



# **PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

## **United Nations Member States**

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### **Nineteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting Thematic Discussion on “Waste Management”**

**Statement by Mr. Martin Zvachula  
Permanent Mission of the Federated States of Micronesia  
on behalf of the**

**Pacific Small Island Developing States**

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*Check against delivery*

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) represented at the United Nations, namely, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Micronesia.

Mr. Chairman,

Today we are focusing on waste management and we align ourselves with statement delivered by Cape Verde on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Many important issues have also been raised by the panelists and we thank them and like to highlight a few points from our perspective.

The Pacific region already has a Strategy on solid waste management which is now ready to be implemented. We call on and encourage our development partners and the international community to come on board and assist us in implementing its various components. We do not expect any one donor or partner to fund or resource the whole Strategy but we extend an invitation and encourage donors to partner with us in addressing this most pressing of environmental issues. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the partners who have already committed themselves to assisting the region in the implementation of this strategy.

I want to firstly focus on the PSIDS' lack of area, especially land space for waste management activities. Finding a suitable site for waste disposal in an environmentally sound manner is always a challenge on islands but particularly on small atolls where land is extremely scarce. If a dumpsite exists, it is often very close to our villages or the main area of business. Often they are also in close proximity to the Ocean and as is often the case, can get flooded as just happened in the Marshall Islands. Obviously, our location we can not change. We need to change the way in which we manage and administer the waste issue in such a situation.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me then focus on something that we can influence. In the last few years, some of our island nations have converted dump sites to sanitary landfills and others are in the process of doing so. The benefits of properly managing our waste are significant as it cuts down on leakage as well as controlling gases such as methane and even have the potential of energy generation, not to mention the benefits to the fragile island environment. We particularly appreciate the support of our development partners, especially the Government of Japan through JICA and the Government of Australia through AusAID, who have provided assistance in this respect and encourage them and others to continue to do so. On the flipside, landfills come with a price tag attached as they have to be monitored, maintained and operated properly, and especially so on islands that are prone to flooding. Sustainable and predictable sources of financing are required for operation but funds are often limited in our island nations.

In addition we also need to strengthen our human capacity to operate, monitor and maintain the sites. Again, we call on and encourage our development partners and the international community to continue and expand their support in the area. There are examples of these types of assistances in other parts of the world and we would be grateful if these could also be extended to the Pacific region.

Another issue we are confronted with is the ever increasing complexity of waste. From plastic shopping bags to medical waste to household electronics, with each one requiring a different method of treatment. No island in the Pacific can handle it by itself. As a result, we cooperate in the region to address the issue and share the burden between our islands and nations but clearly more needs to be done – this was shown in the highly successful and practical POPs in PICs project. And we need to remember that burden sharing means transporting waste over large distances of water among other things. The Pacific region is a big region and we all want to make sure that it is kept clean for us and the generations to come.

Thank you.