

Summary of the First Meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics: 29-31 May 2018

The first meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics was held at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya, from 29-31 May 2018. It was preceded by a preparatory meeting of Major Groups and Stakeholders. Approximately 270 delegates attended the Expert Group meeting representing governments, non-governmental organizations, academia and intergovernmental organizations.

At this meeting, delegates:

- exchanged views on the barriers to combatting marine litter and microplastics, discussing the need to prioritize the most significant barriers;
- considered the work of existing mechanisms addressing this issue, including a new global governance structure;
- examined the feasibility and effectiveness of response options in the short-, medium, and long-term,; and
- agreed to hold a second meeting in November 2018.

They agreed to finalize the Co-Chairs' summary, the main output of the meeting, within two weeks of the closure of this first meeting in order to allow delegations to provide meaningful feedback.

Delegates also exchanged views on the structure, topics for, and date and venue of the second meeting of the Expert Group, with some discussion on whether to hold the meeting in Geneva to facilitate greater input from organizations conducting work related to marine litter and microplastics.

The meeting concluded on the understanding that the meeting report, including the Co-Chairs summary, would provide further guidance on the next steps for the Expert Group.

Brief History

The *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Expert Group was established in 2017 under resolution 3/7 of the third UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 3) on marine litter and microplastics. The resolution recalled two previous UNEA resolutions on marine plastic debris and microplastics (1/6) and marine plastic litter and microplastics (2/11), and mandated the Expert Group to meet not more than twice before the next UNEA in order to:

- explore all barriers to combating marine litter and microplastics, including challenges related to resources in developing countries;

- identify the range of national, regional and international response options, including actions and innovative approaches, and voluntary and legally binding governance strategies and approaches;
- identify environmental, social and economic costs and benefits of different response options;
- examine the feasibility and effectiveness of different response options; and
- identify potential options for continued work for consideration by UNEA.

The *Ad Hoc* Expert Group meets under the auspices of the UN Environment (UNEP).

Outside UNEP, a number of other organs are also conducting work related to marine litter and microplastics, including the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (the Basel Convention); the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Part III: Pollution control in the exclusive economic zone); and various Regional Seas Programmes and Conventions.

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Co-Chairs **Jillian Dempster**, New Zealand, and **Elizabeth Ines Taylor Jay**, Colombia

A high-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) (conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), also known as the Ocean Conference, discussed marine litter among other threats to ocean biodiversity in June 2017. This conference contributed to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), by providing an input to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Report of the Meeting

Opening of the Meeting and Election of Officers

On Tuesday morning, Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of the Governing Bodies, UN Environment (UNEP), opened the meeting. Delegates then elected Amb. Elizabeth Ines Taylor Jay, Colombia, and Jillian Dempster, New Zealand, as meeting Co-Chairs, and Mphatso Kamanga, Malawi, as Rapporteur.

Mette Løyche Wilkie, Director, UNEP Ecosystems Division, emphasized that robust international cooperation is required to tackle marine litter, and outlined progress made in managing marine plastic pollution, including the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and its Global Programme on Marine Litter; and SDG Target 14.1 to, by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, which includes marine litter.

Eric Solheim, UNEP Executive Director, noted the importance of the 2018 World Environment Day theme 'Beat Plastic Pollution,' and urged governments to mobilize citizens to beat plastic pollution by avoiding, replacing, and recycling plastic products.

On Wednesday morning, Geoffrey Wahungu, National Environment Management Authority, Kenya, shared the country's experiences in instituting and implementing the ban on plastic carrier bags. He highlighted several challenges including resistance by manufacturers, and pointed to potential further action on plastic bottles.

Organizational Matters

Co-Chair Dempster proposed, and delegates agreed, to include consideration of the date and venue of the next meeting to the agenda. The US proposed that the time allocated to discuss the outline of the paper on potential options for continued work for consideration by UNEA be reallocated to other substantive items on the agenda, and that discussions on the Co-Chairs summary be carried out by the Co-Chairs in conjunction with the Secretariat.

Co-Chair Dempster noted that delegates would be welcome to discuss the Co-Chairs summary informally during the meeting. With these amendments, delegates adopted the agenda (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/1 and Add.1).

On the organization of work, Co-Chair Dempster noted that the meeting report would be prepared after the meeting due to resource constraints, and that the report would also include the Co-Chairs summary.

