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Interventions following the agenda on 9 November 2020

Fourth Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics,
09 – 13 November 2020

Item 3 Progress in relevant work pursuant to United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 4/6 on marine plastic litter and microplastics

6. The secretariat will provide an update on work undertaken as mandated by the Environment Assembly in its resolution 4/6. The progress report will cover the following areas:

(a) Draft assessment on sources, pathways and hazards of litter, including plastic litter and microplastics pollution (UNEP/AHEG/4/INF/3);

(b) Establishment of a digital multi-stakeholder platform for marine litter and microplastics (UNEP/AHEG/4/INF/4);

(c) Provisional mapping of all United Nations agencies, programmes, initiatives and other sources of expertise relating to marine litter, including plastic litter and microplastics (UNEP/AHEG/4/INF/5).

7. The ad hoc open-ended working group may wish to take note of the work undertaken.

General considerations

- The Swiss Delegation welcomes the important work that emerged not only from UNEA-4's resolution but from the work that had been mandated at UNEA-2 and UNEA-3. It laid out a foundation and informed the work under this intergovernmental working group.
- One year ago, at AHEG-3, this delegation was advocating that this group needs to consistently being informed about the developments in the Scientific Advisory Group, as well as with regard to the EMG, as well as the 10YFP on SCP, that was also mandated to work out guidelines for the issue.
- We regret that this group has not been informed regularly on the developments. We also regret that the EMG has not advanced enough with the mapping of all United Nations agencies, programmes, initiatives and other sources of expertise relating to marine litter, including plastic litter and microplastics.
- We understand that the results of these additional work – namely the EMG and the 10YFP – will be adequately reflected in the UNEP ED's report on the entire resolution 4/6 currently being prepared by the Secretariat.

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On the platform

- Thank for this informative presentation
- We see elements on how such a platform can add-value. This concerns in particular access to data and academic studies. In this regard, we also support the intention to create a strong linkage to the World Environment Situation Room.
- However, in our view such a platform can only complement or be one element among many to tackle this issue of global concern effectively and coherently.
- There are some critical points and risks that have to be considered in building up such a platform, in particular if activities and plans should be uploaded: Just to name three concerns in that respect:
 - **Lack of quality control:** all activities are accepted to be entered onto the platform, allowing certain actors to use it as “greenwashing” exercise
 - **Lack of weighting:** A local clean-up of a private beach is entered as an activity alongside a regulatory mechanism from a government
 - **Lack of coordination and umbrella framework:** the platform is about quantity, lacking on how these loosely reported activities are embedded in a coordinated framework