

Identification of potential options for continued work for  
consideration by the United Nations Environment Assembly  
(UNEP/AHEG/4/5)

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Virtual Preparatory Meeting for the Ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine  
litter and microplastics

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# About the document



outlines range of views on response options from the AHEG process.



order of response options headings does not reflect level of importance or carry any specific weight over others listed

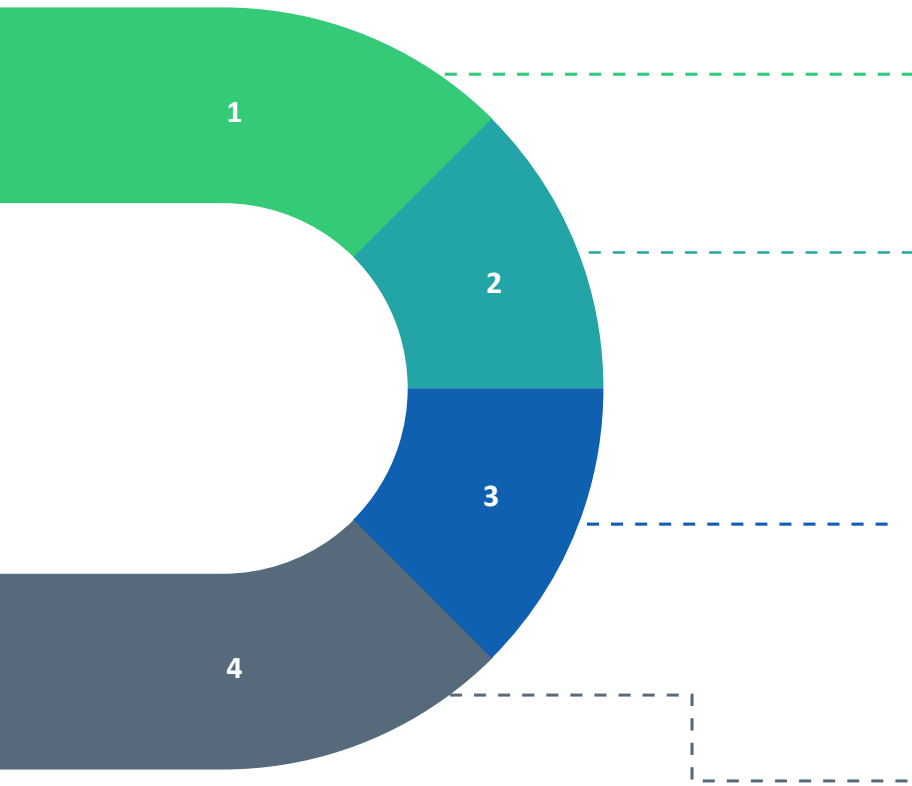


document itself aims to facilitate discussions on the range of views on response options as per the approach taken in AHEG-1



As AHEG is not a negotiation forum, more than one response option within any given grouping or heading may be considered for UNEA-5

# The AHEG Process (2018-2022)



## **AHEG 1 (May 2018)**

Submissions – preparation of various documents (UNEP/AHEG/2018/2, 3, 4,), unanimous agreement at AHEG-1 that maintaining the status quo was not an option.

## **AHEG 2 (December 2018)**

Compilation of documents (UNEP/AHEG/2018/2/2), discussions, submissions → outcome document → UNEA-4 (renewed mandate)

## **AHEG 3 (November 2019)**

Build on previous work, outcome document guided 4/6 work

Intersessional period: 14 from Member States, Regional Groups and other groups of MS / 6 MGS

## **AHEG 4**

9-13 November 2020

## Range of views on international response options

## The range of views on a vision for combating marine litter and microplastics included:

- a. Eliminate all discharge of plastic into the ocean, directly or indirectly, based on the precautionary principle.
- b. Include targeted action and commitments that are specific, measurable and time-bound.
- c. Increase concerted global action by building on existing efforts.
- d. Engage all stakeholders. Action should be multi-layered, evidence-based and should address all stages of the life cycle of plastic, from sustainable production and consumption to environmentally sound waste and wastewater management (including waste collection).