Introduction of the Discussion Papers

Co-Chair Dempster listed the documents for discussions. Carlos Martin-Novella, Deputy Executive Secretary, BRS Secretariat, introduced the document presenting the possible options under the Basel Convention to further address marine plastic litter and microplastics (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/INF/5) highlighting, *inter alia*, that the Convention addresses the environmentally sound management of wastes covering many of the issues related to reducing marine pollution from plastics; the Convention's establishment of a household waste partnership, and the work of the Basel Convention Regional Centers on the impact of plastic waste, marine plastic litter, microplastics and measures for prevention and environmentally sound management of this waste.

The Secretariat introduced an assessment of the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and sub-regional governance strategies and approaches on combating marine plastic litter and microplastics (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/INF/3). She noted that the assessment examined 18 international and 36 regional instruments related to marine litter and microplastics, and had found, among other issues that marine litter is not a primary focus of any instrument, and that the governance structures are fragmented.

She noted that the assessment also examined three options to address governance gaps, highlighting that:

- Option 1 relates to maintaining the status quo;
- Option 2 considers revising and strengthening existing frameworks, and includes components to engage industry; and
- Option 3 proposes a new global architecture with a multi-layered governance approach, including strengthening existing efforts under a new legally binding instrument.

Barriers to Combating Marine Litter and Microplastics

On Tuesday morning, the Secretariat presented the discussion paper on barriers to combatting marine litter and microplastics, including challenges related to resources in developing countries (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/2), highlighting legal, financial, technical and information barriers to combatting marine litter and microplastics. She also reported on challenges related to resources in developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Brazil said the report should be more balanced regarding the global nature of the challenges, without isolating challenges of developing countries and SIDS. The Secretariat clarified that while the barriers discussed are global, the specific exploration of challenges in developing countries and SIDS was as agreed in Resolution 3/7 of UNEA 3.

The NGO Major Group said the meeting should focus on innovative solutions to address the urgent crisis we are faced with, and Women Major Group emphasized the need to push for change from the production sector, saying the problem is essentially not behavioral.

Japan and Singapore called for adopting harmonized assessment and monitoring methodology.

Malawi said there is need for more attention to upstream activities and inland countries as sources of marine plastics.

Drawing attention to the European Union's recent proposal of rules to target 10 single-use plastic products most prevalent on Europe's beaches and seas, as well as ghost fishing gear, the EU highlighted: the absence of a broadly agreed methodology to assess sources of litter and microplastics; the lack of a comprehensive approach to managing microplastics; and discrepancies in policies related to plastics production, management and disposal.

Mauritania called for an international conference to develop an internationally legally binding instrument to address marine litter and microplastics. Peru drew attention to the lack of information on the chemical composition of plastics exported to end-user countries, and called for a lifecycle analysis of alternatives to plastics to prevent negative unintended consequences to human health and the environment.

Spain called for more information on the effects of microplastics on the environment and human health, and stressed the importance of involving all stakeholders in order to harmonize responses.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) drew attention to the IMO Assembly's discussions on marine pollution. Stating that more work needs to be done in a more coordinated manner, the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the Barcelona Convention), highlighted the Convention's regional plan on marine litter, their action plan on sustainable consumption and production, and its Land-Based Sources and Activities Protocol.

Noting that the discussion document contains over 80 barriers, Canada proposed, supported by the US, identifying between 10 and 20 of the most pressing barriers in order to consider targeted responses.

The US noted that the lack of national assessments impede successful management. New Zealand called for a focus on addressing the drivers of plastic pollution. On resource challenges in developing countries, she cited the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter as a good example of regional cooperation. France cited the need for: a global governance structure; reuse policies integrated into plastic production planning; access to plastic-free or recycled plastic alternatives to single-use plastics; and, with Guinea, awareness raising.

Children and Youth Major Group noted additional barriers including investments in false solutions such as plastic-to-energy strategies, and consequences such as unemployment due to unplanned transitions to green development.

Indonesia discussed its solid waste management policies and activities targeting marine litter, single-use plastic bags, plastic wrapping, citing regular and river and coastal clean-up drives. He reported that the theme "less waste, more games," for the 2018 Asian Games to be held in Indonesia, is a reflection of the country's commitment to waste management.

Iran said the World Trade Organization and the World Tourism Organization are key partners in combating marine plastic pollution. Norway said her government is committed to tackling marine plastics, and in it for the long haul; she stressed the need to address consumer use of plastics and to upscale technological solutions for waste collection and management. Turkey underscored the need to address regulatory gaps by applying the extended producer responsibility principle.

