

MARINE PLASTIC DEBRIS AND MICRO PLASTICS

Draft Stm by NGOs

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I am Imogen Ingram and I speak on behalf of Major Groups NGO and not WWF.

We welcome this resolution because we believe that immediate action has to be taken and we call on governments to raise awareness on this issue, especially in coastal countries and Small Island Developing States. There is growing concern about the threat that microplastics poses to marine animal life. Strategic action on plastics is important because they make up at least 60% of marine debris. Changes in the composition of plastics and reduction in land-based sources of debris would do much to reduce this threat.

Plastics are a threat to human health and the environment because chemicals in microplastics leach into the sea water and transfer to fish and other marine organisms. Small Island Developing States populations and coastal populations are especially vulnerable because they rely on seafood for their daily protein and their health will be impacted by any contamination from this source.

We agree that other pollutants from land-based sources should also be addressed because studies from the Baltic Sea showed that after a transboundary agreement involving 5 countries was implemented, the degree of pollution of marine food was reduced. Included as sources of pollutants from land-based activities are run-off from pesticides which may contain endocrine-disrupting chemicals or EDCs. EDCs are also present in wastewater, resulting from the disposal of pharmaceuticals used to treat non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Swedish research has shown that these humans are exposed to these substances through fish and other marine food.

In closing, we call upon governments and WHO to raise more awareness of these threats to human health and the environment, and to take steps as advocated in this draft decision to reduce or eliminate sources of marine litter and microplastics.

Thank you Mr President