

WWF Statement on 11.11.2020

Agenda Item 5

[to check against delivery]

- Thank you Mr. Chair. My name is Zaynab Sadan and I'm speaking on behalf of WWF.
- Discussions over the four AHEG meetings have shown that **the existing international legal frameworks are fragmented and ineffective, as the Philippines' delegate also pointed out.** We have tried the voluntary option (including through GPA and GPML), we have tried the partnership route, and we have tried the regional approach. While **these are good and laudable efforts, they have not worked.** The arrows continue to point in the wrong direction.
- **WWF fully agrees with the views expressed by delegates from numerous member states, including the Philippines, the Pacific Island states, the African states and European and Nordic states, amongst others: This is a transboundary problem that requires a global response, and the level of commitment must match the scale of the challenge—that is why we need a legally binding agreement. We need states to commit, in the strongest way possible,** to an ambitious and time-bound global goal; to clear, measurable national reduction targets; to development of effective national action plans; to accurate and timely reporting; to common definitions and harmonized minimum standards; to continuing and gradual strengthening of the scientific basis; and to making available the resources necessary to ensure that no country is left behind.
- International environmental law is not a silver bullet. And as outlined in the working paper prepared by the Secretariat, strengthening regional conventions could be an important **supplementary response option**, and – where relevant and possible – **existing conventions should be used as platforms**; the recent amendment to the Basel convention is a case in point. **WWF encourages and supports action along these tracks** as well.
- **Nonetheless, there is a need for something new** to fill the remaining gaps, and to coordinate all other initiatives. **A dedicated global treaty is well set up to do just that:** capture all aspects of the plastic pollution problem, and give direction to global efforts.
- In developing such a treaty, there is much to draw on: In setting an overarching global target, for instance, inspiration could be drawn from initiatives such as the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision or the Ocean Plastics Charter. **The submissions on response options from member states, such as from the African Group, European Union, the Philippines, Viet Nam and the Nordic states, also offer substance for potential elements of a treaty.**

In going forward, WWF believes **it is critical to continue to explore what the elements of a new global agreement might look like**, and to do so **in a structured and dedicated manner, with the aim of crafting a global agreement that can be signed, ratified and enforced.** This is why we urgently need a mandate for negotiations – and why this expert group should send a strong recommendation to the UNEA about the need to adopt such a decision. Thank you.