The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) said barriers linked to land-based pollution sources should take into account regulatory deficiencies; confusing market signals that become incentives for plastic production; and the low level of investment in waste management options.

The Netherlands preferred to consider success stories from countries tackling marine litter, as opposed to concentrating on barriers. Greece said sharing examples of good governance practices is important, citing examples of plastic-free islands in his country. Venezuela called for information and technological exchange across countries in order to deal with marine litter. China said information on negative impacts of different plastic wastes should be provided in order to guide policy changes.

The Russian Federation called for a legally binding document as a complement to partnerships to ensure the world can successfully address marine litter.

Iran called for clarity on the geographical scope being addressed, noting that Expert Group should be clear on whether it regards litter and microplastics in the exclusive economic zone, territorial waters or the high seas. Guinea noted that even though national action is important, international action is required since marine litter is a transboundary issue and affects the high seas.

Germany, supported by the Seychelles, stressed the need for a harmonized policy response focused on existing mechanisms, including regional seas organizations, and urged addressing the gaps in science and regulation within these mechanisms. Switzerland preferred a focus on the relationship between governance and existing barriers, the role of existing mechanisms and instruments, and how to address geographic governance gaps.

Seychelles noted the lack of capacity in SIDS in monitoring and governing marine pollution. Benin drew attention to women's groups' involvement in producing alternatives to plastic carrier bags, and Bangladesh reported work on alternatives based on jute fibre.

Business and Industry Major Group pointed out that currently there is a lack of incentives to investing in waste management infrastructure. NGO Major Group called for a lifecycle approach in product design to promote reuse, repair and recycling of plastic already in circulation over manufacture of virgin plastic.

South Africa underlined the need to include socio-economic and psycho-social barriers to combatting marine litter.

The Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment listed, as barriers, uncoordinated clean-up efforts, increased use of single-use plastics, the lack of standardization of plastic products, and lack of awareness and information.

Co-Chair Dempster then closed the discussion on this item.

Response Options, Including Action and Innovative Approaches, and Voluntary and Legally Binding Governance Strategies and Approaches

On Tuesday afternoon, Co-Chair Jay introduced the discussion paper on national, regional and international response options, including actions and innovative approaches, and voluntary and legally binding governance strategies and approaches (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/3).

The Secretariat provided an overview of the discussion paper, noting that it contained an indicative list of response options. She noted that the responses were categorized into the following sections: legal and policy responses, including management of single-use plastics at the national level, Regional Seas Programmes, and establishing a new global voluntary or binding mechanism; technological responses, including research and development of alternatives and regional cooperation on waste management; economic responses, including incentivizing the development and use of alternatives; and educational and informational responses, including regional awareness raising and capacity development programmes.

Fiji, with the NGO Major Group, stressed the need to demonstrate political will by elaborating an internationally legally binding instrument on marine litter and microplastics, with Fiji underlining the importance of a compulsory restriction on the use of plastic carrier bags.

The NGO Major Group stressed that marine litter is not a “waste management issue, but a waste issue,” calling for the broad application of the extended polluter responsibility principle.

Stressing that the solution to addressing marine litter requires global and transboundary action, Liberia noted that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) only addresses some aspects of pollution in the protection of the marine environment.

Colombia and Mexico highlighted the need to consider the health problems associated with microplastics. Japan said solutions should be in accordance with scientific knowledge, and with Norway and Mexico, emphasized the need for a harmonized methodology on reporting and monitoring marine litter and microplastics.

Iran said as combatting marine litter and microplastics is an urgent issue, then a new legally binding instrument is not the solution due to the time it takes to negotiate a new instrument, citing the 13-year negotiations towards a legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

The Netherlands, with Sweden, said the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) should be included in the list of international platforms dealing with pollution.



A view of the room during the meeting

New Zealand and Mexico urged for coordinated approaches among existing instruments to avoid duplications and for collaboration with industry to find solutions.

Denmark, Switzerland and the EU said the status quo option is not acceptable. Switzerland added that there is need for tangible options that target mitigation of marine plastics, and lead to the greatest impact.

The EU noted that there is no one-size-fit-all option, saying that even within the EU, there is differentiation in efficiencies of strategies.

The US said effective national systems should be informed by a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of wastes, and cited the Closed Loop Fund as an example of innovative financial mechanisms for solid waste management.

Chile reported on their ocean cleanup activities including participation in the Stop Plastic Waste Coalition.

