



Statement from the Children and Youth Major Group For the 8th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, 27th October 2021 <https://www.unep.org/events/annual-subcommittee-cpr/8th-annual-subcommittee-meeting-committee-permanent-representatives>

Intervention on Agenda Item 4: Consideration of draft resolutions relating to plastic pollution and marine litter

Dear Chair, distinguished Ministries and delegates, my name is Christianne Zakour. Thank you for the opportunity to voice the call from the young people to act against the global plastic crisis.

First of all, as young people, as today and tomorrow's world citizens, we strongly believe that it is urgent to reframe the problem of plastic waste and pollution. The UNEP MGCY Working Group on Marine litter and Microplastics has been participating for months to ad-hoc expert meetings, to ministerial conferences, to UNEA 5.1 and other high-level negotiation fora, and developed a comprehensive position paper.

We acknowledge the existence of solutions and interventions to address this global issue, and of course we very welcome any strong effort to tackle plastic pollution. However, we must go further to scale up the international commitments and fit global action with the urgency of the plastic threat. We therefore strongly support the resolution for a global legally binding agreement on plastics to be presented at UNEA 5.2.

We are opposed to any solution and intervention that are not in harmony with ecosystems: Furthermore we strongly request the honorable delegates to keep the ambition high in this resolution. The text must fit the purpose of dealing with one of the greatest threats for the environment and humanity. We won't accept weakened wording nor diminished legal obligations. We won't accept any status quo. We won't accept proposals mitigating the work achieved by NGOs, scientists, young people and some states on the need for a global binding agreement. We won't accept empty promises and limitations to voluntary duties. As such, we will reject any proposal limited to just "would" or "should". We request a strong WILL to tackle this overarching problem damaging our seas, our lands, our air, our planet. States must deliver the commitments our world, our ocean and the future generations deserve.

We want to emphasize plastic waste prevention as a key principle, following the basic prevention idea in which "the best plastic is the one we don't produce". Whereas compostable or bioplastic innovations are celebrated, we cannot overlook the warning by The Rethink Plastic Alliance that, "Bio-based plastics rely on limited land resources and chemical-intensive industrial agriculture" and "less than 40% of bio-based plastics are designed to be biodegradable".

As committed young advocates around the world, we have many times voiced concerns over the plastic problem. We have condensed these into detailed points of holistic actions for all



governmental and non governmental actors to jointly undertake. We firmly request that these are reflected in the resolution and upcoming legal and policy developments. Detailed explanations can be seen in the full position paper.

We ask the governments to improve their strategies to tackle marine litter and microplastics by :

1. Promoting Design for Circularity, as clear regulations and standards can favour a non toxic recyclability and avoidance of interfering materials, additives and colorants should be adopted globally.

2. Ensuring better monitoring, reporting and transparency about country and industry achievements of waste avoidance which empowers consumers: “We cannot manage what we cannot measure”.

3. Reflecting producer responsibility in reporting and monitoring schemes. The industry has been preparing for supply chain transparency schemes for years. We suggest international cooperation of governments for open standards of supply chain transparency and recycled material-content quota.

4. Providing the local and national authorities with tools to measure the amount of plastic in oceans, including children and youth in this monitoring process.

Fulfillment of these goals will be fostered by the adoption of an ambitious global legally binding agreement tackling plastic and microplastic holistically, at all stages of their lifecycle. We surely acknowledge that current gaps need to be recognized and filled and some drawbacks and oppositions are still existing. But at the end of the day and for the sake of “our common future” a strong paradigm shift is needed : from linear to circular, from extractivism to recycling.

Thank you for the attention. We invite all the delegates to have a close look at our detailed requests and proposed solutions to tackle marine litter and microplastics in our position paper.

(The position paper can be viewed at <https://www.youthenvironment.org/projecto-4> in the original and short versions and a summary.)

Delivered by:

Christianne Zakour (Trinidad and Tobago)
SIDS Regional Facilitator for the Children and Youth Major Group

Submitted on behalf of the constituency by:

Teresa Oberhauser & Yugratna Srivastava
Children and Youth Major Group Focal Points

teresa.oberhauser@aegee.eu, yugratna.srivastava@plant-for-the-planet.org