# The range of views on the role of existing instruments:

- a. **Learn from the work of existing organizations, frameworks and initiatives** (ASEAN/East Asia Summit; Basel; GPML; MARPOL/LC/LP; Regional Seas; regional fisheries bodies; the G20 and G7; and river basin committees)
- b. **Review, revise and build** on relevant existing instruments, including regional and multilateral instruments and frameworks that have been adopted to address marine litter.
- c. **Engage existing mechanisms and programmes** that encourage SCP.
- d. Provide cohesion and context to the many existing initiatives while avoiding duplication of efforts. Fill identified gaps in a coordinated and structured manner.
- e. Provide **framework for developing linkages with / complementing** multilateral environmental agreements (e.g. BRS), while respecting their legal structures.
- f. Consolidate knowledge and efforts by **mapping existing committees/scientific platforms** (promote innovative technology, coordinate funding, and harmonize reporting needs and data collection methods)

# The range of views on global standards and guidelines:

- a. Develop **common calculation methods, definitions, standards and regulations** with particular attention to categories of plastic products that are most prone to leakage and that pose a **particular risk to the environment** (SUPP, fishing gear, primary microplastics)
- b. Develop **definitions of unnecessary and avoidable use** of plastic, including single-use plastic.
- c. Develop/improve **global guidelines**, including for:
  - i. management of **polymers and additives**;
  - ii. adoption of **global labelling schemes**, including common labelling;
  - iii. monitoring the **state of implementation**
- d. Establish **global standards** for industry, including with regard to:
  - i. use of **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** schemes, customized based on country conditions;
  - ii. use of a phased approach or the **polluter pays principle**;
  - iii. provision of information on the **adverse impacts of products**;
  - iv. **waste management practices**, including in export and import of recycled waste;
  - v. **product design**, durability, reparability and recyclability, including the need for multiple-use (as opposed to single-use) plastic.

## The range of views on global standards and guidelines (2):

- e. Establish a **global monitoring system that includes review and accountability**, and considers use of the precautionary principle, to enable a holistic land-to-sea approach;
  
- f. Develop **regulations on sustainable source materials**, including:
  - i. setting a **minimum percentage of recycled plastic content** in feedstocks;
  - ii. **designating certain types of plastics as avoidable** (including specific single-use plastics and intentionally added microplastics);
  - iii. **common labelling** which is applicable to all countries;
  - iv. **common regulations** on plastic sachet packaging;
  - v. minimum recycled content;
  - vi. **sustainability criteria** for plastic products in domestic markets (both pre- and post-consumption) that are appropriate to, for example, national collection and recycling systems in order to ease the burden on domestic waste management regimes.



# The range of views on the nature of a relevant instrument:

- a. A new global agreement with the continuation of already established frameworks and efforts at global, regional, national and local levels. Attributes might include:
  - **harmonized standards**; sufficient **flexibility** to take into account national **circumstances** and region-specific **challenges**, including through national action plans with commitments to targets and measures best suited to each country's individual context; **access to financial and technical support**; mechanisms to **measure progress** in achieving not only SDGs /other long-term goals.
- b. **Global architecture** that **includes existing and new voluntary and legally binding** elements, using a multi-layered governance approach. This approach could be extended to other institutions. Action could be taken using other response options.
- c. **Use of existing mechanisms** for international action to achieve a **collective vision**, with a new instrument considered where needed.
- d. A **combination of response options** to address marine litter at various levels (local, national, regional) based on a common vision of global action.
- e. **Each country to identify issues and tailor its actions** based on scientific knowledge.
- f. Rather than international obligations, **continue to use best practices** in waste management with emphasis on regional/national/sub-national/local approaches that consider circumstances on the ground