The Barcelona Convention said global action is needed for coordinated measures on global production and trade in plastics, and noted that the UNEP Regional Seas Programmes are key to encouraging regional cooperation.

The Business and Industry Major Group suggested that some technological responses to marine litter could include plastic-to-fuel options and incineration-for-energy, which could also be beneficial in addressing energy gaps in SIDS and developing countries. Supporting a global framework on marine litter, the NGO Major Group noted insufficient information on environmentally sound plastics incineration, and called for increased investment in zero-waste plans and strategies.

Spain noted that although existing mechanisms are already addressing certain aspects of waste management, citing the efforts of the Basel Convention, Stockholm Convention, and the Regional Seas Conventions, there is a need for an overall global instrument to better coordinate efforts to address marine litter and alternatives to plastics.

Drawing attention to the role of the Basel Convention in international waste management, Belgium stressed that biodegradable plastics are not the way forward, instead proposing a focus on improved materials design.

Finland called attention to the importance of effective wastewater treatment to address microplastics before they enter the marine ecosystem; and supported a new global instrument to address marine litter.

Uruguay reported on various national waste management policies and reiterated the country's commitment to a circular economy, drawing attention to research on plastics and microplastics in rivers and associated impacts on flora and fauna.

Thailand spoke on national responses to marine litter, and highlighted the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) work in addressing marine litter, including during the ASEAN Conference on Reducing Marine Debris in ASEAN Region in 2017.

Calling for global action on legacy waste in the ocean, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), reported on its work to reduce marine litter in the Pacific, including through the recently agreed Moana Taka Partnership, which allows for certain vessels to carry containers of recyclable waste from eligible Pacific island ports, *pro bono*, to be sustainably treated and recycled in ports in the Asia Pacific region.

Eritrea discussed measures to reduce and eliminate marine plastics through legislation and regulatory enforcement and working with the private sector to introduce recycling.

France reported work towards a complete ban of plastic bags by 2020. She urged delegates to participate in the Stop Plastic Waste Coalition, which was set up in 2016 at the 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP 22) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech.

Canada said it is using the Group of Seven (G7) presidency to campaign for a zero-plastic-waste charter, building on goals to have 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) informed delegates that the next session of the Committee on Fisheries will discuss guidelines for minimizing abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, and noted ongoing assessments of microplastics along the West African coastline and the Indian Ocean.

Sweden said the Basel and Stockholm conventions form two important pillars for marine pollution, saying a third pillar consisting of a global platform on marine litter and microplastics would reinforce ongoing work. He suggested that SAICM or UNEP should play an overarching role.

South Africa said the cosmetics industry in his country has agreed to systematically phase out microbeads, and noted that a television campaign in the build-up to the 2018 World Environment Day will create awareness on marine litter and microplastics.

The Children and Youth Major Group said focus on waste management undermines other solutions, and ignores the need to target the production of plastics.

Seychelles reported on her country's ban on a wide range of plastics in 2017 as a solution to a major solid waste management problem on the island, and highlighted regular clean-up activities and a plan to ban plastic straws by 2019.

Noting its support for a new international architecture to address marine litter, Peru listed several waste management strategies, including actions by local authorities, universities, the private sector and civil society, and underscored the need to develop an international information-sharing platform for lessons learned and best practices in addressing marine litter.

Supporting SPREP's call for action on legacy waste threatening island nations, Samoa reported on the Samoa Recycling and Waste Management Association, for businesses committed to recycling. Pakistan reported that his country could not institute a plastic carrier bag ban due to opposition from a number of stakeholders. Tonga stressed the importance of education and awareness raising in address marine litter.

The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), which implements strategies and actions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, spoke on their work with the UN on the protection of the marine environment including through innovative short-, medium- and long-term responses, such as recycling of land-based litter.

Supporting the proposal to strengthen existing instruments including the Basel and Stockholm conventions, the Regional Seas Programmes and SAICM, Switzerland also supported calls for an international holistic response to marine litter under UNEP, which could be either voluntary or binding, to address fragmentation in strategies and actions as well as duplication of efforts. IUCN supported a multi-layered governance approach, but also noted that urgent action can be taken immediately at the local, national and regional levels.

