

ADB's Organizational Statement at the UN's SIDs (PICs) Capacity Building Training Programme on the Implementation of the Jaipur Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy (2025-2035)

Deputy RD SPSO

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A. Introduction

It's a pleasure to speak on behalf of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and share our commitment to **sustainable solid waste management** and the **circular economy**, especially in the context of **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** and **fragile environments**.

B. Rationale of Circular Economy

Solid waste management is more than just keeping our surroundings clean—it's about **protecting our ecosystems, safeguarding public health, and ensuring long-term economic resilience**. In the Pacific, our challenges are unique. We are remote and dispersed, yet deeply connected to global trade and tourism. We import most of what we consume, and with that comes a growing volume of waste—much of it non-biodegradable and difficult to manage. Unlike larger nations, we cannot rely on expansive landfills or costly incineration. Land is scarce, resources are limited, and technical capacity is stretched. Our natural ecosystems—reefs, lagoons, and biodiversity—are not just beautiful, they are vital to our livelihoods. This is where the **circular economy** offers a transformative opportunity. It allows us to **rethink waste**—to treat it as a resource, to design smarter systems, and to **reuse, repurpose, and regenerate** rather than dispose.

C. ADB's Response

ADB is proud to support Pacific governments, communities, and partners in making this shift a reality. ADB's **Strategy 2030** prioritizes livable cities and climate resilience, including solid waste management. The **Pacific Approach 2021–2025** guides our work in 12 Pacific Island Countries, focusing on infrastructure, service expansion, institutional strengthening, behavior change, and community engagement. We've identified solid waste management as a key priority in our **Pacific Urban Development, Water, and Sanitation Sector Roadmap**, and our **Action Plan for Healthy Oceans and Sustainable Blue Economies** targets land-based pollution sources like plastics and wastewater.

ADB is implementing a **Regional Circular Economy Improvement Project** across 14 countries, with feasibility studies funded by a \$2 million technical assistance grant and a \$10 million investment project in development. This initiative aims to enhance recycling capacity, reduce waste, improve livelihoods, and support climate adaptation and disaster risk management.

We're supporting **integrated solid waste management solutions** tailored to local contexts:

- In the **Marshall Islands**, the Majuro Integrated Urban Service Improvement Project (\$52.5 million, ADF grant) includes upgrades to landfill operations, recycling systems, and institutional capacity building. It supports the 2024–2030 Solid Waste Management and Circular Economy Action Plan.
- In **Nauru**, we're helping build facilities to process organic waste and recycle materials—reducing volumes and improving sustainability (\$37.5 million, ADF grant).
- In the **Solomon Islands**, ADB is supporting improved solid waste management through infrastructure upgrades, policy development, and community engagement (\$19.4 million project). This includes better landfill management, recycling initiatives, and institutional strengthening to ensure long-term sustainability.

- In **Fiji**, ADB is supporting the government through transaction advisory services (TAS) in developing a **new sanitary landfill** and rehabilitating **four open dumpsites** in the Western Division through a **public-private partnership (PPP) model**. Post-COVID, many Pacific Island Countries face tight fiscal constraints. This initiative reflects the importance of exploring **alternative cost-sharing mechanisms** to help governments **maximize efficiency while minimizing costs**.

We're also promoting **upstream waste reduction** and raising awareness about sustainable consumption—because the goal is not just better waste handling, but **less waste to handle**. One of our most exciting initiatives is the **Regional Recycling Network**, which helps Pacific countries collaborate by pooling waste streams, sharing infrastructure, and building regional value chains for recyclables. This makes recycling **economically viable and environmentally sustainable**, while creating **local jobs**. Finally, we're supporting the **enabling environment**—through policy development, training, financing tools, and partnerships with the private sector.

D. Lessons Learnt

From our work across the Pacific, several key lessons have emerged:

- **Local context matters:** Solutions must be tailored to each country's geography, capacity, and community needs.
- **Partnership is essential:** Collaboration between governments, communities, and development partners drives success.
- **Capacity building is critical:** Technical training, institutional support, and public awareness are vital for long-term impact.
- **Regional cooperation works:** Shared infrastructure and pooled resources can overcome the limitations of scale and cost.
- **Circular thinking is powerful:** Viewing waste as a resource opens up new opportunities for innovation, sustainability, and economic growth.
- **Innovative financing is crucial:** As seen in **Fiji**, where ADB is supporting a PPP model for landfill development and dumpsite rehabilitation, **alternative cost-sharing mechanisms** are vital in a post-COVID environment where fiscal space is tight. These models help governments **achieve more with less**, ensuring sustainability and efficiency.

Vinaka vakalevu, and we look forward to continuing this journey together with all of you toward a cleaner, more resilient, and more sustainable Pacific.