

Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter & Microplastics

Agenda Item 4

Thank you madam co-chair and good afternoon to all delegations. I'll be fairly brief.....

South Africa would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing what is in our view a fairly concise and comprehensive report on barriers to combating marine litter and micro-plastics. As a delegation, we can certainly agree with many of the barriers identified ---- and in fact, we can certainly relate to many of the identified barriers, as a developing country – so the report is well appreciated. Going forward Madam Co-Chair, as South Africa continues to rally and mobilise our stakeholders at national level, to step up our efforts in combatting marine litter, we will certainly share the report with our partners in Government and elsewhere, in order to confirm or validate which of the identified barriers should be considered to be priorities from a South African perspective, and then to begin to respond accordingly.

Madame co-chair regarding the actual barriers report, we would like to raise 2 comments:

- (1) Firstly, in relation to the barrier relating to finance, whilst we acknowledge that the report identifies a lack of knowledge on the costs of marine litter & micro-plastics to human health, we believe it should go beyond that, and also include a lack of knowledge on the costs to other users or uses of the coast, such as recreational use, tourism or other socio-economic activities such as port and harbour operations. I believe that had there been a way to calculate / estimate the cumulative cost of marine litter to affected coastal socio-economic activities, such as for example in terms of lost tourism revenue or the impact in terms of port harbour maintenance costs, it would go a long way in demonstrating just how severe the problem is in real terms. Therefore, we would suggest expanding the reference to human health costs, to include other socio-economic costs.
- (2) Secondly, with regard to the barrier relating to information, and in particular on education & awareness, we agree with the need to identify potential cultural barriers to behaviour change. However, we believe that in order to be more thorough and inclusive of the human dimension to the problem, we should also include potential social and psychological barriers. There has recently been a few studies exploring the psychological dimension of marine litter (in particular within the European Union), and we would certainly like to encourage further such research. We therefore propose expanding the reference to cultural barriers to include social and psychological barriers.

Thank you