In response to a question by Co-Chair Jay on whether there was an agreement to "strike off" the status quo option, the US underscored that the list of options is inconclusive and stressed that the Expert Group is not a decision-making body. Concurring, Singapore underlined that the options constitute an "artificial grouping" of issues, stressing that it would be premature to eliminate any option, and called for more data in order to expand the discussion to include options that are yet to be discovered. The EU, with Norway, noted that while the status quo is not an option, agreed that it would be worthwhile to develop other options based on the plenary discussions and additional information. Norway lauded the work of the Basel Convention but noted that it is not enough to address marine litter.

The Children and Youth Major Group urged moving forward in an expedited manner using the three options as a starting point, lamenting that the younger generation bears the brunt of inaction, and stated their preference for a new global architecture that also takes into account existing mechanisms.

Co-Chair Dempster provided a brief summary and closed the discussion on this issue.

Costs and Benefits of Different Response Options

On Wednesday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced the discussion paper on environmental, social and economic costs and benefits of different response options (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/4).

Iran called for data on the cost of inaction, noting that this could be one way to influence policy makers towards greater action, and suggesting including information on who would bear the costs of responses.

Peru said knowledge transfer and capacity building are important in regards to environmental, social and health impacts, adding that the cost of no action should be evaluated. Switzerland, with Iran, Norway and Peru, said the cost of inaction is always higher than the cost of response actions.

The Netherlands said where data is deficient, the precautionary principle should be applied since marine resources are a common heritage for mankind. Greece supported applying the precautionary principle noting that the health impacts of microplastics will multiply if nothing is done. Singapore said while maintaining status quo is not preferable, some actions such as strengthening work of existing instruments, including the Regional Seas Programmes and relevant multilateral environmental agreements should be considered.

The NGO Major Group noted the consensus on the impacts of global microplastics contamination and their effects on the environment and human health, stressing the need for urgent action based on current research and understanding. They also drew attention to toxicity from chemical additives in plastics that are pathways to substances hazardous to human health and the environment

The Indigenous Peoples Major Group said marine pollutants affect the ability of fisheries to reproduce, which in turn affects the level of fish stocks, which ultimately affects the gross domestic products of SIDS.

Brazil, supported by Greece, said combating marine litter would have co-benefits for addressing other marine pollutants.

The Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) said external costs of plastic pollution borne by communities, environment and taxpayers are ignored in the options provided. Women Major Group emphasized the need to remove these external costs from communities who are the end point of the plastics production and consumption cycle.

Bangladesh noted that alternatives to plastic carrier bags are proving to be more expensive and are thus not a choice by most consumers. The US said studies have shown that the price for alternatives to some plastics can be as high as four times, and noted that some alternatives also contain harmful substances.

The Business and Industry Major Group supported a holistic approach to developing alternatives, and highlighted the effectiveness of industry-led voluntary material design standards and goals.

Senegal proposed a comprehensive assessment of costs and benefits of the economic, social and environmental impacts of marine litter and microplastics. Fiji drew attention to a Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility assessment on solid waste management and recycling in the region. Denmark called for a more detailed quantitative analysis in order to better understand the options.

Mexico stressed the importance of the economic viability of any solution proposed, and noted that the challenge of marine litter and microplastics is also an international security issue as it touches on illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing and illegal trade.

Calling for more details on all the options presented and for success stories to guide other countries' action, Turkey reported that to address a lack of coordination and duplication of efforts, the country has implemented a marine litter action plan and a zero-waste management programme.

The UK proposed a cost-benefit analysis of large ocean clean-ups, particularly those related to large ocean garbage patches.

The Secretariat outlined ongoing work that could feed into the second meeting of the Expert Group, including, *inter alia*, work: with the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) on methodologies to guide priority action on marine litter; with the World Resources Institute on legal actions and market-based measures; with the Regional Seas Programmes to develop a model for the cost of marine litter; and to identify key intervention points for marine litter.

Co-Chair Dempster then closed the discussion.

Feasibility and Effectiveness of Different Response Options

On Wednesday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced the discussion paper on feasibility and effectiveness of different response options (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/5).

Greece called on delegates to consider a combination of alternative options, noting the need to match cost-effectiveness with overall effectiveness.

Canada, supported by Germany and Singapore, proposed that the second meeting of the Expert Group:

- identify and understand the gaps in the existing mechanisms addressing the issue;
- understand the challenges faced by existing instruments, notably the Basel Convention, IMO, and the Regional Seas Programmes, in order to propose solutions;
- understand how global coordination could work given the current framework; and
- identify where immediate action is required and what measures might be applied.

