

## Written Statement for AHEG4 on Agenda 5 Consideration of submissions on potential response options

Japan

### <Overall comments >

1. When we discuss response options, we believe that we should first discuss the contents of actions, considering 1) different context and countermeasures in each country, 2) the need for multi-stakeholder engagement, and 3) urgency of the issue despite limited scientific knowledge, and then discuss the framework which could enable effective implementation of such actions.

### <Long term vision>

2. In Working document 4/5 Para 12 summarizing the opinions on the principles of response options, sub-item (a) states, “Responses should align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals,” and the importance of a global common long-term vision is highlighted. Beyond SDG14.1 targeting 2025, the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” shared at the 2019 G20 summit sets a clear common global vision that aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050 through a comprehensive life-cycle approach. Eighty-six countries and regions, including members of ASEAN, have already shared the Vision.

### <Life cycle approach and National action plan>

3. Working document 4/5 Para 12 also mentions the plastic life cycle approach. Countermeasures covering both upstream and downstream should be taken, such as promoting utilization of biodegradable plastics/recycled materials in the product design phase, the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), relevant waste management, and recovery of washed plastic items. As UNEA Resolution 4/6 also asks for the prioritization of a life cycle approach, we would like to emphasize that each country is expected to strengthen their countermeasures taking comprehensive life cycle approach.
4. Working document 4/5 Para 29 mentions setting measurable targets under national action plans. As affirmed in AHEG-1, there is no “one-size fits all” solution for issues of marine plastic litter while it is essential to address these issues in accordance with each national circumstances and challenges, where national action plans can be an effective policy tool.

### <Enhancing regional and international cooperation>

5. Working document 4/5 Para 14 mentions G20. Evaluation of progress toward a global common vision is vital. Annual follow-up meetings of the G20 Implementation Framework is a good practice applying measurable targets and mechanism of periodical and continuous stocktaking. Information on actions taken by G20 and other participating

countries is annually updated through the standardized reporting format.

6. Working document 4/5 Para 14 mentions ASEAN, Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML), G20, and SAICM as existing instruments that we can learn from. Some existing frameworks such as G20 and ASEAN have already achieved certain outcomes. In order to take urgent actions, it is effective to strengthen existing frameworks. For example, we can enlarge the G20 Implementation Framework which 1) shares the long-term vision, 2) facilitates national action by peer learning and coordination with international organizations, and 3) strengthens scientific knowledge. In addition, we can potentially deploy international periodic review mechanisms with measurable indicators and develop global harmonized indicators. Furthermore, we can conduct pilot projects, such as countermeasures and monitoring, for challenging the gaps as the existing framework shows some good practices such as SAICM and partnership activities in the context of the Basel Convention.
7. Working document 4/5 Para15 mentions global standards and guidelines. While we appreciate the importance of product design and labeling a careful and deep discussion with the industry is needed for such measures to be effective. In addition, effective policy such as regulating plastic sachet packaging is different from country to country, so careful discussions will also be needed.
8. Working document 4/5 Para 16 mentions a new global agreement. The feasibility and timeframe will possibly vary depending on its contents and its structure (legally binding or voluntary). Thorough consideration of each content would be required.
9. Working document para 25 referring to ASEAN as an existing regional framework, ASEAN framework and Bangkok Declaration are good practices promoting the collaboration at a regional level and the strengthening of their efforts.

< Further expansion of scientific knowledge>

10. Working document 4/5 Para 20 through 22, as international response options, mentions necessity of science knowledge. It is absolutely vital to further accumulate scientific knowledge and to strengthen the science-policy interface as a basis of policy measures. Particularly, it is important to collect the data on distribution and accumulation of plastic litter and microplastics in rivers and oceans using a globally harmonized monitoring method, as well as to develop a global scale leakage inventory that includes leakage sources, pathways, and volumes for better prioritization of measures.

< Facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement >

11. Working document 4/5 Para 23 summarizes how multi-stakeholder engagement should be conducted. When promoting the implementation of measures based on a plastic lifecycle approach, it is crucial to engage multiple stakeholders including industry and citizens, who are the main actors both in upstream and downstream measures. There are

examples of well-functioning voluntary international frameworks where multi-stakeholder engagement is progressing, such as SAICM. Though UNEP's multi-stakeholder platform has rooms for improvement, it could be one of effective response options to facilitate countermeasures at national and regional level, for example, in collaboration with G20 implementation framework.