

INC-3 Side event 11: Existing Plastic Pollution: Challenges of SIDS and Remote Communities

Written report back

17th November 2023

Number of participants: ~51 participants, of which 29% male; and 71% Female

Key messages:

- a. SIDS and remote communities face a series of unique, intersecting, and pluralistic challenges relating to plastic pollution; geographic location, the size of the population, economies of scale, inefficient waste management infrastructure, lack of finance, limited land, dependence on the ocean/forests i.e., tourism, trade, and industry; and vulnerability to economic shocks and climate change. Specifically, in remote archipelagos and mountainous areas, challenges relate to coordinating and transporting plastic and waste, limited space and financial capacity for recycling and landfilling facilities, and possible disruptions caused by disasters like hurricanes, floods and other weather events which disrupts waste management facilities and transportation.
- b. SIDS have adopted measures towards addressing existing plastic pollution in their communities through policy and legislative approaches and innovation such as effecting plastic bans in several SIDS, repurposing PET plastics to furniture, shipping waste overseas for recycling, etc.
- c. The meeting called for support to SIDS and remote communities in tackling existing plastic pollution through south-south and north south cooperation. The meeting acknowledged the role of science, need for technical assistance and knowledge sharing, promoting nature-based solutions, investing in the youth and youth led initiatives, transfer of technology while emphasizing indigenous and community solutions to plastic pollution.
- d. The meeting called for wholistic approach on control measures for plastic pollution and mapping pathways for transportation of plastics in SIDS including providing financial mechanisms for waste management. Promoting use of legislative approaches such as effecting bans on single use plastics and Styrofoam including promoting innovative technology from waste to product such as the PET bottles to furniture.
- e. The meeting urged SIDS and remote communities to champion use of alternative value chains such as recycling facilities, use of alternative substances such as bagasse sea grasses, and bamboo including bottle refund schemes, among others.

Key recommendations for considerations by the INC include:

- a. There was clear need for a legally binding instrument that would set the playing field that is consistent for all and allow all member states to work towards a common goal.
- b. The plastic agreement must consider the challenges facing SIDS and remote communities in providing solutions.
- c. SIDS and remote communities require a holistic approach that considers the need for small-scale and decentralized solutions and regional coordination to prevent and manage plastic pollution effectively and efficiently.
- d. Access to technical assistance and financial support must reflect the challenges in SIDS and remote communities.
- e. Mechanisms of regional collaboration should be expanded.

- f. Free prior and informed consent from SIDS and remote communities must be the fundamental due diligence while extracting any resources from their land, water and territories for production and waste management of the plastics.

Key knowledge products, resource tools, and knowledge gaps:

- a. The need for access to technology for categorization and defining plastic MOI for SIDS
- b. Access to scientific data and technology to measure the impacts of plastic pollution in human health and environment.
- c. Documenting indigenous knowledge and practices contributing to combat plastic pollution to support intergenerational transfer of knowledge through customary institutions.

Annex I: Agenda of the event with presenters and titles

Agenda: Share perspectives and foster dialogue between governments, academia, and civil society on plastic marine and river pollution in SIDS and remote communities, especially focusing on specific challenges and successful innovative approaches.

Agenda:

Timing	Topic	Speakers
13.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and opening • Setting the context for the discussion 	Nancy Soi, UNEP Regional Seas Programme Coordinator
13.40	<p>What are the unique challenges and existing priorities and solutions in SIDS and remote communities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives from AOSIS and the Pacific • Perspectives from the Caribbean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiare Marumatakimanu, Government of Samoa, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) • Indira James-Henry, Government of Antigua and Barbuda
13.55	How can a holistic approach be adapted and implemented? Lessons learned from Mauritius	Kishore Boodhoo, University of Mauritius & International Science Council
14.05	<p>What role can community-led initiatives, grassroots organizations, and youth play to address plastic pollution equitably and effectively?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perspectives from Asia • <i>Voices of children and youth in islands</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prem Singh Tharu, Asia Indigenous People Pact • <i>Christianne Zakour, Trinidad and Tobago, Regional Facilitator for SIDS, Major Group for Children and Youth (tbc)</i>
14.20	Identifying equitable solutions: What are priorities for INC and practical steps to combat plastic pollution in SIDS and remote communities?	Moderated discussion with the audience and panel
14.40	<p>Summary and closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap of key insights and takeaways • Call for continued collaboration and commitment to addressing plastic pollution in SIDS and remote communities 	Nancy Soi, UNEP Regional Seas Programme Coordinator

Co-organizers and Speakers:

- Nancy Soi, Regional Seas Coordinator, Regional Seas Programme, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - Moderator

- Tiare Marumatakimanu, Government of Samoa, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)
- Indira James-Henry, Government of Antigua and Barbuda
- Kishore Boodhoo, International Science Council and University of Mauritius
- Prem Singh Tharu, Asia Indigenous People Pact
- Karuna Rana, SIDS Global Focal Point with the Major Group of Children and Youth, Mauritius

Off-site support with organization of the session: Natalie Harms, Secretariat of Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), UNEP