

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 5:

On behalf of the Independent State of Samoa, I would like to congratulate the Secretariat in the organization of this important meeting and to acknowledge your executive panel in leading the facilitation and co-chair of the meeting. Our government would also like to thank the UNEP Secretariat for inviting Samoa to attend this important forum.

Samoa, as a Small Island Development State (SIDs) and one of the Pacific Island Countries, despite our size, we see the issue of marine litter and plastic as a major, given our strong emphasis on subsistence dependence on the ocean and land-based resources including our ecosystem-based reliance. Despite the potential multi-facet causes of marine litter, I would like to refer the Secretariat and suggest to put strong emphasis on what we strongly believe as SIDs, the causes of marine litter as a result of land-based developments and improper management of waste in particular plastics, that we believe have tremendous impacts on the ocean and marine resources through linkages and connectivity from the land-based to the ocean that surrounds our Small Islands State.

We also would like to suggest if you may allow, for the Secretariat to strengthen our Regional Intergovernmental Organizations like the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and the South Pacific Commission (SPC) to name a few, in our Pacific Regional to support the Intergovernmental Organisation with provision of sufficient resources, that would allow a regional approach to set and provide guidance for our small island states so to align our national strategy and actions better to the global focus, regional planning strategy and streamlined down to national key development priorities to see a more integrated and holistic approach to address marine litter and plastic inappropriate disposal.

On a regional level, the 48th Pacific Forum Leader convened its meeting last year and has a Forum Communique dedicated to our Pacific Regional efforts to join the global community to address marine litter and plastic pollution, and this reads as, *“Leaders **committed** to fast track the development of policies to ban the use of single-use plastic bags, plastic and styrofoam packaging and **called** on Pacific Rim partners to join and commit to action on addressing marine pollution and marine debris, to maintain the environmental integrity of the Pacific Ocean for people, planet and prosperity.*

Samoa, as a current Chair of the Regional Forum adopted the Forum Communique to fast track the development of policies to ban single use plastic and Styrofoam packaging.

On the national level, and as a result of this Regional bold commitment, Samoa is currently in attempt through its Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to review related and relevant existing legislation instruments in particular our *Solid Waste Management Act 2010*, to inform the next development for a potential banning of single-use plastic bags and Styrofoam as part of our small island

efforts to address plastic pollution in our water and to contribute to global efforts to fight against marine litter and plastic pollution.

Given our domestic situation with regard to our very unique land tenure system, which more than 80% of our total lands own customary, which means owned by our local people and family through a chiefly title system, contributes tremendously to the issue of illegal and inappropriate disposal of plastic. Thus, the need for alignment of regional priorities to global efforts and focus that will guide national developments and provide technical support to assist with domestic and national integrated efforts to address marine litter and plastic pollution to our water source and ocean.

We are also currently working to formulate our 1st National Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan with the technical support and assistance of the Government of Japan through its JICA Office in Samoa, and the Intergovernmental Organization of SPREP, collectively all these efforts will surely help our country with the issue of plastic pollution in our environment and waters. We have also launched our first national, and the first in the Pacific Region our Samoa Waste Management and Recyclers Association in April 2018 in which our Prime Minister is the patron for this Association to assist and support the government with its effort on marine litter and plastic pollution.

Finally, we would like to bring to your attention the issue associated with the legacy of waste and plastic pollution that has already been generated and remained on islands over the previous years to be considered for future global and regional planning in order to assist small island states like Samoa to best manage marine litter and plastic pollution.

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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