

## Ministerial Statement

02/09/2021

### *Preambular paragraph 1*

*Unsustainable plastic production and consumption, and the associated waste generated, are accelerating at an unprecedented rate. The global impacts of an exponential increase in plastic production are manifested in many areas of the environment, including the marine environment, and the global plastic pollution crisis is increasingly affecting people and the planet. These impacts are due to linear economic models, disregard for or lack of adequate end-of-life management, insufficient support for the development of sustainable alternatives to plastics, continued production and use of unnecessary and harmful plastics, especially single-use plastic products, and open burning and dumping of plastic waste.*

### *Preambular paragraph 2*

*Owing to the nature of global supply and value chains, trade in plastic waste and the flow of plastic in the ocean, the challenge of plastic pollution and marine litter is transboundary and global in scope. Current approaches, which are limited geographically and consider only parts of the life cycle of plastics, have proven insufficient. They cannot address the scale of this challenge, let alone keep pace with predicted future developments. Consequently, the time has come for countries and stakeholders to ramp up their efforts and take collective, balanced, ambitious and decisive action.*

### Paragraph 1

We recognize that no country can adequately address the various aspects of this challenge alone; hence there is a need to commit to establishing a balanced framework for international cooperation that includes coordinated actions to address the negative impacts of plastic along its life cycle, taking into account local and national circumstances as well as specific needs of developing countries, especially SIDS and LDCs. It would also establish transparency and accountability with respect to realizing a common vision.

### Paragraph 2

We emphasize that global solidarity and the involvement of all stakeholders must be guiding principles. Urgent action is needed at all levels, including setting common objectives, developing concrete targets and action plans, taking strong measures, and strengthening regional and global cooperation and decision-making, based on the latest available science. We call on all actors, including governments, the private sector, academia and civil society, to contribute on the basis of their strengths and abilities to, among others, internalize the costs of damage by pollution as far as possible, eliminate unnecessary and harmful plastics from the value chain, increase circularity, adhere to the waste management hierarchy, and support the efforts countries are making to protect the environment.

### Paragraph 3

While we see the need for further quantification and qualification of global economic, social and environmental impacts of plastic along its life cycle, available information indicates that the costs of inaction, including the costs of environmental damage and social impacts, far exceed those of actions taken to combat global plastic pollution and marine litter. Urgent action is required in order to avoid significant economic, social and environmental costs.

### Paragraph 4

Thus, we highlight the necessity for a Global Agreement, aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, that is based on a clear and common vision with ambitious objectives, suitable indicators, and the measures necessary to achieve the elimination or minimization of all negative impacts of plastic throughout its life cycle, including the significant reduction and progressive elimination of direct and indirect discharges of plastic into the environment, sustainable alternatives and the reduction of virgin plastic production. In our view, the Agreement could:

- a. Be based on a precautionary approach, the Rio Declaration and other relevant environmental principles. Acknowledging the devastating impact of global plastic pollution on ecosystems, human health, the climate system and livelihoods. The Agreement should cover all international gaps including those identified by the AHEG<sup>1</sup> and complement and enhance the coordination with existing regional and international instruments such as the Basel Convention, while avoiding duplication of efforts.
- b. Contain solutions based on cross-sectoral and holistic approaches that address the whole life cycle of plastics and sustainable alternatives aiming at circularity. Preventive measures for both sea- and land-based sources, should be prioritized, including designing out plastic waste and pollution, and fostering reduction, reusability, repairability and recyclability, while remediating the existing plastic pollution using an evidence and risk-based approach.
- c. Include specific measures for plastics considered to present particular risks to the environment and human health, especially women and children, due to their chemical structure and additives, and for certain products regarded as difficult to collect and manage safely.
- d. Include adequate and predictable means of implementation to support developing countries, including technological support and improving their policies and legal frameworks.
- e. Include a monitoring, reporting and evaluation mechanism to measure progress in eliminating plastic discharges and the environmental impacts of plastic pollutions aligned with agreed guidelines and methodologies.

### Paragraph 5

The need for capacity building and technology transfer should be considered, as well as technical and financial assistance to developing countries. We recognize that different national circumstances require solutions to be tailored in order to progressively achieve a smooth and inclusive transition, while building on best available techniques and environmental practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Ad Hoc Open-ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics

The approaches used should be sustainable, science-based and pragmatic, promoting preventive and precautionary measures.

#### Paragraph 6

Because of the transboundary nature of plastic pollution, and to ensure traceability and transparency, we support the use and development of common methods, definitions and standards as a reference for implementing domestic policy, including internationally recognized environmental information to address global information gaps, with the aim of developing an efficient, coordinated global effort to combat all types of plastic pollution including marine litter and microplastics.

#### Paragraph 7

Therefore, without prejudging UNEA-5.2 discussions, and in view of the substantial body of work already undertaken, existing political support and the urgency of the global plastic pollution crisis, we recognize the need for urgent action and affirm our commitment to take the next decisive steps by working towards the timely establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution at UNEA-5.2, with the aim of achieving a new Global Agreement with ambitious goals, wide participation and means of implementation.