Canada, supported by several others, also suggested that the Expert Group could consider meeting in a workshop setting to encourage a more robust exchange of views and more in-depth discussions on options.

Singapore also called for the Expert Group to consider a two-pronged approach: facilitating deeper discussions, as well as encouraging ongoing efforts to address marine litter.

France called for more details on impacts, added value, and risks of the different options in order to support better-informed dialogue on them.

IMO expressed willingness to engage with the Expert Group on barriers to compliance and success stories.

Iran, supported by Finland, cited benefits that can be drawn from interregional synergies in implementation of SDG 14 (Life below Water). Finland also said FAO work in fisheries would be useful, and further noted the need to draw from the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO) methodology on marine pollution.

Sweden supported gathering experiences and coordination with other conventions. With the US, he cautioned that the request to other conventions to identify gaps in their mandates regarding marine litter and microplastics is the prerogative of the member states to those conventions.

Co-Chair Jay reminded delegates that the UNEA 3 resolution invites relevant conventions to increase actions in marine litter and microplastics and clarified that it would not be against the Expert Group's mandate to seek ways for further engagement including through a gap analysis.

Costa Rica reported on national level action to address marine litter and microplastics, focused on creating and promoting alternatives to single-use plastics, calling attention to the country's recent ban on all single-use plastic bags. Sri Lanka also reported on its Clean Ocean 2030 national plan, calling for global short-term implementable actions, which could include a global ban on plastic carrier bags and a ban on microbeads in cosmetics.

Proposing a global goal for the elimination of the leakage of marine litter and microplastics into the marine environment, Norway also noted that to address the fragmentation of the existing framework, immediate actions could be taken under the Basel Convention, by the IMO, regional frameworks, and business and industry.

The NGO Major Group called for, among other issues: a UNEP feasibility study on the effectiveness of existing mechanisms; UNEP to initiate informal dialogues with relevant existing mechanisms on further actions that could be taken; the GPA to take a coordinating role in the new global architecture; and establishing a central coordination mechanism, after UNEA 4, to fill the gaps identified.

China called for logical solutions to address the complex issues related to marine litter and microplastics, and stressed the need for a stepwise approach to address these issues.

Ghana reported on national legislature including the Marine Pollution Act and the ongoing development of regulations and bylaws for plastic carrier bags.

The Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA) shared their 12-year experience in marine litter management including a regional protocol for protection of the marine environment from land-based activities.

Côte d'Ivoire reported on consultations with the plastics sector since 2012 to identify solutions to plastic wastes, the existence of a special police unit to enforce pollution laws, and involvement of youth in waste collection. Peru said single-use plastics account for only 10% of Peru's plastic wastes, and that there is need for more in-depth discussions on how to deal with other types of plastic wastes.

Fiji said lessons on how to address upstream challenges of marine litter could be learnt from the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Liberia underscored the need for cost effective solutions to reduce marine litter in order to ensure sustainability. Haiti called for a more holistic approach, involving regional and international cooperation.

Guinea reported that artisanal forms of recycling and reuse of plastics are efficient at local levels, highlighting the need for options that also encourage these approaches to waste management.

Co-Chair Jay then summarized and closed the discussions on this issue.

Potential Options for Continued Work

On Thursday morning, Co-Chair Dempster requested: comments on the format and structure of the second meeting of the Expert Group; proposals for the format of intersessional work; and ideas for the main topics of discussion.

Mexico noted that 168 diverse experiences had been shared during the meeting, and suggested, supported by Peru and Iran, the creation of a cooperation mechanism to disseminate these experiences, with sections related to: coordination; methodologies, databases and indicators; financial and market instruments; new policy instruments; and the work of existing mechanisms.

Brazil said an information-based process would help advance the marine litter discussions. The US suggested using the existing website and platform of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) to share case studies. The EU called for distinguishing between short- and long-term solutions.

Iran suggested requesting Regional Seas Conventions and the Basel Convention to present status reports on their work on marine litter and microplastics before UNEA 4. Singapore said the outcomes of relevant meetings expected to occur before the second Expert Group meeting would be useful, citing the Fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the GPA and Eleventh meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention.

Mexico, opposed by Singapore, France and others, supported web-based intersessional work. Switzerland stressed that the next meeting should focus on governance options that address fragmentation, and could include a pre-meeting workshop, and breakout sessions during a formal 2-3 day meeting.

