Means of Implementation

With respect to means of implementation, document UNEP/PP/INC.1/5 covers the following elements: capacity-building, technical assistance, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and financial assistance.

- a) *What measures will be required to support the implementation of the instrument?*

- Develop clear mechanisms for funding, technical support, and transfer of technology to:
  - ✓ Develop natural alternatives to plastics (in the Islands);
  - ✓ Funding for the development and implementation of a National Action Plans (NAP) to address plastic pollution and marine plastic pollution for SIDS and other developing countries;
  - ✓ Funding for capacity building to implement NAP;
  - ✓ Funding for the development/design of facilities to address plastic pollution;

### **III. Additional input**

Please provide any other relevant proposals or priorities here (for example introductory elements; awareness-raising, education and exchange of information; research; stakeholder engagement; institutional arrangements and final provisions).

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