# The range of views on technological (technical) responses:

- a. Establish mechanisms for financial and technical support to developing countries in meeting their commitments. (e.g. capacity-building and technology transfer in various areas)
- b. Establish a system to facilitate technical cooperation, transfer of expertise, exchange of technical know-how and technology, and best practices, including:
  - i. online training;
  - ii. face-to-face capacity-building seminars;
  - iii. partnerships to promote technical resource development.
- c. Establish a strategic centralized platform for sharing information, knowledge and best practices.
- d. Share, guide and collaborate on research, innovation, and scientific studies.
- e. Facilitate the availability of needed financial and technical resources.
- f. Identify innovative approaches to mobilize non-governmental resources and financing.
- g. Implement and innovate pathway and capture interventions including for wastewater treatment (removal)

# The range of views on economic / financial responses

## responses:

- a. **A new global funding mechanism:** a robust long-term financial mechanism accessible to all parties and stakeholders - assist Member States to implement their national obligations (e.g. development of NAPs).
- b. Reduce the resource gap by ensuring that **international aid flows are well coordinated**. This could include:
  - i. an agreed list of priorities;
  - ii. a set of evidence-based criteria to prioritize funding;
  - iii. standardized reporting templates for deliverables and effectiveness evaluation.
- c. Increase **markets** for recycled plastics.
- d. Create an **international financial mechanism** for waste management and recovery.
- e. A **global fund** to support efforts by countries. Access could be based on:
  - i. common but differentiated responsibilities;
  - ii. consideration of national circumstances;
  - iii. extension to land-locked countries to prevent leakage from rivers and waterways into the oceans.

## Economic / financial responses options (inventory 7b):

- a. **Increased coordination among donors** at the global, regional and national level, especially bilateral donors. (e.g. Asia and the Pacific region extensive funding)
- b. **Increased alignment of financing with the national priorities** of recipient countries and better coordination and alignment of climate finance. (dev. NAP ML may facilitate).
- c. Support for countries in **accessing multilateral/ international funds** (modelled on initiatives)
- d. Leveraging public funding to create a **pipeline of “bankable” projects** for private investment (options e.g. blended finance, investments more attractive/ less risky)
- e. Addressing **perverse incentives** to use virgin plastic as a cheaper raw material than recycled plastic.
- f. Making use of **inclusive financing opportunities**, including financing for community-based organizations and indigenous communities.
- g. Increased financial resources to **remove types of plastic pose the greatest risks**, and to use **circularity approaches** for other types with an **evidence-based approach**
- h. Addressing funding gaps in sectors, including textiles and agriculture

# The range of views on scientific, educational and informational responses:

- a. **Coordinate scientific research** internationally, including socio-economic research and research on micro/nano plastics and sharing of scientific knowledge.
- b. **Increase collaboration and exchange** among existing conventions (particularly the Basel Convention), organizations and fora in order to address marine litter and microplastics in a coherent and complementary manner.
- c. Establish a **scientific and technical advisory group on marine litter and microplastics**, which would benefit from the work of existing mechanisms such as the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).
- d. Establish an **intergovernmental scientific panel** to enhance science-based decisions and policies, drawing on scientific research and knowledge from all relevant institutions.

# The range of views on scientific, educational and informational responses – establishment of a global knowledge mechanisms:

Establish a global knowledge hub could initiate activities and serve as a source of (and clearinghouse for national source inventories, etc. to support governments, organizations and private entities in addressing aspects of marine litter prevention and environmentally sound and risk-based recovery. Its work could include:

- i. development of **harmonized monitoring methodologies**;
- ii. collection, collating and open sharing of **global monitoring data** and information from all actors and sources, including citizen science initiatives;
- iii. ensuring **access to robust, reliable science and sound scientific practices**, such as those that address additives;
- iv. **development of guidelines** for sampling and analysis of marine macro- and microplastics;
- v. **identification of demonstration** projects and their linkages with regional activities;
- vi. mapping of actors, initiatives and approaches.

