

Meeting of the Bureau of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics  
Wednesday 22 July 2020, 15:30 to 16:30 (GMT+3)  
Virtual meeting, organized from the United Nations Office in Nairobi

## **Draft Scenario Note**

### **Planning for the AHEG and path forward to UNEA-5**

#### **I INTRODUCTION**

1. The ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine plastic litter and microplastics (AHEG) was established by [resolution 3/7](#) of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and its mandate extended by UNEA [resolution 4/6](#).
2. The third meeting of the AHEG (AHEG-3) was held from 18-22 November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand and two additional meetings of the AHEG were initially scheduled for May and November 2020. However, due to the current COVID-19 situation, the Bureau of the AHEG decided at its [meeting on 25 March 2020](#), to postpone the fourth meeting of the AHEG (AHEG-4). Information on the AHEG is available under the [UNEP/AHEG web page](#).
3. As the global COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact how we work for the foreseeable future, the Bureau has reviewed with the Secretariat the feasibility of the physical meetings of the AHEG for 2020. Furthermore, the Bureau remains committed to continue efforts to deliver on the expert group mandate towards elimination of marine plastic litter and microplastics.
4. In light of this, and with a view to facilitating further progress under the AHEG, the Secretariat prepared in consultation with the AHEG Bureau, Member States and AHEG focal points as well as Major Groups and Stakeholders an intersessional roadmap of virtual meetings and other activities.
5. The Bureau met on 8 July 2020 and reviewed a first draft of the Scenario Note. Further revision of the Scenario Note was requested by Bureau members and a revised version will be considered by Bureau members at the Bureau meeting scheduled for 22 July 2020.
6. A further revised roadmap that is attached as Annex A to this document will be presented to the AHEG Bureau for their review, comment and approval.
7. The roadmap charts a path to UNEA-5 and updates Member States on the current planning for the AHEG.

## II. PROPOSED OUTCOME OF THE AHEG

### 8. The proposed outcome of the AHEG will include:

The development of a summary report that compiles and organizes information from the previous AHEG meetings as well as intersessional activities, for the consideration of UNEA-5 to be held from 22-26 February 2021, the summary report is envisaged to include:

- a. Stocktaking of existing activities and action by governments, regional and global instruments, international organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other relevant contributors to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics with the aim of the long-term elimination of discharge into the oceans<sup>1</sup>;
  - b. Identification of technical and financial resources or mechanisms for supporting countries in addressing marine plastic litter and microplastics;
  - c. Identification of a range of existing and potential national, regional and international response options including key elements and approaches addressing the life cycle of plastic pollution, with analysis and examination of feasibility and effectiveness of such response options using pilot studies. These elements and approaches of potential options will outline continued work for consideration by UNEA-5.
9. To support the discussions of the AHEG, the Secretariat will prepare, under the guidance of the Bureau, papers related to the above proposed outcome. In particular, a paper that may include considerations related to the following key elements and approaches such as: waste management; responsible production; monitoring and review; science-based actions; as well as financial and technical resources and capacity-building.

## III. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

10. Only one AHEG meeting in a virtual format is foreseen to take place during the week 9-13 November 2020 for two to three hours daily (Nairobi Time) to accommodate all time zones.
11. An online space is planned to be available from September for informal exchange amongst experts. Experts will receive an account to interact amongst themselves, make comments and answer questions. Discussion, comments and interactions on the pre-recorded presentations on the studies mandated under subparagraph 7a, 7b, 7d of UNEA resolution 4/6 will be conducted at the online space to facilitate better understanding amongst the experts on the studies.
12. Virtual working groups on potential response options can be set-up and facilitated to discuss key elements and approaches of response options using papers related to the proposed outcomes prepared by the Secretariat as mentioned in paragraph 8. The AHEG Bureau can provide guidance on these virtual working groups and appoint the facilitators from Member States. Results of such virtual working groups would be made available online.

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<sup>1</sup> Limited information available due to insufficient contribution at this stage.