The EU supported breakout sessions during the second meeting of the Expert Group, as well as a workshop and, supported by Norway, New Zealand, Children and Youth Major Group and many others, suggested written submissions to UNEP on the topics to be discussed at the second meeting. France and the US supported breakout group sessions. Norway supported a combination of workshop and formal setting for the next meeting.

Peru called for an international workshop to discuss methodology, and suggested national workshops to feed into the next meeting of the Expert Group. Liberia drew attention to the Africa Day of Seas and Oceans 2018 to be held on 10-11 October in Monrovia, and invited UNEP to organize a panel session on marine litter.

Sweden restated its proposal on the new architecture, which could take the form of a coordinating body with three pillars related to Regional Seas Conventions, the Basel Convention, and a new platform for the prevention of plastic litter upstream, which could contain elements of waste management not covered

other conventions. Japan underscored the need to estimate both the costs and benefits of different options before discussing the architecture of a new instrument or an overarching structure.

Co-Chair Dempster drew attention to UNEP's assessment of the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and sub-regional governance strategies and approaches and its policy makers' summary to combating marine plastic litter and microplastics (UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/INF/3), calling on delegates to also consider which aspects of this assessment that may need updating.

Canada, China, the US and the Netherlands, noted the need to link the discussion documents in order to match solutions and options to barriers and gaps. France called for UNEP to specify the different options for the establishment of a new global architecture, and provide information on the roles of the GPA and the GPML. Uruguay called on UNEP to provide a compendium of experiences and lesson learned before the next meeting. The US noted that any requests to UNEP for additional information need to be made through UNEA.

In the afternoon, Co-Chair Dempster asked for comments on a document based on the meeting discussions titled, 'Elements for further work in the lead to the second meeting.'

Peru noted that the cost benefit analysis provided for alternatives needs to consider that not all alternatives make economic or environmental sense for each region, noting that for example replacing plastic carrier bags with paper bags has a higher cost for her country.

The US called for more time to consider the document, saying it should not be a meeting output since the elements are not conclusive and the meeting does not have the mandate to negotiate the elements. Canada concurred, saying that the document deals with issues in silos and requires more analysis.

Co-Chair Dempster clarified that this paper is not meant to be a negotiated outcome, and proposed annexing it to the Co-Chairs summary. She also proposed, and delegates welcomed, changing the title to 'List of ideas proposed for future work.'

The EU underscored the need to provide UNEA with clear direction on an international framework that is most conducive to tackle marine litter and microplastics.

Iran said ecosystem services should be mentioned alongside ecosystem functions as they are also affected by marine litter and microplastics.

Norway said the list requires a more formalized structure to generate more in-depth discussion.

After a brief adjournment to allow informal dialogue on the document, Germany, with Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, France, Iran, and the Netherlands, supported further discussion on an expert review of gaps on impacts and monitoring methods, calling on UNEP to merge and consolidate the working documents UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/2-UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/5. With Finland and Iran, this group also supported further discussion on issues related to governance, including calls to: identify potential useful models such as from the Vienna Convention and its Montreal Protocol; provide an overview of existing international and regional governance

structures to further identify gaps and tools to address the gaps; and identify mechanisms including in the following areas: coordination and the role of existing instruments such as GPA and its GPML; data and methodologies; financial and market instruments; generating new instruments and updating policies; and cooperation.

France, with Iran and Brazil, also supported UNEP identifying an appropriate platform for submissions and developing a working classification of ideas and inputs. The US noted that discussions should also focus on national actions and efforts, with South Africa also calling for a focus on regional elements.

Malawi expressed concern that the document was becoming a negotiating text.

In an effort to provide clarity on the legal standing of the document, Singapore, supported by Kenya, the US and Japan, suggested a caveat to be included as a chapeau to the list, noting that this document:

- is a Co-Chairs list which is not endorsed by member states;
- is not a negotiating text; is not exhaustive;
- will not dictate the agenda of the second meeting; and
- should reiterate the mandate of the Expert Group.

This caveat was included in the "non-paper."

Dates and Venue of the Next Meeting

On Thursday morning, Samoa, supported by Switzerland, Norway, and New Zealand, called for the next meeting to be held in Geneva to ensure Pacific SIDS participation, and also to encourage the engagement of proximate secretariats including from the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the World Health Organization, World Trade Organization, IMO, SAICM and others. Norway offered to provide financial assistance to ensure broad participation.

Mexico, Spain, South Africa, Kenya, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo favored Nairobi as the meeting venue, noting that the city is the seat for global environmental discussions. The Children and Youth Major Group called for financing to enable them to attend the next meeting.