# The range of views on scientific, educational and informational responses:

- a. Establishment of a scientific and technical panel or body (some functions listed):
  - i. **assess and track the state of environment** and the extent of the problem of ML/MP progress **in meeting global goals** and agreed international initiatives collate state-of-the-art knowledge to provide scientific and/or technical advice/inputs for decision-making and implementation (science-policy interface). share, guide and collaborate on research, innovation, and scientific studies.
  - ii. coordinate **standardized monitoring** and reporting with an emphasis on comparability, inter-operability, measurement of global progress across the life cycle, including production, consumption, recyclability, recovery and leakage elimination.
  - iii. develop **common rules and regulations** including calculation methods, definitions and standards, convene existing scientific advisory initiatives and compile available scientific data, enhance scientific knowledge, transfer marine technology, and promote innovative solutions to combat marine debris.
  - iv. ensure **coordination and cooperation** between various existing scientific platforms in order to harmonize reporting needs and data collection methods and prevent duplicative efforts and divergences where possible.
  - v. **Innovative data collection** through e.g. the use of new technologies such as earth observation, **map the interrelationship and linkages** between different approaches and models.

## The range of views on:

### **multi-stakeholder engagement, coordination and cooperation**

- a. streamline of stakeholder's initiatives and objectives in order to avoid duplication/fill gaps
- b. recognize and build on the current work undertaken by the GPML to reduce marine plastic litter, give further attention and strengthened to improve its reach and effectiveness.
- c. take into account work and progress on various issues made by the partnership for plastic under the Basel Convention when discussing response option
- d. Harness initiatives undertaken by various other actors

### **public-private partnerships**

- a. Public-private partnerships can be a mechanism that facilitates cooperation between governments and private sector; All stakeholders should be informed and educated to change behaviours; Existing, enhanced, or new public private partnerships that can promote targeted actions
- b. **Removal of barriers**, such as investment and tax barriers for industry to promote innovative solutions to material recovery and recycling.
- c. Consider **mandatory reporting/verification** of companies' compliance with regulations or commitments, including those on ecolabelling.



Range of views on regional response options

# The range of views on legal and policy responses:

- a. Any new global framework should be **flexible enough** to take into account **national circumstances** as well as **region-specific challenges**.
- b. Examples of **existing regional framework** include UN Regional Seas Conventions, protocols, and action plans including regional action plans on marine litter, fisheries bodies, water basin committees, G20/G7, ASEAN/EAS.
- c. Consider ways to **facilitate the development and support of regional/national action plans** to combat marine debris and microplastic effectively, guided by a global framework.
- d. Various regional programs as well as the national interventions should be **aligned and build on each other**. Regional governance/coordinating bodies should create synergy among themselves (strengthening communication/coordination, rationalizing plans to avoid duplications and address gaps, consolidation information and minimizing redundant reporting)
- e. Consider options, including existing forums, for **collaboration tailored to spur** regional, national, sub-national and local **action** and to include participation non-governmental actors.
- f. Harmonize international legal instruments and approaches (e.g. Regional Seas).
- g. **Standardize regional reporting** on production, consumption and final treatment of plastics in order to address the whole life cycle. / Relevant existing instruments - reviewed, revised and built on.

# The range of views on:

## **Technological (technical) responses**

- a. Establish regional projects such as the removal of fishing gear.
- b. Establish regional sharing platforms on knowledge and best practices, as well as collaborative networks for research and strengthening of economic gains. / Establish a regional sharing platform on knowledge, best practices, collaborative network in research and strengthening economic gains.
- c. Map and monitor the flow and source of marine litter at regional level.

## **Economic/financial responses:**

- a. Establish regional funds and engage regional economic communities.
- b. Mobilize regional development banks and other regional funding mechanisms.

