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### **Guam endorses Pacific declaration to prevent marine plastic pollution**

Guam has become one of eight countries and territories with Pacific interests to endorse a “Pacific Regional Declaration on the Prevention of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution and Its Impacts.” The declaration was endorsed by University of Guam President Thomas W. Krise as Guam’s representative in the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

The declaration will support a [resolution on plastic pollution](#) spearheaded by the governments of Rwanda and Peru that calls for a global and legally binding agreement addressing the life cycle of plastics. The resolution will be presented at the [Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly](#), taking place Feb. 28 to March 2 in Nairobi, Kenya. The UNEA brings together representatives of the 193 member states of the United Nations to agree on policies to address the world’s most pressing environmental challenges.

The declaration states: “We, representatives of the people of the Pacific region and stewards of the world’s largest ocean [...] are deeply concerned about the impacts of plastics and microplastics pollution on our region and that the current patchwork of international legal instruments is not sufficient to prevent the acceleration of these impacts.”

The document notes a global disregard for end-of-life management of plastic products, insufficient support for the development of plastic alternatives, and continued production of harmful plastics, especially single-use plastics. Its endorsees share a concern that the annual production of virgin plastics of 368 million metric tons is set to double by 2040, with only 9% of all plastics ever produced having been recycled.

“Despite some progress at national and regional levels, the marine litter and plastic pollution crisis requires a dedicated and coordinated global and regional governance response with the support of all states and other institutional global and regional stakeholders,” the declaration states.

Krise reported about Guam’s specific challenges and efforts regarding plastic pollution at the 30th Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme’s Meeting of Officials in September.

“Along the coasts of Guam, ocean pollution mainly results from illegal dumping and littering on land. Despite having a landfill and reliable trash pick-up services, the cost of waste management and lack of awareness of the effects of pollution are the main reasons for these harmful activities,” Krise said.

Other endorsers of the declaration include Australia, France, New Zealand, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, the United Kingdom, and Wallis and Futuna.

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**Photo caption:**

University of Guam President Thomas W. Krise, top left, joins other Pacific Island representatives at the 30th Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme’s Meeting of Officials in September. The meeting resulted in a regional declaration to prevent marine litter and plastic pollution.