



**AFRICAN PETROLEUM PRODUCERS' ORGANIZATION
APPO**

A Submission on the Potential options for Elements Towards an international
Legally Binding Instrument to End Plastic Pollution

Presented to the United Nations INC Plastics Secretariat

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- The agreement should recognize the importance of plastics to achieve sustainable development goals and the continuation of plastic production while ensuring the effective management of plastic waste by relying on circular approaches to emissions and waste management (adoption of circular economy approach).

This appears to be fair to all parties in the global community, the developed and the developing or under-developed, as well as the technologically advanced as well as the agrarian states.

- Focus on downstream and midstream to solve the root cause of the plastic pollution.

While the focus appears to be fair, it is important that it is not twisted to discourage the growth of global expansion of the petrochemical industries. This is important especially for developing countries that are poised for industrial development, as petrochemicals constitute the core to any industrial breakthrough. Impression must not be created that these laudable efforts are geared towards thwarting the advancement of today's developing countries, in the manner that climate change has now been misconceived.

- The agreement should address pollution from the use of plastics in end products through technological means for recycling and waste management. Restricting use of plastics or their production should not be in the scope of the agreement.

This is another fair position, especially the emphasis against restricting the use or production. What needs to be emphasized is the need to develop technologies that could substantially reduce the hazards of plastics. Today's science can do it, provided there are incentives.

- The importance of supporting research and development in finding technical solutions that adopts circular approaches.

We believe that this is the kernel of the work of this Committee. Focus on developing strategies that will incentivize research and development in making plastic and plastic products biodegradable.

- Importance of building capacity to understand, assess, and address the socio-economic impacts of the implementation of response measures.

It is important to note that compliance to or respect for laws and regulations vary tremendously among countries according to their levels of development and the penetration of governance. While in the developed world the enacting of laws and regulations are enough to ensure compliance by a majority of the people, in most developing countries, majority of the people hardly get to know about laws and regulations passed by the government at the time they are passed. It takes ages, and through word of mouth for May to get to know. And even when they get to know, it takes even longer for them to discard their old habits. It is therefore important that countries are mobilized to sensitize their population on the hazards of plastic waste. But in so doing, the people also need to be given alternatives to what plastics do for them. For example, in rural African communities where there is no running tap water, people used to collect water from the river or stream and store them in various

biodegradable containers like huge calabashes, huge wooden barrels, or in some well-to-do families, in basins. While these containers held quite some good quantity of water for the family to use daily, they were mostly unhygienic as the covers (where they exist) cannot be trusted to properly cover the content. Since these rural people got introduced to plastic jerry cans of 25, 50 or 100 liters, which are easier to carry to the stream, and safer to store water for a longer time, it is going to be difficult to get them to abandon what has proved to be useful and practical to them, without providing an alternative. This is where a lot of sensitization and mobilization shall be required by national governments and local authorities.

- Recognize the environmental impacts related to the use of biodegradable plastics, its durability, affordability, and ESM of biodegradable plastic especially when its turns to waste.

While recognizing the importance of the environmental impacts of the use of plastics, and the need to address them, it is also important to recognize that plastics are today the cheapest and most affordable and durable containers for some of our basic needs like for medicines, food, water, etc. This is especially for poor developing countries. Rushing to discourage their use will further heighten the existing inequalities between the have and have-not states. All efforts must be made to ensure that no one group of people feel (rightly or wrongly) that global policies are always targeted at disenfranchising them from the global decision-making process.

- Ensuring the effective management of plastic waste by relying on circular approaches to emissions and waste management

Encourage the establishment of small and medium reuse plastic plants in communities that have the need for plastics. That way, demand for more virgin plastics may be controlled.

- A comprehensive LCA comparison of single-use plastic uses and compared to alternatives to determine the environmental and economic impact.