

## Barriers

- We thank UNEP Secretariat for the background documents that have been produced. These are good documents that include a lot of information. Together with UNEP studies carried out upstream to UNEA3 and other studies made available by Member States, they constitute a good – and already very elaborated – basis for our work.
- In relation to the first document, a lot of barriers are listed and it is not possible to consider them all. In addition, they do not have the same importance for all countries and may be addressed through different solutions. We should concentrate on a limited number of them.
- We believe that there is a clear need to accelerate the move towards a more circular economy model and in particular towards sustainable consumption and production patterns for plastics, including responsibilities for waste prevention and environmentally sound waste management.
- In the short term, upstream prevention measures, and more specifically action to change the way plastics is designed, produced, consumed and disposed of, are the most urgent challenges to be addressed.
- This would include measures towards waste prevention and reduction, waste collection and management, based on extended producer responsibility principles and the waste hierarchy and waste water management.
- Measures focusing the land-based sources of plastic marine litter should be complemented with measures addressing sea-based sources.
- More specifically, the absence of broadly agreed and common monitoring and assessment methodologies of plastic marine litter and microplastics quantities and of their impacts makes the comparison of available data, their interpretation as well as the identification of additional monitoring needs very difficult. This hampers the orientation of resources where they are most needed, can undermine the global uptake of action. Work to address this issue has already started under UNEP but more efforts are needed.
- In some part of the world, there is discrepancy between rapid economic development combined with higher consumption of single use products made of plastics and the development of the required infrastructures to collect and properly treat solid waste and waste waters. The lack of sustainable funding for the required infrastructure is one of the key obstacles.
- Effective measures for reducing marine litter from single use plastic products are missing. Several countries have taken or envisage to take measures to curb plastic pollution from specific products such as plastic bags. But most of the items concerned are not covered by a systematic effort to address them.

I take this opportunity to announce that, as part of its plastic strategy, the European Commission has adopted yesterday a proposal of legislation to reduce the impact of the ten single use plastic products most found on European beaches and to reduce the impact of plastic fishing gear. The proposed measures consist in promoting less harmful alternatives when they are available, in better informing the consumers and extending the producer responsibility when there is no alternative to the single use plastic products, and in ensuring that certain other items enter the existing separate collection and recycling circuit.

- Another barrier to combatting marine litter and microplastics is the lack of comprehensive approach towards microplastics. Here too, some measures have been

taken or are envisaged for preventing microbeads from cosmetics. But this is only a small part of microplastics reaching seas and oceans. So, additional measures are needed to address microplastics intentionally added in products but also other main sources of microplastics such as textile, tyres and plastic pellets.

- Finally, the finding of the UNEP's report according to which the current governance landscape on plastics is made of a broad range of instruments different in nature and characterized by important gaps, deficient implementation and fragmented and uncoordinated approach should be fully addressed as it hampers the development of a comprehensive, coherent, coordinated and synergetic framework for ongoing and future activities.

### **Response options**

- The EU is tackling the plastic and microplastic pollution already through the implementation of its waste management, marine environment and port reception facilities legislation.
- It has recently adopted the Plastic Strategy, an overall integrated and consistent European approach to tackle all sources of plastic marine litter. This strategy highlights the gaps or shortcomings in the current legal and policy framework and proposes targeted measures to improve the prevention, the collection and recyclability of plastics. It also aims to develop a regulatory framework for plastics with biodegradable properties, and to address microplastics from all sources and single use plastics.
- The EU also support activities aimed to filling the knowledge gaps and promoting scientific research and technological development on impacts of litter and microplastics on aquatic ecosystems and species and on human health.
- It is very much engaged in cooperation at bilateral, regional and international levels, in the implementation of the Regional Seas Conventions' plans on marine litter, in the G7, the G20 and other fora, such as the Basel convention, MARPOL and others, working on marine litter. It advocates for concrete actions in favour of a more efficient use of resources and circularity, particularly in the plastics sector.
- The Plastic Strategy has also an international dimension aiming in particular at contributing to marine litter reduction in South-East Asia and the Mediterranean and to plastic waste prevention in major world river basins.
- From our experience, we can see that many initiatives and instruments exist at all levels. Many, as the Bâle Convention, are engaged in reflection on doing more to combat marine litter and microplastics. But there is a need to make those initiatives more efficient and integrated and to identify issues that are not covered by existing instruments but would require to be considered at international level.
- Improved waste and waste water management, integrated approach for microplastics, single use plastics and harmonization of plastic litter and microplastics monitoring and assessment methodologies and standards are gaps that could and should be filled by a stronger international governance framework.