



Addressing existing plastic pollution: A treaty imperative

Nairobi, 03rd July 2025 - As we look ahead to the resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) in Geneva this August, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) welcomes the constructive spirit that characterised the Heads of Delegation meeting in Nairobi. Over the past three days, States engaged with openness, and in some areas, showed encouraging signs of convergence. This spirit of dialogue gives us reason for cautious optimism.

But we must also be clear: *our work is far from done.*

For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the plastic pollution crisis is not a future threat - it is a daily, escalating reality. Plastic waste continues to choke coastlines, damage ecosystems, threaten food security, and undermine blue economies across our regions. These impacts are not theoretical. They are measurable, transboundary, and irreversible unless decisive action is taken now.

That is why AOSIS has consistently and unequivocally insisted on this: remediation of existing plastic pollution must be part of the solution.

We welcome the growing recognition, including in discussions this week, of the need for remediation of existing plastic pollution under the treaty. AOSIS highlighted the importance of:

- Establishing clear obligations for all Parties to work both individually and collectively to address existing plastic pollution, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- Establishing a remediation mechanism: to develop policy guidance on environmentally safe removal; and
- Enabling that mechanism to serve as a coordinating platform to bring together States, relevant intergovernmental bodies, and private actors to remediate existing plastic pollution.

As the Maldives emphasized, *"We support the AOSIS proposal for a clear and cooperative mechanism to address existing plastic pollution. This must include access to financing and technology for safe removal - and must not place a disproportionate burden on SIDS."*

This cannot be a paper mechanism. Alongside this, AOSIS has been actively engaging in finance negotiations to establish a fund or sub-fund to secure predictable finance for remediation action on existing plastic pollution. A Remediation Fund or Subfund must be created - one that is purpose-built to attract both public and private finance.

Antigua & Barbuda echoed this call, stating that *"the Remediation Fund must be institutionalized within the agreement."*

SIDS are fighting on both fronts: leading the ratification of the BBNJ Agreement to enable the establishment of marine protected areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction and in the plastic pollution negotiations to include obligations to remediate existing plastic waste - not just from our shores, but from areas beyond national jurisdiction, which make up nearly two-thirds of the Ocean.

Costa Rica noted, *"this proposition supports the goals of the BBNJ Agreement and highlights the importance of coordination between processes."* We cannot champion new marine protected areas while allowing them to be smothered by plastic.

The mandate from UNEA Resolution 5/14 was clear: the treaty must address plastic pollution in all environments, including in the marine environment. A treaty that does not tackle existing plastic pollution would fall short - not just of the mandate, but on the principle of justice for those bearing the greatest burden. SIDS are disproportionately affected by a crisis we did not create.

As Jamaica affirmed, *"the AOSIS proposal is a strong basis for negotiation. The special circumstances of SIDS are not up for debate. They are just."*

We urge all partners to work with us in the lead-up to Geneva to secure strong, consensus-based language on remediation of existing plastic pollution. AOSIS remains fully committed to advancing this work and will convene a virtual meeting next week to continue building momentum. Because unless we remove what is already there, we are not ending plastic pollution. We have to act now.

About AOSIS:

Since 1990, The Alliance of Small Island States has represented the interests of the 39 small island and low-lying coastal developing states in international negotiations on climate change, sustainable development, and oceans. As a voice for the vulnerable, AOSIS is key to ensuring the United Nations mandate to "leave no one behind" is honoured. On the global stage AOSIS often punches far above its weight, negotiating historic global commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions, among other achievements.

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