Proposing Member State: Norway

Co-sponsoring member States:

Proposed title of resolution: Marine Litter and Microplastics

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DRAFT

SUGGESTED ACTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY ON Marine litter and microplastics

The United Nations Environment Assembly may wish to consider the adoption of the draft resolution/decision on Marine Litter and Microplastics:

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

PREAMBLE

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, by which the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Sustainable Development Goal 14 and its target 14.1, which seeks, by 2025, to “prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution”,

Acknowledging the increased knowledge on the levels, sources, negative effects of, and measures to reduce marine litter and microplastics, as summarized in the UNEP 2016 Assessment report “Marine plastic debris and microplastics - Global lessons and research to inspire action and guide policy change”, the First World Ocean Assessment and a large number of other reports and scientific publications,

Noting with concern the high and rapidly increasing levels of litter, especially plastics, and microplastics in the coastal and marine environment and the negative effects this has on marine biodiversity, ecosystems, animal well-being, fisheries, maritime transport, recreation and tourism, other ecosystem services and local societies and economies,

Noting also with concern that marine litter and microplastics can contribute to the spreading of toxic chemicals/hazardous substances and living organisms harmful to ecosystems and human health; the lack of knowledge on the levels of nanoplastics in the ecosystems and seafood resources and on their potential negative effects on ecosystems and human health,

Recalling the United Nations Environment Assembly's decisions and recommendations on measures to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics in the resolutions 1/6 “Marine plastic debris and microplastics”, and 2/11 "Marine plastic litter and microplastics",
Reaffirming the commitment of Member States to the “Our ocean, our future: call for action” Declaration adopted at the UN Ocean Conference and notes the voluntary commitments presented to this conference, the Our Oceans conference in [Malta in 2017, and at UNEA-3], and G20 action plan decided in 2017, on efforts to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics,

Welcoming the UNEP/EA.3/INF/5 report "Combating marine plastic litter and microplastics: An assessment of the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and sub-regional governance strategies and approaches", as requested in UNEA Resolution 2/11, ]

Noting with appreciation the broad international recognition of the urgent need for action at many levels to prevent further damage caused by marine litter and microplastics, and that measures are available, but noting also that a targeted and coherent long-term response is dependent on strengthened international cooperation,

OPERATIVE PART

1. Emphasizes that the ultimate long-term goal is that the marine ecosystems and the human activities dependent on these ecosystems are not negatively affected by marine litter and microplastics,

2. Urges all actors to further step up actions on a national, regional and global level to fulfil the SDG target 14.1 to "by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution",

3. Urges also all actors to fully implement the recommendations and actions in the UNEA 1/6 and 2/11 resolutions, as relevant, and emphasizes that these resolutions have important elements and guidance not repeated in this resolution,

4. Calls on all Member States, in order to operationalize and monitor the implementation of SDG target 14.1, to establish national, and to cooperate in establishing regional, reduction targets on marine litter and microplastics, based on assessment of sources and on monitoring of levels of marine litter and microplastics,

5. Recognizes the urgent need for establishing and applying common and standardized methodologies for monitoring quantities of marine litter and microplastics and notes that GESAMP, as a follow up of UNEA resolution 2/11, is coordinating a global scientific assessment on harmonized methods and standards for sampling, measurement and monitoring of marine debris and microplastics in the marine environment,

6. Stresses that prevention of marine litter is key and that sound waste prevention and integrated solid waste management and infrastructure in areas with the largest input should be given a high priority; that the most cost-effective and environmentally sound measures should be used recognizing that there are already existing solutions and effective measures that can be locally and regionally adapted,

7. Urges Member States and other stakeholders to include marine litter in regional, national and local waste management plans and in wastewater treatment, to take further action to
prevent and significantly reduce litter and microplastics in the marine environment through encouraging resource efficiency, including prevention and increasing recycling rates of plastic waste and re-design and re-use of products, materials and services; preventing the use of plastic where appropriate, and work for that primary microplastics in products are phased out where adequate alternatives are available, and only replaced with non-hazardous compounds,

8. Recognizes also the need to develop an integrated approach against microplastics from all sources,

9. Urges also Member States and other stakeholders to step up measures to prevent marine litter and microplastics from sea-based sources such as fisheries, aquaculture, shipping and off-shore installations,

10. Stresses that clean-up of marine litter will reduce microplastics stemming from degradation of plastic litter; and should focus on areas where it is a significant threat to biodiversity, wildlife and sustainable use, and where it can be conducted in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner; recommends cooperation between governments, civil society, industry and other stakeholders to ensure the most effective results from available resources to this end,

11. Recognizes that plastic litter and microplastics are transported to the oceans by rivers and run-off or wind from land, and calls upon Member States, relevant organizations and other stakeholders to include marine litter and microplastics in management and action plans, covering the freshwater/seawater interface and land/sea interface, applying an integrated source-to-sea approach,

12. Recognizes with concern that natural disasters and increasingly strong extreme weather events also cause significant input of marine litter and microplastics to the marine environment, and stresses that measures to prevent and reduce the damage from such natural disasters and extreme weather events are important also to reduce marine litter and microplastics,

13. Underlines the responsibility of plastic producers/importers and packaging firms for reducing the level of marine littering from their products and encourages the use of extended producer responsibility schemes as well as providing information on, adverse effects caused by their products,

14. Recognizes the important contribution of the civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics; and urges cooperation between governments, private sector and civil society, on information sharing, awareness raising, capacity building and clean-up actions,

15. Urges Member States and encourages civil society and industry to join the Global Partnership on marine litter and cooperate on projects and actions to implement the UNEA resolutions 1/6, 2/11 and [3/X], based on the best scientific knowledge, best available techniques and best environmental practices, and cost-effective measures,

16. Requests the Executive Director to strengthen UNEP's capacity and activity on marine litter and microplastics, including through
a) Strengthening the secretariat for the Global Partnership on marine Litter, as well as UNEPs contributions to it;

b) Providing advice and prioritizing activities based on best available scientific knowledge, and the most environmentally sound and cost-effective measures to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics, according to the UNEA resolutions 1/6, 2/11 and 3/X,

c) Facilitate the establishment and implementation of regional and national action plans to prevent and reduce litter and microplastics in the marine environment, as requested by Member States,

17. Calls upon relevant international and regional organizations and conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Basel Convention, the Stockholm Convention, the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes, as appropriate within their mandates, to increase their action to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics and their harmful effects,

18. Requests the Executive Director, in order to assist in the evaluation of progress on the achievement of the SDG 14.1 on marine debris as well as the implementation of UNEA resolutions 1/6, 2/11 and [3/X], to compile the voluntary commitments targeting marine litter and microplastics and to provide an overview of the range of actions presented that may serve as a basis for considerations on further work towards a more systematic approach to enhancing national, regional and global action to combat marine litter, and present this report to UNEA-4,

19. Welcomes the UNEP/EA.3/INF/5 report "Combating marine plastic litter and microplastics: An assessment of the effectiveness of relevant international, regional and sub-regional governance strategies and approaches",

20. Decides to establish an Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group to facilitate an open, transparent and inclusive process under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme, to further the assessment with the aim to strengthen international governance structures for combating marine plastic litter and microplastics in a coherent and comprehensive manner, and to develop recommendations, including voluntary and legal options, to this end,

21. Requests the Executive Director to report to the Environment Assembly at its fourth session on the outcome of the Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group,

22. Requests the Executive Director to report on the implementation of this resolution to UNEA-4.