

Statement by Dr.Kalpana Chaudhari, Institute For Sustainable Development And Research (ISDR, India), And Shah And Anchor Kutchhi Engineering College, India

Statement Submitted for Ad hoc Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to prepare for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

At Dakar, Senegal, 30 May – 1 June 2022.

Thank you, Chair. I'm here from India and we support "End Plastic Pollution", the green initiatives for plastic free life. I am participating on behalf of the Institute for Sustainable Development and Research, (ISDR), and Shah and Anchor Kutchhi Engineering College, India.

We thank UNEP for expeditiously implementing the decisions of UNEA-5/14 to prepare for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment through OEWG.

We feel honored to be part of this OEWG as we already participated in deliberations in UNEP@50 and UNEA-5 during 16 February to 04 March 2022 wherein the resolution UNEA 5/14 entitled 'End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument' was adopted by all stakeholders. This gives us an opportunity for continued collaborations to visualize the aspirations of global communities towards transforming the plastic free world.

In the proceedings of OEWG, we should consider how we can prevent plastic pollution which is destroying vulnerable marine ecosystems and agriculture? This is a challenging problem for Asia and the planet at large, whose inhabitants have earned their livelihood from the earth – Land, Water and Sea/Ocean since early times. That is why stakeholders companies and research institutions which have been leaders in the agriculture, marine, offshore, shipping, fisheries and aquaculture industries for decades are investing major resources in fighting plastic pollution in the Marine ecosystem to increase Land and water productivity.

Plastic has become one of the most crucial issues for the environment and global climate change that we are facing today. India is generating about 3.5 million tonnes of plastic waste annually and the per capita plastic waste generation has almost doubled over the last five years. A very few tonnes are recycled due to the lack of a functioning solid waste management system. This leads to burden on the landfills and poor socio-economic conditions of the waste pickers. The deliberations in OEWG will help to focus on reduction in plastic uses and promote environment friendly alternatives along with the policy formulation and incentives.

To develop the international legally binding instruments, all stakeholder's partnership is expected to promote collection, segregation by modern technology, recycling of all kinds of plastics to move towards a circular economy. Need to adopt 3R pattern (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) for plastic utilization in all sectors for effective implementation of UNEA-5/14 resolution.

Innovative solutions are expected in OEWG from start-ups, entrepreneurs, industries and youth on Plastic waste Challenges by organizing events such as community meetings, Hackathons, street shows, field visits for highlighting the immense talent and potential of youth and other stakeholders.

Recently, In India, the Union Environment Minister (India) Launched Awareness Mascot 'Prakriti' & Green Initiatives for Effective Plastic Waste Management on 5th April 2022 to ensure the effective plastic waste management and launch an e-governance portal to mitigate issues related to plastic pollution. Other examples are: National Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Portal for Plastic Packaging (CPCB) for improving accountability, traceability, transparency and facilitating ease of reporting compliance to EPR Obligations by Producers, Importers and Brand-owners Mobile App for Single Use Plastics Grievance Redressal (CPCB) to empower citizens to check sale/usage/manufacturing of SUP in their area and tackle the plastic menace. We believe that such best practices can be integrated in the OEWG proceeding to form the recommendations.

There is an urgent need to provide financial support to NGOs to promote national and international policy on plastic free life and boost the steps to reduce plastic pollution in the urban, coastal and marine environment, including existing plastic pollution.

We move forward to undertake significant efforts by stakeholders to strengthen the existing national and regional collaborative efforts to reduce plastic use and prevent marine litter, implement the UNSDGs through youths, communities, farmers, fishermen, marine and shipping industries to save life below water, climate change, disaster management and mitigation.

We must consider that livelihood of large population is depending on the trade of plastics in the informal sector, where the majority are women, struggling to support their families, many plastic industries are well established, many people are employed in those plastic industry which need to find out alternate and sustainable solution to those industry and their employees for rehabilitations. This needs a human approach to provide the means for the livelihoods of the affected stakeholders while supporting the UNEA-5/14 resolution to end the plastic pollution.

Finally, we support the agenda of OEWG to prepare for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment at Dakar, Senegal, 30 May – 1 June 2022 which will help to end plastic pollution, proposed by 5 th UN-Environment Assembly. In order to prepare for future deliberations, we support UNEP in organizing a series of multi stakeholder dialogues, to be initiated at the OEWG, with the objective of creating a space for constructive engagement and innovative thinking to achieve the UNEP resolution 5/14 entitled 'End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument' and cooperation to prepare for the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

Thank You.