

**CANADA'S WRITTEN STATEMENT(S) – FOURTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC  
OPEN-ENDED EXPERT GROUP ON MARINE LITTER AND MICROPLASTICS**

*November 09-13, 2020 // Virtual*

***Agenda Item 3: Progress in relevant work pursuant to UNEA Resolution 4/6***

- In addition to the updates provided on the draft assessment of sources, pathways, and hazards; the establishment of a digital multi-stakeholder platform; and, the provisional mapping of UN agencies, programmes, initiatives, and other sources of expertise; we think it is also important that AHEG participants be provided an update on other relevant work pursuant to UNEA Resolution 4/6, specifically the remaining activities outlined in paragraphs 2 and 3, as well as information on when this work is expected to be finalized and how it will inform discussions at UNEA-5.

***Agenda Item 4: Consideration of para. 7 of UNEA Resolution 4/6***

***(a) Taking stock of existing activities and action (res. 4/6, para. 7 (a));***

- We note that the report seems to be weighted towards information that was provided through the online survey.
- We also note that a number of participants made narrative submissions, and would like to seek clarity on how we can ensure both types of submissions will be brought forward and inform future discussions.
- Regarding the online platform referenced in paragraph 9(c) of the report, we wish to understand how this relates to the online multi-stakeholder platform (discussed under Agenda Item 3), as well as to efforts by the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML).

***(b) Identification of technical and financial resources/mechanisms (res. 4/6, para. 7 (b));***

- Taking note of the new financing opportunities outlined in Section IV, F of the report, we were wondering if these had been taken into consideration when reaching the conclusions outlined in Section IV, B and E, in relation to the focus of funding, as well as the challenges and barriers to funding, respectively.
- These two sections (IV, B and E) highlight the notable lack of financing initiatives that take an explicit approach to gender in the context of plastic pollution, despite the importance of this issue and its impacts on women.
- We support the need to increase gender considerations in addressing plastic pollution, as well as that it is only through a gender-responsive approach will we be able to take effective action, and would therefore have liked to see the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) highlighted as an example of a financial initiative demonstrating meaningful progress in this regard.
- Not only does GPAP put a priority on mainstreaming gender into its work, it has also recently released both a *Gender Strategy*, as well as a *Guide to Ensure Gender-Responsive Action in Eliminating Plastic Pollution*, demonstrating efforts that go above and beyond other approaches.

***(d) Analysis of the effectiveness of existing and potential response options and activities (res. 4/6, para. 7 (d)).***

- We would again like to highlight the need to consider voluntary initiatives – particularly those involving both government and the private sector – including, the Ocean Plastics Charter, Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP), and G20 Marine Litter Implementation Framework, among others.
- These initiatives have a fundamental role to play in addressing marine litter, and the momentum they established, as well as their goals and targets, represent key areas that can help inform discussions on response options, at all levels.
- For example, strengthening and expanding, and coordination across, these initiatives is important to consider when reviewing Section IV A (Strengthening the International Framework).
- As another example, GPAP is supporting the development of National Plastic Action Partnership plans in a number of countries, which is relevant to Section IV F (National Marine Litter Action Plans).
- In addition, we wish to reiterate that certain identified archetypes, such as design standards or regulatory and market-based instruments, may be more appropriately considered as an element of a response options, rather than a standalone response option themselves.
- Further, similar to what has been raised by other Member States during previous discussions, we would have liked to see more clarity on “feasibility” and “timeliness” for each of the options presented in the report.
- Specifically on this notion of timeliness, understanding this question would largely be influenced by political momentum, it would be helpful to have an indication of how long various options could take to develop or be strengthened.
- Lastly, while we realize that the structure of the report is in response to the mandate set out in UNEA Resolution 4/6, paragraph 7(d) to analyze existing and potential response options, we think the report could have been reframed slightly to pay more attention to the ways in which different options can complement one another.

***Agenda Item 5: Consideration of submissions on potential response options pursuant to para. 10 (d) of UNEA Resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics.***

- We would like to reemphasize that there have been options raised and discussed during previous AHEG meetings, beyond just those identified through submissions.
- This is particularly important as there is a need to reflect on ways in which coordinated global action on marine plastic litter can draw on existing initiatives, in order to avoid duplication, and ensure that the hard work that has gone into these efforts is reflected.
- As such, we wish to again highlight the Ocean Plastics Charter as the objectives and targets it outlines can provide useful examples for future discussions.
- The Charter is a global framework that takes a comprehensive approach to addressing marine plastics pollution by encouraging ambitious action and cooperation by governments, businesses and organizations.
- By endorsing the Charter, governments, businesses, and organizations have committed to ensuring plastics are designed for reuse and recycling, and to a more resource-efficient and lifecycle approach to plastics stewardship on land and at sea.

- The Charter also provides quantitative and time bound targets that serve as ambitious guidelines to support partner achievement of its broader objectives, and SDGs 12 and 14.
- The Charter has been endorsed by 26 governments and 70 businesses and organizations.
- As a general comment, regardless of the specific response option being discussed, we wish to reiterate the importance of ensuring measures: focus on the entire lifecycle of plastics; are grounded in evidence; support an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach; and, avoid duplication, while leveraging existing initiatives.

***Agenda Item 6: Preparations for the fifth session of UNEA.***

- We welcome the revised iteration of the Chair’s summary, and appreciate the efforts by the Chair, the AHEG Bureau Members, and the Secretariat in developing it.
- Consistent with the mandate of AHEG, we also welcome that the report is factual, neutral, and does not include specific recommendations, nor a weighing of options.
- Building on our earlier statement, we are encouraged by the inclusion of an explicit reference to the narrative submissions made as part of the stocktaking exercise in paragraph 9, and would suggest including the relevant document reference as a footnote.
- In addition, we appreciate the explicit reference that response options are not mutually exclusive, as indicated in paragraph 20. This will be an important consideration for UNEA, when reflecting on the work of AHEG, and exploring how options can complement each other, including in trying to strengthen coordination at the global level.
- Regarding specific, textual comments on the summary, we would note the following:
  - Paragraph 2, we would like to have “the range of views” replaced with “a range of views”, as well as the removal of the word “potential.”
  - Paragraph 4, we would like the year of the report indicated at the outset (i.e. AHEG considered the 2017 report...), as this will help ensure clarity in summary.
  - Paragraph 6, given the list of activities indicates they are non-exhaustive, we would just suggest avoiding the use of absolute/definitive language, such as “all barriers” or “no barriers”, and will better reflect the varying views on their findings.
  - The table under paragraph 14, we would welcome clarity on what the asterisked note under the “international level” column corresponds to.
  - Paragraph 16, we feel that a reference to considering strengthening existing initiatives could be included as part of the bulleted list.
  - Paragraph 19, we again would suggest removal of the word “potential.”
  - Paragraph 20, we request the second sentence include “non-exhaustive” when referring to the identified potential options.
  - Paragraph 20a, further to interventions that we have made previously, we would request referencing the goals of the Ocean Plastics Charter as examples of a shared vision.
- To this end, we are looking forward to a meaningful discussion during UNEA-5, informed by both the outcome of AHEG, as well as the outstanding work discussed during the first day of meetings pursuant to UNEA resolution 4/6, and exploring how we move forward to pursue the most effective option to address marine litter.