13. The Secretariat would develop a guidance note for such virtual working groups. A preliminary draft of the guidance note is attached as Annex B. The Secretariat will support the organization of the working groups, Member States/experts will have the opportunity to submit written input on the guidance note.
14. The work would be complemented by the online space and can also benefit from further input from the regional consultations.
15. Member States can organize regional consultations virtually if desired in late August or early September, at the earliest. The Secretariat will provide expertise and logistics support upon request. A guidance note is provided in Annex C. The following points can be considered for the regional consultations:
  - a. Consultation with the Bureau Chair, this would include scene-setting by the Bureau Chair/Regional Chair/Secretariat;
  - b. Update of studies mandated under subparagraph 7a, 7b, 7c and 7d of UNEA resolution 4/6;
  - c. Inputs from the regional consultations on capacity building, and financial and technical assistance;
16. Online interactive technical briefings will take place on effectiveness (subparagraph 7d of UNEA resolution 4/6) and response options (subparagraph 10d of UNEA resolution 3/7) as well as on other items included in the draft agenda of AHEG-4 ([UNEP/AHEG/2020/4/1](#)). The timeline is in Annex A. A preparatory technical meeting can also be organized back to back with the AHEG if deemed necessary. The roadmap is expected to be revised based on lessons learnt, feedback and an assessment of the ongoing COVID-19 situation by 30 September.
17. The Secretariat can provide technical inputs to other meetings upon request, such as Major Groups and Stakeholders Meetings.

## ANNEX A

### **Roadmap of virtual meetings and other activities for the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics (Version of 6 July 2020)<sup>2</sup>**

A series of online interactive technical briefings and virtual working groups for the expert group are planned to take place in the upcoming months. To maximize transparency, ensure inclusivity and participation from all regions, interactive technical briefings and virtual working groups will be organized at different times (e.g. 8 AM and 4 PM EAT). These online interactive technical briefings and virtual working groups will contain pre-recorded presentations which will be made available in all UN languages and uploaded on the [Intersessional period section](#) of the UNEP marine litter [web portal](#).

Following the interactive technical briefing on the revised methodology for analysis of the effectiveness of existing and potential response options and activities held 18 May 2020, one online interactive technical briefing is proposed on case studies on the analysis of effectiveness. The two-hour long interactive technical briefings will present the application of the revised methodology to analyses effectiveness through different case studies. Therefore, the online interactive technical briefing will cover the different case studies.

There will be interactive technical briefings on potential response options to provide the opportunity for submitters of potential response options to present their submissions and answer questions from participants.

A paper elaborating on key elements and approaches will be prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Bureau taking into account the work of the previous AHEG meetings as well as the ongoing work of the working group. The paper will identify elements and approaches for further discussion in virtual working groups, the potential preparatory technical meeting and the AHEG meeting. Based on the submissions made on response options, the already identified key elements are as follows, 1: waste management and responsible production; 2: monitoring and review and science-based actions; and 3: financial and technical resources and capacity-building.

After each interactive technical briefing and online virtual working groups, participants will be invited to provide written comments to the presentations and the background documentation within 2 weeks of its posting to: [unep-gpmarinelitter@un.org](mailto:unep-gpmarinelitter@un.org). The Secretariat will make available the written comments through the AHEG web portal.

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<sup>2</sup> Comments received can be found at: <https://environmentassembly.unenvironment.org/submitted-comments-aheg-intersessional-roadmap-and-its-activities>

## Proposed timeline of activities

### Proposed upcoming interactive technical briefings and activities

Date	Activity	Background documentation
<b>July</b>		
<b>29 July</b>	<p><b>Interactive technical briefing:</b> Presentations of submitted response options followed by a question and answer session with the submitters</p> <p>Time: 8:00 – 11:00 am (EAT) and 4:00 – 7:00 pm (EAT)</p>	<p><a href="#">Draft outline of summary of submissions on potential response options for continued work for consideration by the United Nations Environment Assembly</a></p> <p>Received submissions on potential response options <a href="#">Link</a></p> <p>Received pre-recorded presentation on potential response options <a href="#">Link</a></p>
<b>31 July</b>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> Voluntary inputs to the report on <b>stocktaking</b>, pursuant to UNEA resolution 4/6 subparagraph 7(a)</p>	<a href="#">Link</a>
<b>August</b>		
<b>12 August</b>	<p><b>Interactive technical briefing:</b> Presentation of <b>pilot studies on the analysis of effectiveness</b> of existing and potential response options and activities in contributing towards long-term elimination of discharge of marine plastic litter and microplastics into the oceans.</p> <p>Time: 8:00 am (EAT) and 4:00 pm (EAT)</p>	To be confirmed
<b>15 August</b>	<p><b>Deadline:</b> Submission of <b>potential response options</b>, pursuant to UNEA resolution 3/7 subparagraph 10d</p>	<a href="#">Link</a>
<b>Week of 24 August</b>	<b>Potential regional consultations (upon request)</b>	To be confirmed
<b>Week of 31 August</b>	<b>Potential regional consultations (upon request)</b>	To be confirmed
<b>September</b>		
<b>3 September</b>	<p><b>Virtual working group on Elements Paper</b></p> <p>Time: 8:00 – 10:00 am (EAT) and 4:00 – 6:00 pm (EAT)</p>	To be confirmed
<b>Week of 7 September</b>	<b>Potential regional consultations (upon request)</b>	To be confirmed
<b>17 September</b>	<b>Virtual working group on Elements Paper</b>	To be confirmed

