

Mme Co-chair

- Let me first express my congratulations to our two co-chairs on your appointment. Thanks also for your willingness to serve and for your leadership.
- It is very encouraging to see such a large number of experts gathered in this room. We look forward to engage in interactive discussions to move our common global action to combat marine litter and microplastics forward and to make the work of this group a success as we prepare for the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly.
- Marine plastic litter and micoplastisc is a key priority for the Norwegian Government. We are in this for the long haul, if necessary.
- Norway welcomes the discussion paper on barriers to combating marine litter and microplastics, including challenges related to resources in developing countries.
- The paper outlines elements that are relevant and important in themselves. However, the main barrier to combating marine litter and pollution is the lack of efficient environmental governance - both at the national and the international level. The elements listed in the document constitute barriers if they are lacking in the governance structure, because they weaken the overall response to the problem.
- The international governance structure needs to set the directions, but solutions and measures must need be developed and implemented at the national level.
- In implementing measures, we encourage particular attention to those issues that the governments are responsible for. The governments decide on policies, sets priorities, allocate public resources, cooperate with other states, build the knowledge base etc. These actions will further stimulate the efforts that are going on in the private sector and civil society.
- At the national level, an efficient national environment policy on waste management and pollution control is crucial.
- As regards to technical barriers, a number of waste collection and waste management systems are already in place. These systems could be upscaled.
- Many countries have policies and regulations in place, but struggle with implementation and control. Lack of resources, weak governance structures, poverty and social issues may play a role.
- It is important to contribute to support concrete actions on the ground. We need global cooperation. Norway has therefore launched a development programme to combat marine litter. Norway is taking the initiative to establish a multi-donor trust fund in the World Bank to improve waste management and prevent marine litter. We will provide additional information under item 5. Norway wants to contribute to establishing effective and sustainable waste management systems to prevent litter entering the oceans.

- There is a need also to address behavioural change, varying according to national circumstances. In Europe, one main challenge is to reduce the unnecessary use of plastics in everyday products and bad waste disposal habits by regular consumers for instance. In Norway we have invited to a dialogue with all relevant stakeholders on measures to reduce unnecessary single use plastics, encouraging stronger commitments. We also welcome the European Commission's newly proposed regulatory framework in this regard as well as urge the participation in the Clean Seas campaign.
- Finally - at the international level, Norway is of the opinion that there is a clear need to establish a global dedicated governance structure to combat marine litter and microplastics in a holistic manner, that which fills the gaps in existing structures and that is better served to support governments in developing and implementing stronger national policies.