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**United Nations  
Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment  
Programme**

United Nations Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment Programme  
Fourth session  
Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019

**Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment  
Assembly on 15 March 2019**

**4/9. Addressing single-use plastic products pollution**

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Concerned* that waste, in particular plastic waste, is not managed effectively in all Member States,

*Conscious* that only 9 per cent of the 9 billion metric tons of plastic ever produced has been recycled<sup>1</sup> and that most plastic ends its life in landfills, dumps and the environment,

*Aware* that if current consumption patterns and waste management practices do not change, by 2050 there will be approximately 12 billion metric tons of plastic litter in landfills and the environment,<sup>2</sup>

*Mindful* that, while plastic plays an important role in the economy, plastic packaging accounts for about half the plastic waste in the world, and that the mismanagement of that waste leads to a loss of resources and value and affects the environment,

*Alarmed* by the serious environmental, social and economic impact of plastic waste and pollution, including but not limited to the blocking of waterways, the clogging of sewers, the creation of breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other pests and the blocking of the airways and stomachs of animals, as well as the impact on human health of poor solid waste management practices,

*Recalling* its ministerial declaration at its third session, entitled “Towards a pollution-free planet”,<sup>3</sup>

*Welcoming* global efforts to raise awareness of the negative impact of plastic pollution and, in that regard, noting with appreciation World Environment Day 2018, held under the theme “Beating plastic pollution”, with India as its global host,

*Noting with appreciation* the actions taken by Member States and regional integration organizations that have adopted policies and legislation to reduce and, in some instances, phase out certain single-use plastic products,

<sup>1</sup> Roland Geyer, Jenna R. Jambeck and Kara Lavender Law, “Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made”, *Science Advances*, vol. 3, no. 7 (July 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> UNEP/EA.3/HLS.1.

*Noting* the important role played by key actors, such as plastics producers, retailers, the consumer goods industry, importers, packaging firms, transporters and recyclers, in contributing to a reduction in plastic waste resulting from their products and activities, as well as in providing information on the impact of their products and encouraging the adoption of innovative approaches, such as the use of extended producer responsibility schemes and deposit refund schemes, among others,

1. *Encourages* Member States to develop and implement national or regional actions, as appropriate, to address the environmental impact of single-use plastic products;

2. *Also encourages* Member States to take action, as appropriate, to promote the identification and development of environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastic products, taking into account the full life-cycle implications of those alternatives;

3. *Invites* Member States to promote improved waste management that will contribute to reducing the discharge of plastic waste into the environment;

4. *Also invites* Member States to work together with industry to encourage the private sector to innovate and find affordable and environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastic products and to promote business models that take into account the full environmental impact of their products;

5. *Encourages* Governments and the private sector to promote the more resource-efficient design, production, use and sound management of plastics across their life cycle, and in particular encourages Member States to carry out environmental education on the impact of plastic pollution and on sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic products and to promote sustainable consumption patterns;

6. *Encourages* Member States to take comprehensive action with regard to single-use plastic products in addressing related waste through, where appropriate, legislation; implementation of international agreements; provision of adequate waste management infrastructure; improvement of waste management practices and support for waste minimization; environmentally sound clean-up activities; information sharing; and supporting innovation;

7. *Invites* Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders to promote and enhance cooperation in scientific research and the development of environmentally sound alternatives to single-use plastic products, where appropriate, and to tackle plastic pollution within local, national and regional voluntary and regulatory frameworks, as appropriate;

8. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in partnership with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, to undertake the following actions:

(a) Supporting Member States, upon their request, in the development and implementation of national or regional action plans to address the environmental impact of single-use plastic products;

(b) Facilitating and coordinating technical and policy support to Governments, in particular those of developing countries, that request such support, with the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders, in respect of the environmental impact of single-use plastic products and the promotion of innovative and environmentally friendly solutions for their replacement, taking into account their full environmental impact;

(c) Making available information on action already taken by Member States to address plastic pollution and the full life-cycle environmental impact of plastic products in comparison with the full life-cycle environmental impact of alternative materials, and sharing that information in advance of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.