

Agenda item 3

Update by the Chair on previous work of the
ad hoc open-ended expert group

Third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics
18-22 November 2019 – Bangkok, Thailand

First meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group

The meeting considered the following documents [*emphasis added*]:

- **Barriers** to combating marine litter and microplastics, including challenges related to resources in developing countries (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/2)
- National, regional and international **response options**, including action and innovative approaches, and voluntary and legally binding governance strategies and approaches (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/3)
- Environmental, social and economic **costs and benefits** of the different response options (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/4)
- **Feasibility and effectiveness** of the different response options (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/5)

First meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group

- There was widespread agreement that social attitudes and human health benefits needed to be taken into account when designing strategies and policies to tackle the problem. Stakeholder engagement was also seen as vital.
- There was agreement that a common framework based on one size fits all based was not an optimal approach. Rather a diversity of solutions, adapted to local conditions, linked to a greater understanding of sources, flows and barriers, would be most likely to succeed.
- Participants recommended a more interactive format for subsequent meetings, to enable exchange of knowledge between member states, major groups and especially business.

First meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group

Agreed that a robust analysis of different response options was required, based on:

- (a) a deeper understanding of the **gaps in existing mechanisms and agreements**, including of their coverage and the mechanisms or agreements that are working well;
- (b) a greater understanding of the **challenges** faced by existing programmes and institutions;
- ...
- (e) identification of **opportunities** for short-term, as well as medium- and longer-term, actions;
- (f) an analysis of ways in which **improved data** from the monitoring of marine litter and plastics could be used **to inform upstream processes and interventions** [*emphasis added*]

Second meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group

Addressed:

Information and monitoring (UNEP/AHEG/2018/2/3)

https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/summary_of_information_and_monitoring.pdf

Governance (UNEP/AHEG/2018/2/4)

https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/governance_summary_for_posting_final_lowith_annex.pdf

Options for continued work and Preparation of input to the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

Second meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group

- The meeting recognised the progress that had been made on increasing understanding of the issues but that there were still significant gaps in knowledge about new materials, waste management, industrial developments, financing and the effectiveness of existing policies.
- During discussions, many participants expressed a need to understand better the links to national efforts to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and the activities across the United Nations funds and programmes.
- The increased interactivity was appreciated by the participants. However, there was a greater need to synthesise the outcomes of the various break-out groups so that each group could benefit from the ideas of others.
- Overall, the meeting participants recognised that efforts and activities were growing globally and that there was an urgent need to understand better the sources, extent and impacts of marine litter and plastic pollution as well as the effectiveness of different response options.

Resolution 4/6

Preamble and Operative Paragraphs

...the need to **increase coherence, coordination and synergies between existing mechanisms** and to **enhance cooperation and governance**...at the local, national, regional and global level...

strengthen scientific and technological knowledge with regard to marine litter, including marine plastic litter and microplastics, through the following activities:

- Convening existing relevant **science advisory initiatives** with inputs from Member States...
- Compiling available scientific and other relevant data and information to **prepare an assessment on sources, pathways and hazards of litter**...
- Recommending **indicators to harmonize monitoring, reporting and assessment methodologies**...
- Gathering information with a view to informing policies and action regarding **environmentally sound technological innovations, options and measures** ... taking into account the **whole life cycle of plastics**... [*emphasis added*]

Resolution 4/6

Preamble and Operative Paragraphs

strengthen coordination and cooperation by **establishing**, subject to the availability of resources and building on existing initiatives, a **multi-stakeholder platform**

strengthen scientific and technological knowledge with regard to marine litter, including marine plastic litter and microplastics, through the following activities:

Convening existing relevant **science advisory initiatives** with inputs from Member States...

Compiling available scientific and other relevant data and information to **prepare an assessment on sources, pathways and hazards of litter**...

Recommending **indicators to harmonize monitoring, reporting and assessment methodologies**...

Gathering information with a view to informing policies and action regarding **environmentally sound technological innovations, options and measures** ... taking into account the **whole life cycle of plastics**... [*emphasis added*]

Thank you

H.E. Ms. Jillian Dempster
Chair, Third ad hoc open-ended expert group meeting
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of New Zealand

Third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and
microplastics

18-22 November 2019 – Bangkok, Thailand

www.unep.org