<b>30 September</b>	<b>Virtual working group on Elements Paper</b>	To be confirmed
<b>30 September</b>	<b>Call on: Feedback</b> on a draft outcome document on progress, identifying various elements for further discussion based on the submissions made on <b>potential response options</b> .  Time: 8:00 – 10:00 am (EAT) and 4:00 – 6:00 pm (EAT)	To be confirmed
<b>30 September</b>	<b>Revision and update of Intersessional Roadmap:</b> Proposed Interactive technical briefings and activities are expected to be revised based on lessons learned, feedback and an assessment of the ongoing COVID-19 situation.	

### Past webinars and activities

Date	Activity	Background documentation	Webinar Presentation Recordings
<b>MAY</b>			
<b>18 May</b>	Invitation for member States and Stakeholders that have submitted response options to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review summary and confirm accuracy of content</li> <li>2. Submit pre-recorded presentations<sup>3</sup> on their respective submissions for <b>response option</b> (7-10 min per presentation)</li> </ol>	<a href="#">Draft outline of summary of submissions on potential response options for continued work for consideration by the United Nations Environment Assembly</a>  Received submissions on potential response options <a href="#">Link</a>	
<b>18 May</b>	Webinar on the <b>revised</b> methodology for analysis of the <b>effectiveness</b> of existing and potential response options and activities in contributing towards long-term elimination of discharge of marine plastic litter and microplastics into the oceans.  Time: 8:00 am (EAT) and 4:00 pm (EAT)	<a href="#">Draft revised methodology to analyse the effectiveness of existing and potential response options and activities on marine litter and microplastics at all levels to determine the contribution in solving the global problem</a>  Received submissions on approaches to analyse effectiveness <a href="#">Link</a>	Session 1: عربي 中文版 English Français Русский Español  Session 2: عربي 中文版 English Français Русский Español

<sup>3</sup> The Secretariat will provide a “how-to” guide to facilitate participants to record their presentations.

<p><b>21 May</b></p>	<p>Webinar on <b>Stocktaking</b> of existing activities and action to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics and inventory of <b>technical and financial resources or mechanisms</b> for supporting countries in addressing marine plastic litter and microplastics.</p> <p>Time: 8:00 am (EAT) and 4:00 pm (EAT)</p>	<p><a href="#">Draft Provisional summary of the stocktake of existing activities and action towards the long-term elimination of discharges into the oceans, to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics</a> and <a href="#">Draft Provisional summary of the Inventory of technical and financial resources and mechanisms for supporting countries in addressing marine plastic litter and microplastics</a></p> <p>Received narrative submissions: <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p>2.1 Stocktaking (part 1): عربي 中文版 English Français Русский Español</p> <p>2.2 Stocktaking (Part 2): عربي 中文版 English Français Русский Español</p> <p>2.3 Technical resources and mechanisms: عربي 中文版 English Français Русский Español</p> <p>2.4 Financial resources and mechanisms: عربي 中文版 English Français Русский Español</p>
<p><b>29 May</b></p>	<p>Deadline for submission of pre-recorded presentations on <b>potential response options</b> by relevant member States and Stakeholders for upload.</p>	<p>Received submissions on potential response options <a href="#">Link</a></p>	<p>Received pre-recorded presentation on potential response options <a href="#">Link</a></p>

