

Meeting of the Bureau of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics
Wednesday 4 March 2020, 15:30 to 16:30 (GMT+3)
Executive Office Boardroom - UNEP
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri

MEETING SUMMARY

Agenda and background documentation is available on the [meeting portal](#).

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. The Chair welcomed Bureau members, the Secretariat and Mr. Carlos Garcia, Permanent Representative of Peru to the UN in Geneva, to the meeting and the Bureau adopted the draft annotated Agenda. Mr. Garcia attended as an observer to the meeting, in his capacity as a representative of the host country of the 5th meeting of the expert group.

Agenda item 2: Update on current status of preparation for the 4th meeting of the expert group.

2. The Secretariat provided a brief update on the preparations for the next expert group meeting, including with regard to the status of submissions from member States and stakeholders, preparation of documents and logistical preparations.

Update on status of submissions

3. The Secretariat provided the following update with regard to online submissions from member States and stakeholders, to date:
 - Voluntary inputs on examples of approaches to **analyse effectiveness** (subparagraph 7 (d) in UNEA resolution 4/6) – by 10 January 2020:
 - In total, 30 submissions were uploaded to the UNEP papersmart portal or emailed directly to the Secretariat. Of the portal submissions, 2 did not contain any data and 7 were duplicates, giving a total of 21 valid submissions. Of the 21 valid submissions, 6 provided information on their current or upcoming responses and activities, 3 provided a narrative highlighting the issue more broadly and 12 submissions provided suggestions relating directly to options for the methodology, including published approaches.
 - The proposed revised methodology was presented to member States and stakeholders at an online webinar held 7 February. The Secretariat to note of comments made during the webinar, and of additional comments sent in writing after the webinar.
 - As requested during the third meeting of the expert group, the revised methodology takes into account the above mentioned submissions, as well as comments provided during the third meeting of the expert group and the existing body of work on effectiveness analysis methodologies. In addition, the stocktaking survey

undertaken in delivery of subparagraph 7(a) of UNEA resolution 4/6 will feed into the effectiveness analysis.

- Voluntary inputs to the report on **stocktaking** (subparagraph 7 (a) in UNEA resolution 4/6) - by 1 February 2020:
 - The deadline for inputs was extended until 14 February 2020.
 - 161 submissions were received by 14 February, of which 158 were usable.
 - Number of actions submitted by types of organisation were as follows:
 - Governments: 43 actions from 12 Governments
 - UN entities: 34 actions from 13 entities
 - Regional Seas: 14 actions from 2 programmes
 - Major Groups: 51 actions
 - Other submissions: 16
 - 10 submissions received using the G20 template.
 - 52 submissions received via the stocktaking survey.
 - Submission of **potential response options**, pursuant to paragraph 10 (d) of UNEA resolution 3/7 – also by 1 February 2020:
 - 7 Submissions for potential response options received from member States and specialized agencies and 5 from 8 major groups and Stakeholders. The European Union and its member States provided a submission on 25 February.
4. The Bureau noted that the number of submissions on potential response options, pursuant to paragraph 10 (d) of UNEA resolution 3/7, appeared to be limited. The Secretariat clarified that some submissions were made on behalf of regional groups with many member States, and that they covered a wide array of topics. Furthermore, additional submissions might be submitted between the fourth and fifth meetings of the expert group, and reminded the Bureau that the stocktaking exercise is expected to continue until end of July 2020.
 5. The Bureau requested further guidance on how to summarize and present the submissions made by member States and stakeholders. The Secretariat suggested to prepare a dedicated guidance paper for participants to be able to quickly identify what they need.
 6. The Bureau also requested the Secretariat to make submissions publicly available online through the expert group main [website](#), and offered to reach out to the different regional groups to encourage follow-up.

Update on document preparation

7. The Secretariat informed that working documents will be available in English during the week of 23 March and a few weeks later in all UN languages.
8. The Secretariat agreed to share draft versions of relevant working documents with the Bureau for consideration at its next meeting on 25 March.

Update on logistics

9. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that a first draft of the Host Country Agreement has been submitted to the Government of Peru and is currently being reviewed by the host country, and that a formal site visit is planned for end of March to ensure the venue meets UN standards.

10. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that regional preparatory meetings may be held in Lima, Peru prior the fourth meeting of the expert group (tentative dates: 2 – 3 May) and agreed to provide additional information to the Bureau when available.

Agenda item 3: Consideration of the provisional agenda and provisional annotated agenda for the 4th meeting of the expert group.

11. The Chair recalled that the role of the Bureau is to propose and endorse the provisional agenda and annotated agenda for the next meeting of the expert group and invited the Secretariat to present the draft agenda for consideration.
12. Following the discussion, the Bureau recommended that some of the paragraphs should be reviewed, to ensure full alignment with the mandate of the ad expert group and relevant UNEA resolutions, and mandated the Chair and the Secretariat to elaborate a revised version for further consideration.

Agenda item 4. Any other matters.

13. The Chair suggested to address possible impacts the outbreak of the COVID 19 coronavirus on the organization of the fourth meeting of the expert group, and underlined that any decision on a possible postponement or cancelation of the fourth expert group meeting would have to be taken by the Bureau, in close consultation with the host country.
14. At the request of the Chair, the Secretariat provided the following guiding considerations:
 - Meetings with universal participation (i.e. 193 Member States) should have a broad representation from each of the five UN regional groups. If, for example, one regional group was under-represented, then this would significantly undermine the universality of the meeting.
 - This may, in turn, lead to the re-opening of decisions or conclusions from the expert group, on the grounds that member States were not adequately represented at all meetings.
 - A member State may also formally object to a meeting being held on such grounds, and raise it with the Chair/Bureau.
 - Additional responsibilities could fall upon the host country in terms of strict requirements to make available appropriate medical treatment, which would have to be addressed and amended formally through the host country agreement.
 - The Secretariat and the Chair could be invited to explore alternative options to holding a meeting, for example through written submissions/comments on meeting documents, and communications by the Chair.
15. Upon recommendation by the Chair, the Bureau agreed to establish a sub-committee of the Bureau to closely monitor the evolving situation of the coronavirus, composed of the Chair of the Bureau, Mr. Carlos Garcia from the host country, and Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Mr. Ulf Bjornholm and Mr. Stadler Trengove from the Secretariat.

Agenda item 5. Closing of the Meeting.

16. The Chair thanked the Bureau and the Secretariat for an informative and fruitful discussion and closed the meeting.