

**(a) What are the main priorities in information (on marine litter and microplastics) and monitoring?**

- **Life-cycle approach/recycling/reduction:** Monitoring should encompass not only monitoring of plastic in the ocean or plastic waste, but plastic production and recycling. This requires a holistic approach which would entail monitoring sustainable consumption and production practices across the life cycle of products.
- **Transparency on plastics:** Tracking of plastics and microplastics by type of plastic, including plastic related e-waste and additives (and toxicity) in plastics, is needed. Without information on what needs to be managed and how to appropriately manage wastes and on additives then it is not possible to get a complete picture.
- **Consumer awareness for behavioral change:** Information and data must be communicated in a way that builds awareness of the public so that consumers can make informed decisions.
- **Microplastics:** Understanding the sources of microplastics and nanoplastics, and the impact of microplastics and nanoplastics on human health and ecosystems is a priority.
- **Trade-offs:** Understanding when the alternative to plastic is worse than the use of plastics is a challenge. This makes providing policy advice that would result in benefits and not costs to human health and the environment difficult.
- **Up-to-date information on the state of global marine environment with regard to marine litter and microplastics including cumulative effects of actions taken towards reducing marine litter and microplastics based on existing data and information.**

**(b) How can legal instruments support these priorities? (also includes other policy instruments not just legal)**

- **Waste management systems:** Not all waste management systems have the same capabilities and thus linking the type of plastics entering the market with the ability of a national waste management system to manage a particular type of waste should be considered – a one-size-fits-all instrument may not work.
- **Types of plastics:** Perhaps a design manual could focus on three main types of plastics which could be promoted and the use of other types of plastics could be discouraged.
- **Illegal imports:** There is a need to strengthen customs to prevent illegal importing.
- **Data sharing between governments, industry and relevant stakeholders:** Data sharing mechanisms which facilitate the sharing of data between partners in a way that ensures transparency and trust in data would help build an environment of collaboration. Guidelines and data validation considerations should be included in any data sharing mechanism.
- **International cooperation on monitoring:** A global mechanism for monitoring would help inform policy and assist in reaching global ambitions, legal reform and improve knowledge on marine litter and microplastics. There are challenges in terms of global monitoring; however, this would inform the development of policy interventions and legal instruments.
- **Financing for data and information:** Legal instruments could be used to increase financing of data and information sharing if data sharing was mandatory.

**(c) What are the implications of options 1, 2 and 3 (see document UNEP/AHEG/2018/2/2) for information and monitoring?**

- **Phasing out of toxic plastics:** Working to classify and eliminate harmful plastics is important relates to all three options, even to the status quo.
- **Global monitoring architecture:** Option 2 and 3 include a global monitoring framework which would create challenges, but would also improve global knowledge and data.
- **Multilateral environment agreements (MEAs):** Existing MEAs, such as the BRS or UNFCCC, can support information on monitoring; however, the current MEAs do not provide a framework which would capture both national plastic production and use and international trade.
- **Waste management systems:** Not all waste management systems have the same capabilities and thus linking the type of plastics entering the market with the ability of a national waste management system to manage a particular type of waste should be considered – a one-size-fits-all approach may not work.
- **Voluntary versus legally binding:** Countries face difficulties in securing resources for collecting and sharing data. Voluntary reporting may not result in comprehensive reporting; however, it provides more flexibility to countries.
- **Timing:** A global partnership or focal point could be developed in the short term. There is a need to identify short-term wins and longer term objectives.

**(d) What are the next steps to be taken to address barriers and opportunities?**

- **Availability and access to basic data:** Information on the prevalence and impacts of plastics and microplastics is still lacking. In particular, high-quality time series data which follows a standardized methodology. This is essential for understanding trends over time and judging the impacts of policy interventions. There is a need to build national capacity for this.
- **Improving science:** Scientific support for political processes on the impacts and state of plastics is not addressing the full range of policy issues; for example, the impacts of microplastics on human health. There is a need for a way to bring together scientific knowledge, research and efforts of different global bodies and researchers. This would help better understand the existing situation and also to understand information gaps.
- **Improved data and information sharing:** There is a need to make methodology, terminology and information more harmonized, standardized, accessible and useable. This would require international collaboration and engagement.