

**Message**  
**From UNEP Symposium on Plastic Waste Problems**  
**To G20 Osaka Summit & G20 Ministerial Meeting**

The International Environmental Technology Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme organised a UNEP Symposium on Plastic Waste Problems on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 in Osaka, Japan, premised on the need for environmentally sound management of plastic waste in order to solve the marine plastic litter issue.

The problem of plastic waste and ocean pollution is an urgent global issue. In addition to the plastic waste problem on the land, plastic waste leaking into the ocean is a serious threat to ecosystems. Microplastics miniaturized by the influence of waves and ultraviolet rays have been found in marine life and may eventually cause adverse effects to human health through the food chain.

The Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly organised in March 2019 adopted resolutions on “Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics” and “Addressing Single-use Plastic Products Pollution”. The United Nations Environment Assembly recognised the important role of the United Nations Environment Programme in combatting plastic waste and its ocean pollution globally.

The symposium participants, including professionals and experts, identified issues surrounding environmentally sound management of plastic wastes, and environmental technologies, successful practices and solutions which can contribute to solving the marine plastic litter issue were introduced. Furthermore, the symposium discussed how to raise public awareness of this issue.

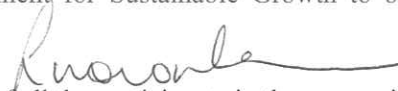
The symposium also recognised that: 1) all countries’ efforts are indispensable in order to solve the marine plastic litter issue; and 2) promotion of international cooperation is important in order to enhance waste management capacity in developing countries by applying advanced technologies for waste management and disposal from Japan and other countries.

Based on the resolutions adopted by the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the symposium confirmed that the United Nations Environment Programme would accumulate scientific and technological knowledge, and support improving waste management and developing national and regional action plans. Furthermore, the symposium emphasized sustainable solutions of environmental problems should be sought through waste management by promoting that the International Environmental Technology Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme would implement various international projects on environmentally sound management of wastes to promote sustainable solutions to environmental problems.

The G20 has been dealing with a wide range of issues facing the global community, such as environmental issues including the marine plastic litter problem. As the “premier forum for international economic cooperation,” the G20 has to lead the world in the efforts to tackle the issue of marine plastic litter.

It is imperative for the G20 to advance actions to prevent the discharge of marine plastic litter into the ocean, especially by improved waste management, recovery of marine litter and innovative solutions. In addition, it is essential for the G20 to support efforts to address the issue by countries which need assistance, inter alia, through sharing knowledge and technologies regarding waste management, in collaboration with international organizations including the UNEP.

The participants of the symposium hope that Japan will exercise its leadership at the G20 Summit and G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth to be held next month to make substantial progress in the efforts to address this issue.

  
On behalf of all the participants in the symposium,  
Ligia Noronha  
Director, Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme  
22 May 2019