

Seychelles Statement : Second Meeting Ad Hoc open Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, the Republic of Seychelles is an archipelago country in the Indian Ocean. The capital of the 115 island country, Victoria, lies 1,500 kilometers east of mainland East Africa. In view that Seychelles has a maritime surface of more than 1400000 km² whereas the land only represent a terrestrial surface of 455 km², marine litter is one of the issues we are facing.

In relation to marine litter and Microplastics, we urge that the need for the SIDS are taken under consideration. SIDS and many other small African countries often have a higher GDP per capita, but we also have a much higher cost per capita in particular to address capital intensive investment in environmental infrastructure. There is a need to strengthen the waste management infrastructure to avoid plastic and other waste from ending up in the ocean.

As being a small Island developing state, Seychelles is currently at the tipping point on the combat against plastic pollution and marine litter. Since 2017, we have restricted the sales, importation and manufacturing of single use plastic such as plastic bags, cups, cutleries and styrofoam take away boxes. A ban on plastic straws will take effect in 2019 and we will continue to explore the possibility of restricting other items in the future. We also have received the white flag certification on one of the most iconic beaches in Seychelles as being plastic free. The key is to educate the stakeholders on the alternatives for single use plastics and promote the use of biodegradable items which will help us address the issue of waste management. We also signed the global declaration on plastics.

Seychelles has been encouraging the 3R's (Reduce, Recycle and Reuse) in our environmental education programmes and campaigns for several decades now. We hope to work with small businesses or SMEs in this direction to discourage them as much as possible in using single-use plastics in their packaging. Educating the consumers also is key in reducing the consumption of products with single-use plastics

Secondly, we are actively collaborating with NGOs to tackle marine litter by organizing cleaning activities and the citizens of Seychelles are slowly being educated about the adverse effect of plastic on the environment and the human health.

Thirdly, SIDS have a smaller pool of professionals and often struggle to ensure availability of appropriate technical expertise. We urge the respective organisation to continue supporting SIDS in relation to the appropriate technical assistance as well as capacity building. For a country such as Seychelles for example we are looking to boost our capacity in relation to addressing the monitoring of illegal dumping at sea as well as reinforcing the framework for the control of chemicals.

Finally, I would like to add that Seychelles is fully committed to the elimination of marine litter and plastic pollution. Furthermore, the Small Islands Developing States need to be supported in the endeavor to remove plastics in a systematic manner and consider an african wide frameworks for the reduction and elimination of plastics. We also need to engage the private sector to reduce the use of plastic packaging and to be proactive in providing an economically viable recycling system for plastics.

Thank you for your attention.