



Clean Environment | Resilient Ocean | Healthy Communities

### Outcomes Statement

#### Clean Pacific Roundtable 2021 Clean Environment. Resilient Ocean. Healthy Communities

At the 3<sup>rd</sup> Clean Pacific Roundtable hosted by New Caledonia and held virtually on 16 to 25 November 2021, we the participants adopted the following Outcomes Statement.

**Reaffirm:** The Pacific Ocean is the lifeblood of our society. It provides our cultural and historical identity since time immemorial and unites our islands in common purpose.

**Note** with alarm the unprecedented severity and frequency of threats the Pacific Ocean faces from climate change, plastics pollution and marine litter, and other anthropogenic stressors.

**Restate** our commitment to the “2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent”.

**Recognise** that a resilient Blue Pacific is necessary to meet the extraordinary and unabating challenges of our times.

**Recall** the commitments made by SPREP Ministers’ High Level Talanoa 2021 Accelerating Actions for a Resilient Blue Pacific to act now to identify and accelerate actions in order to achieve a resilient Blue Pacific.

**Further recall** that marine pollution - including plastics pollution, nuclear waste, radioactive and other contaminants, hazardous and noxious substances, oil spills, and contamination from World War II wrecks, other recent shipwrecks and unexploded ordnances - negatively impacts food security, human health, biodiversity, livelihoods, and culture. Entire ecosystems and species are placed at risk, as well as the people whose livelihoods and economic development depend on them. The products that end up as marine pollution are not produced in the region, and yet Pacific Island countries and territories are disproportionately impacted by them.

**Recall** the successful outcomes of the inaugural 2016 and 2018 Clean Pacific Roundtable as a platform to initiate regional and national cooperation in the waste and pollution sector and enable monitoring and progress reporting against the Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy (Cleaner Pacific 2025).

**Further recall** the recommendations, endorsements and commitments made at the 30<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting for the implementation of the Cleaner Pacific 2025, notably the establishing of

Environment Sectors (with disaster waste included) within National Disaster Management Offices to address disaster waste and other environmental issues, the Asbestos Management Legislative Reform Pathway and Code of Practice and Policy Note; the development of a Mercury Free Pacific Campaign to phase down and phase out mercury containing products and make artisanal small-scale gold mining free of mercury; the development of a Healthcare Medical Waste Investment Plan and support for donor intervention; and the Pathway for a sustainable financing mechanism for waste management.

**Acknowledge** responsibilities of Parties to MEAs for record keeping and reporting and the value in monitoring to assist with informed decision making and encourage resource appropriate monitoring & evaluation activities in their governance framework.

**Acknowledge** that the Clean Pacific Roundtable is a vehicle to disseminate outcomes, promote regional collaboration, and resource complementarity to prevent pollution-related issues that impact the health of the ocean and communities within the region.

**Recall** the “Pacific Regional Declaration on the Prevention of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution and its Impacts” presented at the 2021 SPREP Meeting Environmental Ministers’ High- Level Talanoa, highlights the growing understanding of the impacts of marine litter and plastic pollution and call on governments to support the establishment of a negotiating committee for a new binding global agreement on marine litter and plastic pollution at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA5.2) in 2022.

**Affirm** that as the Blue Pacific, we are implementing the Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan 2018-2025, however, we recognise that the interconnectivity of the world’s oceans means that marine pollution as a transboundary problem, to be effectively addressed, requires the coordinated and effective involvement of all countries.

and, in relation to the following topics the outcomes of the Clean Pacific Roundtable are as follows:

### **Circular Economy**

**Strongly** acknowledge the responsibilities under MEAs to undertake appropriate monitoring, record keeping, evaluation, and reporting within their governance framework to assist with informed decision making.

**Support** a safer circular economy as an approach to addressing waste and pollution issues in the Pacific to prioritise practices and products that are safe, toxic and hazard free substances at all stages of the value chain.

**Emphasise** that Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge Systems, Practices, and Innovations with free prior and informed consent already embody safe and regenerative circular economy approaches such as traditional and organic composting and farming, and nature-based packaging.

**Encourage the adoption, implementation of** processes and policies that will enable a safer circular economy in the Pacific region, which prioritises waste and pollution prevention and may include, but is not limited to, import and manufacturing restrictions on problematic products (such as single-use and toxic plastics and products that cannot be safely recycled or reused in the region), extended producer responsibility including backloading and reverse logistics, and container deposit fees/advanced recovery fees, which promote and support safe reuse, right to repair, repurpose, and recycling infrastructure and practices.

