



Mr Jorge Laguna-Celis  
Secretary, Governing Bodies  
UNEP  
P.O.Box 30552  
00100 Nairobi  
Kenya

Dear Mr Laguna-Celis

This submission responds to your request for additional inputs on the 2017 UN Environment Assembly theme (pollution), the types of outcomes expected, and the wording of the title.

As indicated in previous correspondence (2 December 2016), Australia proposes four topics we believe are appropriate under the headline theme (Pollution Free World). The topics are:

**Stopping Marine Plastics at its Source** – plastic is one of the most prevalent types of marine pollution and can affect marine species through entanglement, damage to habitats and ingestion. It may also accumulate pollutants. Discussing this specific topic would build on work undertaken through UNGA71, which had marine debris, plastics and microplastics as its topic for the informal consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea. Australia's submission to that process highlighted the need to stop marine plastic pollution at its source. It would also build on the UNEA resolution 2/11 on marine plastic litter and microplastics and IUCN resolution WCC-2016-Res-049-EN on promoting regional approaches to tackle the global problem of marine debris, which recognises the importance of stopping marine plastic pollution at its source. The discussion should include stopping marine plastics by:

- Developing a more circular economy, including product design and recycling;
- Conversion of waste to energy; and
- Fisheries measures to prevent discharge of fishing gear.

**Towards Peak Garbage** – this topic will focus on plastic pollution in the marine environment. The amount of plastic entering the ocean is increasing at an exponential rate. Once it enters the ocean, very little plastic is subsequently removed. It is projected that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, by weight. Plastic will continue to accumulate in the ocean unless corrective and preventive policies are introduced. The design of these policies and the timing of their implementation will determine how much plastic pollution will accumulate before we reach peak garbage.

**Marine Debris** – Marine debris has been observed to impact marine turtles at all stages of their life cycle, although the extent to which micro-plastics affect turtle's biology and reproductive success is not known. The Draft Recovery Plan for Marine Turtles in Australia identifies impacts from marine debris as a priority requiring management.

**Quantifying Human Exposure to Pollutants** – A number of countries have reporting systems for pollutant release; in Australia, it is the National Pollutant Inventory. The data in these systems would be more useful if it was integrated with other datasets (e.g. factors that affect pollutant movement such as air and water movement) to provide information on human exposure to pollutants. It would also be useful to link datasets regionally.

Australia looks forward to discussing these topics with other Member States, including at the Annual Sub-Committee Meeting in Nairobi on 6-9 March 2016.

Yours sincerely



Nathan Bartlett  
UNEP National Focal Point (Australia)  
Department of the Environment and Energy  
[internationalsection@environment.gov.au](mailto:internationalsection@environment.gov.au)

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