

Submission from the Major Group for Children and Youth to UNEP toward

4th Meeting of the Ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics

- Intervention for Agenda Item 6 -

Thank you Chair, we would like to thank once again the Secretariat for this opportunity to participate in the AHEG. As part of the MGCY delegation, bringing together more than 300 youth organisations globally, we appreciate the effort and relentless work of the AHEG and all its participants. We deeply hope that the comments done by the civil society, including the MGCY, will be incorporated in the final summary, and therefore considered at the UNEA 5 in the policy process.

We appreciate the interventions delivered these later days, highlighting both the emergency of the plastic threat and the need for a coordinated global action. We support the effort on the global agreement and we will emphasize the necessity of a dedicated global instrument to tackle plastic pollution at UNEA5. We firmly reiterate that we need a binding and bold international agreement, as agreed by many other NGOs and delegations. Convergence is real and cooperation is underway in favor of such a binding agreement. UNEA 5 will need to go beyond the voluntary contributions, to set strong concrete compulsory targets and to finally realize the call for a mandate to negotiate the global binding agreement against plastic pollution.

UNEA5 will undeniably be a challenging yet fundamental negotiation for combatting plastic and microplastics pollution. Adapting to the unprecedented Covid context and the virtual nature of a part of UNEA, we would like to emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement, and especially youth engagement, not simply essential in the negotiation phase but also in the implementation process. Children and Youth would like to be involved throughout the whole process of policy making, including the very first brainstormings, drafts and ideation phase.

Despite the challenges we're all facing, the governmental and non-governmental stakeholders must work together and keep their efforts and ambitions high, in both the covid and post covid contexts. The plastic threat won't stop and is actually expected to grow, as well as its negative impacts on our health and our environment. Children and youth urge all stakeholders to work towards globally coordinated and far reaching solutions leading to a system transformation rather than incremental steps which do not reflect the urgency or climate crisis we are in. Accordingly, the MGCY has drafted and released a position paper expressing our approach to the plastic crisis and the ongoing negotiations at the AHEG and upcoming UNEA that we are going to submit to be part of the documents of this meeting. We

have set a range of concrete demands to the governments and we firmly recommend all the delegations to read with attention and seriously consider these options.

Our most important recommendations are to:

1. Leverage education and awareness of the impacts of plastic pollution as a key strategic element.
2. Ensure a proper monitoring and reporting. Otherwise, it will be hard to manage what you don't measure, we cannot combat what we don't know.
3. Emphasize plastic waste prevention as a key principle, therefore prevent non essential plastic products from being produced, following the basic prevention idea by which even if we can recognize plastic is needed for some human activities, "the best plastic is the one we don't produce".
4. Promote a sound and circular waste management. The end of the plastic life cycle must be addressed following a circular approach avoiding harmful ways of disposal.
5. Push for a bold internationally-binding text containing explicit measures that enable a move towards circularity and a reduction of plastic waste.
6. Learn from COVID-19 health crisis: once the COVID pandemic became a global threat, reusable or biodegradable packaging fell out of favour as advisories tackling germ spread unknowingly discriminated against reusables. However, the COVID pandemic has given us an opportunity to steer from linear models into a circular model. Our governments must take charge through preventive measures to avoid non essential plastic.

Thank for you attention

- submitted on behalf of the constituency by -

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