

National Statement of Sri Lanka

Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group to Prepare for the Work of the International Negotiating Committee to Develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution, including in the Marine Environment 29th May – 1st June 2022 , Dakar Senegal

Mr Chair, Excellencies, and Distinguish Delegates

First of all I would like to thank the Government of Senegal for hosting this very important event, bringing many nations together in solving, plastic pollution.

Sri Lanka was able to highlight the issue of plastic pollution by submitting two resolutions on Marine plastic litter and Microplastics and Waste Management to UNEA 4 in 2019 where both got adopted.

UNEA 5/14 , made history with the initiation of developing a legal binding mechanism for plastic pollution, including marine environment

Sri Lanka has taken many initiatives to minimize plastic pollution through creation of awareness, improving waste management practices, initiating plastic waste recycling programmes, and banning of selected single use plastics, where many more activities are in the pipeline.

Development of the “National Action Plan on Plastic Waste Management 2021-2030” was one of the major achievements, where all plastic waste management activities were streamlined, to maximize resource utilization and to avoid duplication.

The eruption of fire on Ship “X-press Pearl” in the Sri Lankan waters caused the one of the worlds’ worst disasters on plastic pollution by spilling 1680 MT of plastics into the sea, which is around 84 billion plastic pellets. The coast from Mannar to Kirinda got contaminated , which will have adverse impacts for years to come. Strengthening of capacities to enhance environment risk assessment processes and legal framework are need of the hour, to minimize future risks. The contaminated site needs to be rehabilitated to minimize the adverse impacts caused to the coast, sea bed and the bio diversity.

Accumulation of plastic waste at waste dumpsites too has caused a serious threat to Sri Lanka, which needs to be treated and disposed in an environmental friendly manner.

It is important to build consensus among nations to **reduce production of plastics and increase recycling, upcycling and production of environment friendly alternatives** at affordable prices and influence behavioural changes in people to protect the environment from plastic waste.

I would also like to commend the UNEP secretariat for their hard work and wish the deliberations to be very successful.

Thank You