

154th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, 20th May 2021

Comments by the Republic of Costa Rica on Agenda Item 3. Report by the Executive Director

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

Good afternoon Excellencies and colleagues,

The delegation of the Republic of Costa Rica thanks UNEP's Executive Director for presenting the Quarterly Report and would like to positively welcome the references to the terms and the work on Nature-Based Solutions, plastics, biodiversity and ecosystem restoration.

The important work in such areas drives and promotes the vision of a sustainable reconstruction, mainly due to the COVID-19 repercussions.

Costa Rica takes this opportunity to reinforce its strong commitment to protecting ecosystems as an indispensable way to sustain all life on Earth. Conservation and improvement of ecosystems as natural heritage are the basis for sustainable development and eradicating poverty.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Comments by the Republic of Costa Rica on Agenda Item 8. Other matters: Group of Friends of Nairobi to Combat Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution.

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

The delegation of the Republic of Costa Rica expresses its satisfaction with the creation of the Group of Friends of Nairobi to Combat Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution.

Our delegation appreciates the distinguished delegations of Rwanda, Norway, Chile and Portugal for their important initiative in this regard, as well as Perú and Rwanda for their leadership in drafting the resolution for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to launch negotiations for a global agreement on plastics.

Costa Rica announces its adherence to the group of Friends in Nairobi and combating marine litter and microplastics nationally and internationally. In this respect, Costa Rica aspires to be the first modern, green and decarbonized economy by 2050.

Through the National Decarbonization Plan and the Adaptation to Climate Change National Policy, Costa Rica will do so through the tools used to improve resilience in critical areas such as infrastructure, productive systems, tourism, water resources management, biodiversity, and health.

Being ambitious implies a high commitment to transform our current development model, but it does not mean an economic setback. We see it as a good investment.

Costa Rica has adopted a series of measures to reduce plastic pollution and protect marine resources.

We established norms to ascertain whether plastic materials and products are renewable and compostable. Such standards allow taking action to ensure the sustainable consumption of plastic products, such as certification schemes, and possible measures to ban or reduce certain materials and products that are not suitable for sale and consumption.

The country officially launched its National Strategy to replace single-use plastics with biodegradable alternatives back in 2017, making it the first country in the world to launch a comprehensive strategy to eliminate disposable plastics. In this way, since February 2021, Costa Rica has prohibited the entry, use and consumption of single-use plastics in National Parks and Biological Reserves.

Costa Rica is also developing national and regional action plans towards achieving the reduction of marine litter, such as the National Policy for Sustainable Production and Consumption, the Voluntary Clean Production Agreements Program in collaboration with the private sector, the Institutional Environmental Management Programs, the National Strategy for the Recovery of Urban Watersheds, the Glolitter Project: Establishing Partnerships to Help Developing Countries address the problem of marine plastic litter from activities at sea, the National plan for marine debris, and so on, so Costa Rica considers that having a global agreement will provide a framework for this work, allowing us to respond to our regional and national contexts and problems.

Finally, Costa Rica is committed to contributing to the ambitious goal of protecting at least 30 per cent of the world's land and sea by 2030, a measure that will help us stop biodiversity loss while restoring marine and water ecosystems.

Tackling marine plastic litter and microplastics requires the implementation of an array of policies, activities and technologies. The challenges and barriers we have identified include limited coordination of bilateral funding and a continued need to increase private investment. Based on these, new opportunities for innovative financing need to be explored, such as joint public-private initiatives, blended finance, blue bonds, and plastic offset programs.

Sustainable rebuilding is more intelligent and offers higher returns.

We strongly believe that now is the political moment for a new and ambitious global agreement addressing the entire lifecycle of plastics.