

First Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics

29th – 31st May 2018, United Nations Office at Nairobi – Kenya

Intervention from Samoa to Article Item 8:

We support the intervention by our regional Intergovernmental Agency SPREP for regional workshops to determine marine plastic litter plan for the Pacific sub-region. The Pacific Ocean is one of the largest, and member states have very large ocean EEZs. We feel the need for the harmonized methodology suggested by earlier speakers, and would like to build on a 2014 study which showed 97% of 34 fish species sampled had ingested plastics. We believe this may adversely impact the health of our peoples, and those whom we export our fish to. Further, there is a food security issue around the effect of pollutants in reducing ability of fish to reproduce.

The 2014 study could serve as a baseline, because several countries were involved, but we would like to update it to measure where Ocean health has improved or got worse.

We do not want to stop people for eating fish because USEPA studies show that the omega-3 oil and fatty acids from fish make eating fish beneficial to health - BUT we want to reduce or eliminate ocean pollution in the Pacific so that eating fish is safer for all.

To do this, we need to take stock of ocean health in our region. We could build national capacity in participating member states by using the University of South Pacific postgraduate students to carry out studies in the ecosystems that they know so well. We would use the data obtained for decision-making and awareness-raising, to assist with overall efforts to reduce marine plastic litter pollution of the ocean.

Thank you madam Co-chair

Delegate from the Independent State of SAMOA

Mr. Seumalo Afele Faiilagi
Assistant Chief Executive Officer
Division of Environment and Conservation (DEC)
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE)
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