

**Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UNEP
(Nairobi, 5 March 2020)**

Agenda item 2: Draft elements of a decision on the Global Programme of Action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities

EU/MS comments

EU and its Member States thank the Secretariat for the document and in line with previous interventions on the future of the GPA, we support the proposed way forward:

- to end the IGR,
- to integrate the relevant activities and partnerships of the GPA into the Programme of Work in view of their shared objectives
- to endorse such a decision in an extraordinary IGR, as well as at UNEA, and
- to report to UNGA through the UNEA report

The document provides a good basis for discussions. However, we do have some comments that we will also send in writing (attached). Our main comments are explained below.

The preamble part:

- We suggest to add to paragraph 4 a reference to the text in the Bali Declaration related to the decision making on the future of the GPA and its IGR, as well as to include an additional paragraph 4 bis that refers to held regional consultations and the CPR briefings. This will provide a better explanation for the Operative paragraphs.
- Furthermore, we suggest to delete para 7, which duplicates para 1.

On the operative paragraphs:

- On paragraph 2: We believe that the GPA activities in the context of the POW are relevant to many more SDG targets, for example: also targets 6.2, 14.2 and 14.3 and – looking to the relevant land-based activities – targets 8.4 and 12.2,12.4, 12.5 and 12.8 are quite relevant as well.
- On paragraph 4: we believe there is not sufficient justification to organise the proposed multi-stakeholder forum. As we indicated earlier: we could imagine that there may be an added value for an exchange by the Secretariat with MS and major stakeholders and other groups on technical and scientific issues. We are open to consider this on a needs basis and without establishment of subsidiary bodies.
- In our view, the ED progress reports as well as the Programme Performance Review should be the basis to decide upon a possible follow up, just like with other subjects.
- Besides, we believe the UNEA-5 meeting is already quite heavy and we expect that the theme will provide sufficient basis to address the most pressing issues related to the GPA if that would be relevant.

Draft Elements of a decision to be adopted by an Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA)

[Preambular section]

EU+MS amendment proposals to the Draft Elements submitted by UNEP

1 *Recognizing* that maintaining a high-quality coastal and marine environment provides ecosystem functions and services in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources);

2 *Recalling* that the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) was created to counter the impact of land-based activities on the marine environment, and that the GPA was adopted by 108 Governments, and the European Commission at an intergovernmental conference convened in Washington, D.C., in 1995¹;

3 *Further recalling* that Intergovernmental Review Meetings of the GPA have been organized in Montreal (2001), Beijing (2006), Manila (2012) and Bali (2018), wherein governments with the participation of stakeholders met to review the status of the implementation of the GPA and decide on the actions to ~~be taken to strengthen~~ enhance the GPA and its implementation;

4 *Also recalling* with appreciation, the Bali Declaration² on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities adopted at the Fourth IGR held in Bali, Indonesia, 31 October-1 November 2018 in which it was agreed to work on the function, form and implications (including legal, budgetary and organizational) of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, including the future of the intergovernmental review process and the work currently coordinated by the Coordination Office of the Global Programme of Action;

45 *Noting with appreciation* the (regional) consultations on the future of the GPA held by the Secretariat in 2019 and 2020, as well as the related briefings to the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP.

56 *Noting* with appreciation that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has hosted the GPA Coordination Office since its establishment and also welcoming the work of the office ~~in~~ preventing land-based sources of marine pollution on the global level through demonstration projects, policy recommendations, research, capacity-building and awareness raising activities, and further recognizing the valuable role of its three global partnerships, the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management, and the Global Wastewater Initiative, for which the GPA Coordination Office ~~acts~~ provides the Secretariat functions;

67 *Recognizing* that the ~~aims, functions and~~ general objectives and activities of the GPA are

relevant to the [mission of United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) [and form part of its Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021](#) and Programme of Work and to various relevant resolutions adopted by the UN Environmental Assembly;³

~~Recognizing that maintaining a high quality coastal and marine environment provides ecosystem functions and services in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources);~~

¹ <https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/1995-gpa.pdf>

² <https://papersmart.unon.org/igr-meeting/sites/default/files/k1900652.pdf#overlay-context=working-docs>

³ Marine plastic debris and microplastics (UNEP/EA.1/Res.6); Oceans and seas (UNEP/EA.2/Res.10); Marine plastic litter and microplastics (UNEP/EA.2/Res.11); Sustainable coral reefs management (UNEP/EA.2/Res.12); Environment and health (UNEP/EA.3/Res.4); Managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development (UNEP/EA.3/Res.6); Marine litter and microplastics (UNEP/EA.3/Res.7); Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally (UNEP/EA.3/Res.8); Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems (UNEP/EA.3/Res.10); Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics (UNEP/EA.4/Res.6); Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (UNEP/EA.4/Res.11); Sustainable Nitrogen Management (UNEP/EA.4/Res.12); and Implementation Plan “Towards a Pollution-free Planet” (UNEP/EA.4/Res.6);

[Operative section]

1. **Decides** to hold no further meetings of the periodic Intergovernmental Review (IGR) of the Global Programme of Action;
2. **Recognizes** the continued relevance and valuable role of the three global partnerships in tackling land-based pollution established in the framework of the GPA, namely the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management and the Global Wastewater Initiative as tools to contribute to the implementation of [the relevant SDG targets, \[including 6.3 and 14.1\]](#) of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and calls upon all Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other relevant regional and international organizations, the private sector, the academia, civil society, non-governmental organizations, individuals, and other relevant stakeholders to support its activities;
3. **Invites** the Executive Director of UNEP, as appropriate and subject to available resources, to continue to support the ~~aims and~~ general objectives of the GPA and its three global partnerships to tackling land-based pollution within the framework of the UNEP Programme of Work and Budget and to maintain and strengthen UNEP’s capacity to support Member States in implementing and reporting on national, regional and global programmes to address land-based sources of marine pollution;
4. **Invites** the UN Environment Assembly to continue to consider [the progress on](#) the prevention of land-based sources of marine pollution [in the context of the implementation of UNEPs](#)

~~Programme of Work and Budget and when relevant to, subject to available resources, organize at its fifth session a multi stakeholder forum with the purpose of advancing partnerships and~~ discuss relevant emerging issues that contribute to achieve high-quality coastal and marine environments in line with the SDGs and relevant mandates and resolutions of the Environment Assembly.

5 **Invites** the UN Environment Assembly at its fifth session to take note of this decision and to include it in its report to the UN General Assembly.
