

## NGO Major Group – Intervention on Item 7 at OEEG-1

Thank you, Madame Chair

My name is Tim Grabel with the Environmental Investigation Agency.

While I am member of the NGO Major Group, I speak on behalf of several other Major Groups.

I want to thank UN Environment for the thought-provoking and insightful reports and discussion papers, and for presenting various options on a way forward. I would also like to thank Canada for its insightful proposal and other delegations who have elaborated on that proposal.

In particular, we would also like to support Sweden's intervention about building on the Canadian proposal and take this opportunity to elaborate on the four specific points raised by Canada.

**First**, with respect to identifying and understanding the gaps, we agree with Norway and a number of other member states who have highlighted that most, if not all of this work, has been performed by the assessment report prepared by UN Environment for UNEA-3. We believe that the assessment was consistent with the mandate and includes elements on voluntary and national responses. As a result, we believe we have a clear understanding of what gaps exist. What we know less, and cannot predict, is whether one or two of those gaps would actually be filled by other conventions. This should not detract us, however, from taking action where we know action is needed.

**Second**, with respect to successes and challenges, we believe that identifying the successes and challenges arising from the operation of existing mechanisms is important. But we also recognize the challenges of directing the work of other conventions over which this group does not have a mandate. We therefore believe that a two-pronged approach could help in this respect. This group could invite parties to the various conventions and international instruments to explore the possibilities existing under those instruments, as was done by the parties to the Basel and Stockholm Conventions. But recognizing that the timeframe of these initiatives would not be consistent with the urgency on marine litter and, more specifically, marine plastic pollution, we should also invite UNEP to approach the various secretariats less formally to start collecting all relevant information without formal decisions by their governing bodies. We should also acknowledge that these other conventions only related to discrete aspects of a "comprehensive approach to addressing the lifecycle of plastics to prevent marine plastic pollution," and that even if these other conventions act within their competencies, there will still be the need for additional action.

**Third**, with respect to the need for a coordination mechanism, we agree that more information would be useful. We recognize that there is interest in exploring the possibility of using existing bodies such as the GPML or GPA, for example, to serve in a central coordination role. We believe that, in preparation of the November meeting, UN Environment should explore the feasibility and effectiveness—as well as the limitations—of these existing bodies in preparation of the November meeting. We also believe that, with respect to possible coordination mechanisms between existing multilateral environmental agreements, it would be useful to understand how those could operate and what successful models and modalities could be replicated or not. Such an approach would allow this expert group to recommend practical steps forward in a constructive and timely manner for UNEA-4.

**Fourth**, with respect to assessing what can be done in the short, medium and long term, we believe that we should strongly consider a *start-and-strengthen* approach, one that was so successful in the Montreal Protocol context. Applying a similar approach here, it means we act where we know action

is necessary—such as coordination, reporting, monitoring, among others things— and allow other instruments such as Basel and MARPOL to consider what, if any role, they will play. And, where gaps are not filled, we should have procedures that have been created to fill them. In other words, it should be possible to negotiate the establishment of a central overarching coordination mechanism after UNEA-4, one that covers known gaps while also including a procedure to fill other gaps depending on actions in other fora. We believe this approach would allow us to move forward without preempting future developments.

**Finally**, we support the workshop approach proposed by Canada and the suggestion made by Iran to consider regional workshops. In order to respect the mandate established at UNEA-3, however, we believe these workshops and/or regional meetings should exist in addition to the second OEEG, as well as be open to the participation of experts from all Member States, representation from international and regional conventions and organizations and relevant stakeholders.