

GOVERNANCE DISCUSSIONS

Guiding principles

Responses to the problem of marine litter and microplastics should be aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. Political will is essential for effective outcomes. Information and research are critical enablers.

The overall approach should be

- Comprehensive and holistic
- Transparent
- Evidence-based

It should incorporate

- Sea-based and land-based sources
- The circular economy
- The full life-cycle approach

It should target:

- Elimination and prevention
- Immediate as well as sustained, long-term action

It should be supported by and grounded in:

- A science/policy interface
- International cooperation
- Multi-stakeholder engagement
- Realities of differences in local contexts and (technical/financial) capacities

Stakeholders' roles

- **States:** role in taking action at the national/local level and engage in international cooperation efforts
- **Private sector:** role in product design, information transparency, producer responsibility through the full product life cycle, implementation of a circular economy approach, providing finance
- **Civil society (NGOs):** role in convening stakeholders, fostering community action and citizen science, watch dogs, voicing public opinion, information gathering and dissemination
- **International organizations:** within their mandates, support coordination and collaboration activities, contribute expertise and linkages with relevant workstreams.

Governance structure:

- **Strengthening existing instruments**

There is consensus on the need to strengthen existing mechanisms within their mandates and scope. Basel, SAICM, MARPOL, Stockholm, FAO etc. tackle different issues that contribute in addressing MLMP, such as trade, pollution from ships, POPs or transboundary movement and disposal. None of these instruments address the issue in a comprehensive manner. Each existing mechanism has its own governance and State membership structure (e.g. UNEA cannot request action from IMO/MARPOL or from FAO). A gap analysis on compliance/enforcement of existing structures and the possibilities of existing mechanisms to further contribute to the solution would be useful. There is a need for States to coordinate their positions, first at the domestic level (among authorities responsible for different sectors / fisheries, marine affairs, environment, etc) and then in their representation at the international fora relating to MLMP.

- **Considering new/enhanced mechanisms for coordination/collaboration (?)**

Because of the current fragmented approach, there is also a need to reflect on/design a platform that would address the problem in a holistic manner (as opposed to the fragmentation of addressing the issue through the different existing mechanisms). GPML and/or SAICM, could serve this purpose.

- **Considering a global legally binding architecture**

Advantages include:

- More weight
- Gives countries more confidence to take action if they know that other countries are also taking action (joint efforts, no free-riders)
- More effective in supporting coordination at the national level
- Can provide a set of different measures, such as capacity building and other support mechanisms from developed countries in the implementation of the instrument

Disadvantages include:

- Duration for the negotiation
- Resources/cost

Many experts considered that it may be premature to embark on the negotiation of an international legally binding instrument as this may take a long time and immediate action is needed. Many experts also favored the adoption of such an instrument as the only way to address the problem in a holistic manner.

Prevention pillar

- Sound waste management / recycling targets (such as of fishing gear)
- Transparency and information sharing (information on production, consumption and trade, as well as policy options) and research coordination; such as inventories for monitoring (global, regional, national, local or municipal (e.g. for waste management).
- Regulatory measures and guidance on production methods and products/additives
- Measures for standardization, labelling, packaging at the national and international level

Enablers

- A global mechanism for financial and capacity/technical support/cooperation

- Use of policies to promote voluntary commitments and market-based incentives (subsidies and tax reforms)
- Education (consumer education) and awareness raising
- Indigenous and local communities/knowledge