

Statement by the Republic of Indonesia to the Second Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics Geneva, 3 -7 December 2018

As an integral part of the international community, Indonesia is always committed to contributing to global environmental protection and preservation.

Like many other countries, Indonesia faces increasingly problematic marine litter pollution. Maritime and marine sectors are important for Indonesia, the largest archipelago in the world, because more than 65% of our territory is ocean and millions of population work in fisheries and marine-related activities.

Indonesia gives serious attention to marine pollution which has already brought negative impacts to the economy and environment.

National policies

To deal with the mounting problem of marine litter, the Government of Indonesia has taken some important policies.

In 2017, through a presidential decree, Indonesia has set out a target to reduce waste by 30% and to handle waste properly by 70% of total waste generation in 2025. As most marine plastic pollutions come from land-based activities, the reduction of waste becomes a priority.

In implementing this regulation, the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry assisted local governments at both provincial and city/regency levels, in formulating more consolidated and effective solid waste management strategies. Until 30 November 2018, 270 of 520 cities/regencies and 7 of 33 provinces have already submitted their local policy and strategy on waste management. In an attempt to reduce the use of plastic, several local governments have implemented regulations to ban plastic bag in retail stores. We aim to implement the nationwide ban of single-use plastic bags in a gradual manner.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry is finalizing the roadmap of producers' waste reduction program, in line with the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) approach. The roadmap intends to become a guideline on how producers should reduce waste that are generated from their products and packaging products, among others by (1) avoiding unnecessary use of plastic products, including in packaging, (2) re-designing plastic product/packaging so that become more recyclable and reusable, and (3) recycling post-consumer plastic products.

In order to consolidate efforts by different stakeholders, Indonesia just released the National Plan of Action to Combat Marine Debris. The national plan lays out a strong institutional basis for sixteen line ministries and agencies, local governments, private sectors and NGOs in carrying out programs to reduce marine debris and microplastics. The government is now preparing a regulation to impose plastic bag taxes in order to

limit the production and distribution of single-use plastic bags.

International collaborations

We are aware that collaboration is a key to the global efforts in tackling marine plastic pollution. Therefore, Indonesia pursues some international cooperation with like-minded partners. Bilaterally, Indonesia works together with countries, such as Denmark, Norway and Japan to reduce marine plastic debris.

In Southeast Asia, Indonesia participated and co-sponsored some conferences and workshops on marine debris issues under Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) frameworks. For instance, with the support of the government of Germany, Indonesia hosted a workshop on the management of plastic and packaging waste for officials from Southeast Asian countries in October 2018. During the East Asia Summit in Singapore two weeks ago, Indonesia and other East Asian countries released the Leaders' Statement on Combating Marine Plastic Debris.

In Bali on 30-31 October 2018, Indonesia hosted the 5th Our Ocean Conference which successfully garnered global commitments, made by not only governments, but also international organizations, private sectors and NGOs, to combating marine pollution. As highlighted by a representative of the UN Environment Program in the beginning of this expert group meeting, Indonesia hosted the Fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action (GPA) for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities in October 2018. The meeting agreed on the Bali Declaration, which among others establishes five regional coordinating offices of GPA where Indonesia is a hosting country of GPA regional coordinator for Asia-Pacific.

We believe that more collaboration, attention and resources are needed to combat marine litter. In that context, Indonesia is willing to explore cooperation with more international partners and to eagerly contribute to more robust global efforts.

Inputs to the 2nd Meeting

Indonesia is open to discussing policy options raised in this meeting, including but not limited to three options offered in the 1st meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics, held in Nairobi from 29 to 31 May 2018. Option 1, which is to maintain the status quo, is certainly not the one we prefer. By not establishing any new mechanism or framework, global efforts to address marine litter and microplastic will be remained scattered. The global community needs a new framework of cooperation which could significantly improve global collective efforts.

Indonesia, however, is of the view that establishing a universal and legally binding agreement which regulates marine plastic pollution is politically and technically uneasy. The reason behind this view is that there are remain gaps in several issues which could not be easily addressed in a relatively short period. The gaps could prevent states from agreeing on common grounds and restrict their ability to comply with a new binding arrangement.

Regarding the waste management technology, for example, many developing countries still cannot cope with the volumes of waste due to the lack of financial and technological abilities to develop a reliable waste facility. As underlined by Malawi, Seychelles, and Costa Rica in their statements in this meeting, there are significant capacity gaps between states in issues such as waste management. Furthermore, currently there is not much option offered and developed to replace plastic, which make many countries difficult to drastically reduce plastic in a short period of time.

Acknowledging the gaps, if we choose Option 3 (new global architecture with a multi-layered governance), we are not sure on how much time needed to complete Phase 1 (Develop voluntary measures) and move towards Phase 2 (Develop a binding agreement). Rather than putting Phase 2 of Option 3 as our eventual target, Indonesia prefers to focus on Option 2 (Revise and strengthen existing framework, and add components to address industry).

The voluntary approach of Option 2 can be pursued in parallel with Phase 1 of Option 3 without thinking too much of Phase 2. By proposing a voluntary framework, we prefer to encourage states, private sectors, and other stakeholders to exchange views, experiences, and financial as well as technological assistances, rather than having punitive measures which may harm states which have little capabilities.

GPA is an appropriate institution to establish a more structured and systematic voluntary framework. It already has a secretariat under UN Environment and plans to establish some regional coordinating offices. To improve GPA's capability and credibility, we may consider strengthening and widening mandate of GPA, so that it has new tasks such as collecting information and designing the stocktakes of national, bilateral, regional and global efforts in protecting marine environment from plastic. The GPA Secretariat also could explore cooperation with international organizations, such as World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in developing technologies to monitor and estimate global marine debris and their movements across the world's oceans which could become a credible reference to define actions needed to address marine litter pollution. Furthermore, to strengthen GPA's effectiveness, we could consider increasing the frequency of IGR meetings from every five year to every two year, so that governments and stakeholders could meet more often to exchange views and explore possible collaborations.

Although preferring a combination of Option 2 and Phase 1 of Option 3, Indonesia is open to further discussing other options with other states and stakeholders in this meeting as well as prior to the next year's UNEA-4. We believe that every proposal in this meeting is built upon a good intention to find a consensus and gather as much as support to save global marine environment from plastic litter and microplastics.