## **ANNEX B**

### **Guidance for Virtual Working Groups**

#### **Background**

1. The present note is intended to facilitate discussions on various aspects relevant to marine litter and microplastics, bearing in mind the mandate for the expert group as outlined in resolutions 3/7/10 and 4/6/7.
2. Participants will be invited to explore the options for various key elements and approaches set out in separate background notes containing a compilation of relevant results of the work undertaken under resolutions 3/7/10 and 4/6/7 as well as sections from response option submissions

#### **Guidance for engagement**

3. To enable all the experts to express their opinions and participate effectively, experts will be invited to join several virtual working groups, one for each key element. The discussions in each group will be led by a facilitator and a rapporteur from among the government experts taking gender, geography and areas of expertise into consideration, and will also include senior experts and a note-taker from the secretariat. The facilitators will be designated by the Bureau of the ad hoc open-ended expert group.
4. Participants will be invited to refer to the background notes for each key element and consider the current state of information and knowledge, gaps and potential ways for addressing these.
5. An estimated 3-4 online meetings of 1.5-2 hours will be held over 4-6 weeks to make progress on each key element.
6. Each key element will have a separate section in the online space where recordings and summaries of discussions and working documents will be posted. AHEG participants may also submit input here and/or comment throughout the process.
7. Proceedings will be undertaken in English, with interpretation available in one working group only.
8. The format of the working groups will be informal.

#### **Expected outcomes**

9. The main outcome of the working group discussions will be a set of identification of a range of different response options with analysis and examination to be presented to the AHEG for further consideration,



10. While the discussions will be informal, each of the working groups will address four questions in relation to their specific theme as well as barriers. The working groups may also wish to highlight additional aspects during the course of their discussions.
11. Questions may include (a) Based on the background notes, what are the main priorities for the key elements and approaches?; (b) How can existing legal instruments or other initiatives support these priorities?: and (c) What are the next steps to be taken to address barriers and opportunities?

## ANNEX C

### Regional Consultation Meetings note

#### Background

1. Due to a catastrophic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the fourth meeting of the Ad hoc Open-ended Expert Group (AHEG 4) initially scheduled in May 2020 has been postponed. In light of this decision, and with a view to facilitate further progress and revision of the working documents ahead of the next expert group meeting, the Secretariat has prepared, at the request of and in close consultation with the Bureau this note.
2. Many countries have taken part in the AHEG 3 (18-22 November 2019, Bangkok) and gained common understandings on issues, which are supporting higher engagement of the region in the intersessional work, but the momentum needs to be strengthened and more countries must be encouraged to take part so that AHEG outcomes are of use and relevance to the region overall.
3. In light of the above, the members of the Bureau of the AHEG, propose to organize a virtual regional consultation meetings to: 1) Engage additional countries from their respective regions; 2) Facilitate consultations of the Chair and Bureau with the regions; 3) Share information on the progress and ongoing work of the AHEG intersessional work; 4) Provide feedback to Chair and Bureau on regional specifics for in particular the key elements. (Regions may also wish to add additional topics such as regional coordination mechanisms or others).
4. Potential draft agenda – times proposed are just indicative – each region could decide on longer sessions or meeting.
  - a. Day 1
    - i. **Opening (30 mn)**
      1. Adoption of the Agenda
      2. Update from the Bureau Chair
    - ii. **Stocktaking of existing activities and action to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics and inventory of technical and financial resources or mechanisms for supporting countries in addressing marine plastic litter and microplastics (2 hours).** This session aims to explore the domestic policy action and to understand how policymakers can learn from past initiatives and deepen and improve current action including the discussion on financial and technological resources inventor. The session is to cover not only policies and actions on a national scale, but also regional and international scale.
    - iii. **Methodology for analysis of the effectiveness of potential and existing response options and activities (1 hour).** Participating experts would be invited to discuss

based on the presentation of the case studies on the analysis of effectiveness of response options given by the UNEP Secretariat at the interactive technical briefings.

**b. Day 2**

- i. Potential Response Options (2 hours).** All participating members are expected to present their proposal of potential response options.
  - ii. Region specific topic (30 mn)**
  - iii. Summarization of the meeting with the Chair of the Bureau (30 mn)**
  - iv. Closing (10 mn)**
-