



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation  
and Nuclear Safety

**General Statement from Germany in Plenary, 3rd UNEP ad hoc open ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics in Bangkok, 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019**

Dear Madame Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to take the floor,

Congratulations on your election.

The fight against marine litter is one of the most pressing political tasks of our time.

It is very encouraging to see that so many countries have a common interest in strengthening international cooperation and in working together to combat marine plastic litter at global level.

From the German point of view, the past work under UNEA has been a good step forward, but there is still more to accomplish.

Policymakers are responsible for creating the right framework conditions and incentives. National and regional action plans and existing international agreements, e.g. the Basel Convention, are important tools.

In light of latest developments, Germany would like to encourage UNEA to issue a mandate for developing a global legally binding agreement that closes current gaps and offers added value.

In October 2019, Germany invited like-minded states to an informal roundtable meeting in Berlin to discuss possible paths towards a new global agreement to combat marine litter and microplastics.

Representatives from 14 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania - China, Denmark, Germany, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Norway, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the European Commission - participated in a lively discussion.

We reiterated that the fight against plastic waste and marine plastic litter is a global task and requires a full-lifecycle approach.

The particular aspects of all kind of plastics have to be integrated and principles of circular economy need to be applied.

There was a feeling that discussions on a global legally binding instrument are helpful and the process should be continued.

An international instrument should consider national circumstances and support local governments. It should acknowledge local and regional challenges.

There was a strong feeling that more data collection and research is needed.

Based on this encouraging political signal from Berlin, it is our intention to support the discussion among like-minded countries in search of a suitable approach during the time leading up to UNEA-5 in 2021.

The German Ministry for the Environment is committed to supporting the process wherever and whenever helpful and needed.

Regarding the agenda of the working group, which focused on details laid out in the last resolution, we suggest placing emphasis on fundamental issues as well: where are we heading, what is the goal and how do we get there.

We hope we will be able to discuss these issues in the days to come, while at the same time focusing on the establishment of the necessary framework, including technical and administrative aspects such as stocktaking, guidelines, etc.

We note that there are links to the preparation of technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of plastic wastes at the level of the Basel Convention. e.g. the establishment of a Basel Convention partnership on plastic waste and the preparation of technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of plastic wastes.

Other measures related to waste management outside of economic instruments (e.g. legislative and regulatory measures, voluntary agreements) should also be addressed.

The "Criteria to address" should therefore be broadened to read "Measures to support waste management".

Germany sees the joint preparations for UNEA-5 as a global process in which countries from all parts of the world should be actively involved.

The upcoming three meetings of the Expert Group will be a great opportunity to pave the way for significant improvements during a successful meeting of the 5th United Nations Environmental Assembly 2021 in Nairobi.

Thank you very much.