There was no conclusion on this item in plenary, and delegates left with the understanding that the dates and venue of the second meeting will be confirmed by the Secretariat in due course.

Adoption of the Report and Closure of the Meeting

Co-Chair Dempster noted that the Co-Chairs summary would be annexed to the meeting report, which would be circulated within two weeks.

Kenya thanked delegates for their participation and expressed hope that the country would continue to host the Expert Group until it completes its mandate.

Habib El-Habr, GPA Coordinator, thanked delegates for their contributions and the Secretariat for their support of the meeting, expressing gratitude to Japan for seconding Kanako Hasegawa to the GPA, noting that her term as a Junior Professional Officer was complete.

Co-Chair Dempster closed the meeting at 5:29pm.

Upcoming Meetings

Third STI Forum: The Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) will convene on 5-6 June 2018. The STI Forum is a component of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM). It is convened once per year by the ECOSOC President to discuss science, technology and innovation cooperation around thematic areas for the implementation of the SDGs. **dates:** 5-6 June 2018 **venue:** UN Headquarters **location:** New York, US **contact:** UNDESA **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2018>

Eleventh Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention (OEWG 11): The eleventh meeting of the Open-ended Working Group will include discussions on the strategic framework, technical guidelines, the review of Annexes I, III and IV and related aspects of Annex IX to the Convention, whether to review Annexes II, VIII and IX, the Basel Convention Partnership Programme and new agenda items on marine plastic litter and microplastics and waste containing nanomaterials. **dates:** 3-6 September 2018 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **e-mail:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** [http://www.basel.int/TheConvention/OpenendedWorkingGroup\(OEWG\)/Meetings/OEWG11/Overview/tabid/6258/Default.aspx](http://www.basel.int/TheConvention/OpenendedWorkingGroup(OEWG)/Meetings/OEWG11/Overview/tabid/6258/Default.aspx)

First Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on BBNJ: The first session of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on an international legally binding instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) follows an organizational session (held in April 2018) and the conclusion of the fourth and concluding session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) on the elements of a draft text of an international legally binding instrument (ILBI) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine BBNJ under UNCLOS, which was held in July 2017. **dates:** 4-17 September 2018 **venue:** UN Headquarters **location:** New York City, US **www:** http://www.un.org/depts/los/reference_files/calendar_of_meetings.htm

Fourteenth Meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC-14): This meeting will review the possible listing of hazardous chemicals under the various annexes of the Stockholm Convention. **dates:** 17-21 September 2018 **location:** Rome, Italy **e-mail:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.pops.int>

73rd Session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee of the International Maritime Organization (MEPC 73): At its last session, the MEPC agreed to include a new output to address the issue of marine plastic litter from shipping in the context of SDG 14 (Life below Water). Member states and international organizations were invited to submit concrete proposals to MEPC 73 on the development of an action plan. **dates:** 22-26 October 2018 **location:** London, United Kingdom **phone:** +44 (0)20 7735 7611 **email:** info@imo.org **www:** <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/MeetingSummaries/MEPC/Pages/Default.aspx>

Fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the GPA: The Fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the GPA will take place in Bali, Indonesia. The Intergovernmental Review Meeting is a forum where governments and other stakeholders review the status of the implementation of the GPA and decide on action to be taken to strengthen its implementation. **dates:** 31 October - 1 November 2018 **location:** Bali, Indonesia **contact:** UNEP GPA Coordination Office **email:** gpa@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/nairobiconvention/unep-global-programme-action-unepgpa>

2018 UN Biodiversity Conference: The 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the 9th Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the 3rd Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (CBD COP 14, Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP 9, and Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP 3) are expected to address a series of issues related to implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. **dates:** 7-22 November 2018 **location:** Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **e-mail:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

Second Meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics: This meeting is scheduled to take place before the next UNEA Assembly. **dates:** TBC **location:** TBC **contact:** UNEP **www:** <https://www.unenvironment.org/>

Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4): The fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) will take place from 11-15 March 2019, in Nairobi, Kenya, as agreed during UNEA-3 in December 2017 (UNEP/EA.3/L.2). By the same text, the Assembly decided that following the 2019 session, UNEA will convene during the last week of February, unless otherwise decided by UNEA. **dates:** 11-15 March 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** UNEP **www:** <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

GLOSSARY

GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
GPML	Global Partnership on Marine Litter
IMO	International Maritime Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNEP	UN Environment