## **Technological Innovations with Public-Private Partnerships**

**Recognise** the need to strengthen coordination and collaboration efforts across the various sectors and stakeholders including clarifying the different roles and responsibilities in waste management at the community and national levels.

**Emphasise** the value that private industry can bring to alternative delivery system innovations for waste prevention and reduction, extended producer responsibility initiatives, safe waste management services and infrastructure, and environmental protection and the responsibility to human rights private industry must uphold.

**Ensure** there is meaningful, and empowering community and national consultation and awareness prior to and during the development and implementation of government policies, regulatory frameworks and legislation to ensure ownership on waste prevention and management initiatives in the Pacific.

**Emphasise** that an enabling robust legislative framework environment based on precautionary and polluter pays principles that is aligned where possible with other Pacific island countries and territories including the asbestos code of practice, container deposit schemes and reverse logistics, and used oil management incentives, is a useful tool to encourage investment and partnerships whilst ensuring the protection of human health and the environment.

**Support** Public Private Partnerships as well as partnerships with tertiary institutions in waste prevention and management that can take many forms, but are centred on the basis of a partnership where both risks and rewards are shared.

**Ensure** capacity development opportunities in waste management through formal qualifications in tertiary institutions and short-term training courses for practitioners, so that expertise remains in the Pacific and that building the evidence through applied research, helps inform and contribute to national policy.

**Emphasise** the value of sustainable financing instruments for Pacific island countries and territories in the prevention, mitigation, remediation, and sustainable management of waste.

**Call** on new Public Private Partnerships to be a truly shared responsibility that enable significant improvements in waste management while recognising the responsibilities and opportunities for the private sector to identify, prevent, mitigate, and remediate the adverse human rights and environmental impacts of business activities, products and services, and business relationships.

**Strongly encourage** support for the development of a Mercury Free Pacific Campaign to phase down and phase out mercury containing products; the development of a Healthcare Medical Waste Investment Plan and support for donor intervention; and the Pathway for a sustainable financing mechanism for waste management.

**Strongly urge** support for the development of National Plastic Pollution Prevention Plans (N4Ps) with measurable and timebound targets and consider including supporting legislation to phase out problematic plastics including toxic and single-use plastics and plastic products that cannot be safely reused or recycled in the region; to ensure the safe management of plastic pollution in the region; to ensure plastics are returned to producers outside the region at end of useful life; and to remediate plastic pollution in the environment.

### **Bridging people and waste: Enhancing consciousness in waste prevention and management**

**Recognise** addressing the challenges of waste management, requires collaboration with the community, through genuine engagement and building of relationships and trust, and that some of the most sustainable and effective plastic pollution responses comes from local initiatives offering locally derived and nature-based alternatives.

**Recognise and nurture** the role of champions at the community and national level, to advocate for and enhance awareness on waste prevention and management in the Pacific, noting knowledge, values and practices are constantly evolving, and that knowledge sharing and financial and practical support from partner agencies is crucial to successful pollution prevention.

**Acknowledge** the **right to science** through the development of systems supporting open and public access to the latest science, Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices (TKIP), as appropriate with free prior and informed consent.

**Support** raising awareness that our way of consuming and therefore producing waste has a negative effect on our environment, and that everyone can limit and reduce this impact through appropriate actions targeted at waste prevention.

**Support** the development and implementation of tools, systems, and practices for improved and sustainable behaviour change, while respecting people's needs, limitations and well-being.

**Call** on businesses, scientists, communities, formal and informal waste workers, and civil society organisations to play an active role in waste reduction and prevention and non-hazardous waste management outcomes and to avoid false solutions and regrettable substitutes.

**Emphasise** the importance of disaster waste planning, to respond in a timely manner to the complexities and challenges in addressing multiple waste streams following a disaster, contributing to disaster risk reduction, and the strengthening of community resilience.

**Emphasise** the importance of addressing plastic pollution, acknowledging the region's import dependency and the complex transboundary challenges. In this regard, we strongly support and urge all United Nations Member States at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA5.2) to support the establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to negotiate a new binding agreement covering the whole life cycle of plastics.

**Adopted on 25 November 2021**

Noumea, New Caledonia