

# Tackling Plastics in SIDS

## ISLANDS Webinar (Caribbean Time Zone)

Opportunities for SIDS to join the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment and the Launch of the ISLANDS and Plastics communities of practice on the Green Forum.

### Introduction

Our planet is [drowning in plastic pollution](#). Plastic waste is everywhere, from the deepest ocean trench to the highest mountain peak and across the entire [food chain](#). The impacts on [human rights](#), [marine life](#), and [the economy](#) are well documented – and devastating. We cannot recycle our way out of this crisis. Plastics pose [distinct risks to human health](#) at every stage of its lifecycle, and microplastics, ubiquitous in the ocean carry carcinogenic [persistent organic pollutants](#) (POPs).

[More than 500 government and businesses](#) have already united around a [common vision](#) for a circular economy for plastics under the [New Plastics Economy Global Commitment](#), led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The vision sets out a circular economy approach to plastics managing that could save governments [USD 70 billion between 2021-2040](#) and create 700,000 additional jobs, mainly in developing countries.

The [Global Commitment Progress Report 2021](#) signals that 2022 offers a unique opportunity to capitalise on momentum towards ambitious global action on plastics. Promising trends include the declining use of virgin plastic among the signatory businesses with absolute reduction targets amounting to 19% by 2025, industry support for extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies across the plastics value chain,

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and the agreement on intergovernmental negotiations towards an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

The Global Commitment provides an established voluntary framework for stakeholders to develop and report on actions and progress related to plastic pollution. It allows governments to voluntarily test different approaches to address the full life cycle of plastic products. This process can also help governments identify where more resources are needed to better combat pollution and meet future obligations. Joining the Global Commitment also ensures that vital progress to combat plastic pollution is maintained.

SIDS face unique challenges around plastic waste management. Solutions and lessons learned from signatories can provide SIDS with important insights across key progress areas:

- Elimination of problematic or unnecessary plastic packaging and products through redesign, innovation, and new delivery models.
- Shifting from single-use to reusable packaging and products.
- Designing for reuse, recycling, or composting.
- Reuse, recycling or composting in practice.
- Decoupling (primarily by reducing the need for virgin plastic).
- Consumer awareness and behaviour change.
- Reporting.

Under the GEF funded [Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing States](#) (ISLANDS) Programme, this webinar will serve as a formal invitation for SIDS to become signatories to the Global Commitment. It will facilitate knowledge exchange by highlighting existing solutions to [turn the tide on plastics](#) in SIDS. It will also serve as an opportunity to showcase how ISLANDS will facilitate SIDS-SIDS learning through the [Green Forum](#) – a new collaboration space for stakeholders in the green economy – and how ISLANDS can support SIDS to report on signatory commitments.

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## Event overview

### Objectives

The objectives of this event are to:

1. Build on momentum towards a circular economy for plastics including the [announcement of new government signatories under the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment](#).
2. Invite SIDS to become signatories to the Global Commitment.
3. Introduce the ISLANDS Programme and how it will facilitate SIDS-SIDS learning on circularity.
4. Grow the [ISLANDS](#) and [Plastics](#) communities of practice on the Green Forum.
5. Link ISLANDS, the Global Commitment, the IUCN Plastic Waste Free Islands project (PWFI).

### Partners

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
IUCN Plastic Waste Free Islands project (PWFI)

### Date and time

29 March 2022: 09:00 to 10:30 (Barbados and Antigua time)  
(15:00–16:30 CEST)

### Target audiences

The main target audiences are government representatives from SIDS focused on reducing plastic pollution.

This event will be open to the public and relevant to all stakeholders in the global effort to [#BeatPlasticPollution](#).

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## Draft agenda

- 09h00–09h10** Welcoming Remarks  
**Speaker:** Melanie Ashton, GEF ISLANDS
- 09h10–09h20** New Plastics Economy Global Commitment on Plastic  
**Speaker:** Llorenç Milà i Canals, Head of the Secretariat – Life Cycle Initiative, UNEP
- 09h20–09h30** End plastic pollution  
**Speaker:** Asha Challenger, Lead Negotiator– Oceans: Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations
- 09h30–09h50** **Q & A**
- 09h50–10:00** Circular solutions: Examples of effective, quantifiable solutions to addressing plastic leakage as part of a systems approach to addressing plastic pollution.  
**Speaker:** João Sousa, Senior Programme Officer of Marine Plastics, Global Marine and Polar Programme at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- 10:00–10:20** Round-table discussion  
Possible discussion questions:
- What are the activities/issues that SIDS find most difficult in addressing plastic pollution?
  - What support or information would help SIDS to join the GC – if they wanted to?
- 10h20–10h30** Closing reflections

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## Background

### About ISLANDS

The Global Environment Facility [Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing States](#) (ISLANDS) Programme supports 33 Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) across the Caribbean, Indian and Pacific Oceans to safely and sustainably manage chemical and hazardous waste. A global project connects and facilitates SIDS-SIDS learning across and between project regions including through dedicated communities of practice on the Green Forum.

### About the Global Commitment

The New Plastics Economy Global Commitment is led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The Ellen MacArthur Foundation leads the engagement with the private sector (the business signatories and endorsers), and UNEP leads the engagement with the governments.

### About the UN Environment Programme

UNEP is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

### About the IUCN Plastic Waste Free Islands (PWFI) project

In 2019, with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), IUCN launched the [Plastic Waste Free Islands \(PWFI\)](#) project, as part of its global Close the Plastic Tap Programme. Implemented in Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa in Oceania and Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia and Grenada in the Caribbean, the project seeks to promote island circular economy and to demonstrate effective, quantifiable solutions to addressing plastic leakage from Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

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