# The range of views on:

## **Educational and informational responses:**

- a. Increase collaboration among MS with regard to existing conventions, organizations and fora
- b. map and monitor sources and flows of marine litter at regional level.
- c. galvanize action through existing instruments such as Regional Seas programmes, regional fisheries bodies and river basin committees.
- d. facilitate regional capacity-building and information exchange regarding knowledge such as best practices, best available techniques/technologies through regional centres or nodes of the GPML, and promote collaborative network for research and strengthening economic gains.
- e. Regional collaboration is needed in the removal of abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG).
- f. strengthen the work of the regional seas conventions (RSC) on monitoring and assessment through expanding their responsibility for managing global data based on harmonised monitoring and assessments.

Range of views on national response options

# The range of views on legal and policy responses:

## a. National action plans and reduction targets:

- i. Facilitate and strengthen capacities for the development and implementation of NAPs;
- ii. Set goals and targets at the national level:
- iii. Introduce voluntary national reduction target(s) or compulsory, measurable, time-bound targets. They could include national targets for waste avoidance, diversion and recovery;
- iv. Prepare a set of **guidelines** for how to design and implement action plans;
- v. Develop **best practices** with associated policy toolkits which governments could use in designing and revising their national action plans.
- vi. Develop national inventories, including:
  1. sources, pathways, and amounts of waste generated, reused, collected, recycled and properly disposed of;
  2. volumes of marine litter cleaned up;
  3. the scale of use of innovative technologies and materials including research and development (R&D) investment;
  4. the scale and/or effect of assistance to countries that need technical capacity development, including with regard to the increased amount of waste properly disposed of.

## b. Set differentiated targets and related indicators for developed and developing countries.

# The range of views on legal and policy responses:

- c. **Develop national policies and/or initiatives**, including in these areas:
- i. **bans on microplastics** in personal care and cosmetic products;
  - ii. encouragement and coordination of **industry-led solutions and commitments**
  - iii. **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes** at national level with industry engagement;
  - iv. **engagement with the private sector, including the informal waste sector**, to collaborate on improved waste management by developing innovative new recycling and recovery technologies, funding models, and new value streams;
  - v. creation of **incentives to reduce demand/consumption for plastics**, and introduction of taxes on waste disposal in the natural environment; **promotion of indigenous design** using local materials; behavioural change across all sectors through **formal/informal** channels;
  - vi. encouragement of **transformation of business models** for various areas; **promotion of investment** in waste treatment facilities and other infrastructure (WM &MR);
  - vii. **strengthening of reception facilities** in ports and involvement of fishermen;
  - viii. establishment of **river basin committees**; establishment of integrated waste management system to capture all used materials, including plastic packaging, and making access to such systems universal.

# The range of views on legal and policy responses:

- Develop/establish national positions across responsible fora as input to regional conventions, organizations and fora for a coherent national positions across the responsible ministries
- Effectiveness and reporting
  - i. Develop a methodology to assess the effectiveness of the policy measures taken.
  - ii. Standardize national reporting on production, consumption and final treatment of plastics, addressing the whole life cycle.
  - iii. Include marine litter related aspects in national coastal plans.
  - iv. Establish national agencies dedicated to coastal management.



# The range of views on:

## **technological responses:**

- a. **Promote:** environmentally sound waste management (e.g. of dumpsites); improved waste management systems (e.g. upstream sorting, recycling and recovery); environmentally sound clean-up of marine plastic litter; Deploy innovative mitigative solutions such as litter booms, wastewater treatment, drain traps.
- b. **Consider recycling rates** for plastics, with a particular focus on the quality of recycled material and the existence of markets for that material; Develop infrastructure, incentivize and develop markets for scrap material to improve sustainable production, use and recovery into increasingly circular systems; Conduct life cycle assessments of alternatives.

## **economic/financial responses at the national level included:**

- a. increasing funding and improving outcomes by financing all phases of integrated waste management systems; enabling innovative, transparent funding approaches;
- b. incentivizing entrepreneurial waste pickers;
- c. transferring some of the cost of implementation to the actors responsible for leakage, for instance through: restrictions on the sale of non-recyclable material; product design requirements; deposit schemes or other EPR measures; operationalization of polluter pays principle

## **scientific, educational and informational responses included in document**

# Thank you

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