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Department of Environment and Natural Resources
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU
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18 November 2019

The Secretariat
3rd Meeting of the UNEA Ad-Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group
on Marine Litter
UN Environment Programme

Dear Sir/Madam:

We are pleased to submit the attached Philippine Statement for the 3rd Meeting of the UNEA Ad-Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter.

The national statement reiterates our previous submissions as transmitted by this Office and the interventions by the Philippine delegation at UNEA-4.

The Philippines is seriously and persistently pursuing its position on particular elements such as:

- the negotiations of a new global treaty to combat marine plastic pollution.
- the consideration of the feasibility and effectiveness of a potential international legally binding agreement on marine litter and microplastics (UNEP/AHEG/2018/2/5).
- the discussion of elements of a treaty, especially with respect to a scientific intergovernmental panel, and a system for national reporting, including measuring and monitoring progress, and support to the implementation especially by developing countries, among others.

For your consideration.

Atty. Jonas R. Leones
Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs

Philippines' National Statement

to the 3rd Meeting of the UNEA Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group
Opening Plenary Session on 18 November 2019

Following the Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities in January 2012, this community of nations have made headway into addressing this problem at various levels. In this region, the ASEAN Bangkok Declaration on Marine Debris adopted in July 2019 signals the unified stance of the Southeast Asian nations to prioritize this issue.

Nevertheless, much more integrated parallel action remains to be done at the national, regional and international levels. At least 8 million tons of plastic wastes are continuously dumped per year. Over 75% of plastic ever produced becomes waste as its **market price does not take into account the costs of its life cycle to society and nature**, and even as plastic production is expected to quadruple by 2050. Addressing this growing crisis should involve not just governments but also the private sector as well as research institutions, non-government organizations, the general public and individuals, to comprehensively and effectively stop the leakage of marine litter, including microplastics into our environment **that adversely affects our economy, our environment, and potentially our health** as microplastic enter into our food chain (with a recent report of 50 studies estimating human ingestion of microplastics of at least 5 grams per week.)

As the UN Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group Meeting meets this week, the Philippines continues to reiterate its commitment in working with the rest of the international community, including through this Expert Group, to explore ways in which global actions may be improved. Consistent with our position at UNEA4, the Philippines reiterates its support **for the start of the negotiations of a new global treaty to combat marine plastic pollution.**

This is aligned with the conclusion of a 2018 UNEP-commissioned study that **the current existing legal framework governing marine plastic pollution is fragmented and inadequate.** Likewise, this same group's report on its second meeting recommended, as one of the potential options for the consideration of the UNEA, **to consider the feasibility and effectiveness of a potential international legally binding agreement on marine litter and microplastics (UNEP/AHEG/2018/2/5).**

It is our hope that in light of the urgency and importance of the problem, this week's meeting would be an opportunity **to propose and discuss elements for such a treaty**, especially with respect to a scientific intergovernmental panel, a system for national reporting, including measuring and monitoring progress, and implementation support, among others, so we continue to move forward on the gains of our past meetings and elevate our discussions towards agreed targeted global actions.

We wish everyone a productive time at this 3rd Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group! We also wish to thank the UNEP Secretariat for efforts in organizing this meeting.

Mabuhay!

15 November, Manila, Philippines