



Format of the position paper:

1. Name of your organization
2. Your views on major barriers to combatting marine litter and microplastics
3. Your views on potential national, regional and international response options and associated environmental, social and economic costs
4. Your views on the feasibility of different response options
5. Any other inputs

Position Paper

1. HEAD Organization is an environmental Lebanese NGO, its headquarter is found in Byblos, a highly touristic area located at the coast. HEAD's major concerns involve marine litter and landfills. Besides cooperating with the private sector and the municipality to launch a recycling program in the region, it looks to work and engage the youth within its projects and university programs. Its theme for 2018 is "Beat Plastic Pollution", thus, HEAD is enthusiastic to respond to the Marine litter and microplastics call by the United Nations Environment Assembly.

"The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, by which the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recalling 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", *Recalling* its resolutions 1/6, entitled "Marine plastic debris and microplastics," and 2/11, entitled "Marine plastic litter and microplastics," on measures to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics,

Acknowledging the increased knowledge on the levels, sources, negative effects of and measures to reduce marine litter and microplastics, as summarized in the 2016 assessment report by the United Nations Environment Programme entitled *Marine plastic debris and microplastics: Global lessons and research to inspire action and guide policy change*, the First World Ocean Assessment and numerous other reports and scientific publications."

2. HEAD is located and operating in Lebanon, where most of the landfills / dumpsters are located on the Mediterranean coast. On a yearly basis, a huge amount of our waste reaches the sea water due to many reasons; environmental, municipal discharges, political situations, etc.

With the lack of laws to protect our Mediterranean coast from litter, the government and municipalities found themselves facing a serious problem; our water is highly polluted with litter.

Since the Mediterranean water belongs to 21 countries, our problem became tremendously big affecting lots of people beside the Lebanese citizens.

Whenever we decide to look closely to the barriers combatting marine litter, we find the following:

- The government allowed the dumpsters at the coast

- Until now the government did not sign a waste management solution, they are still looking for the best option. Consequently, we are facing lack of laws regarding waste management.
- The civil society and the private sector established recycling and composting programs, yet financially they are still not able to cover all Lebanon, nor to oblige citizens/ municipalities to be committed.
- The international funding was concentrating on the Syrian crisis in the country, which lead to limiting the waste management funds.
- Awareness to decrease the amount of generated waste among citizens is limited.

HEAD believes that the above constitutes the major obstacles to the marine litter, and at the same time the solutions. Once resolved, we will have the government, the civil society and private sector working hand-in-hand towards a better culture and cleaner coast and water.

3. Marine pollution has no borders nor limits, if a country coast and water is polluted, all twenty-one Mediterranean countries will pay for it. Hence a regional approach is necessary.

HEAD took the initiative years ago and launched a yearly marine pollution campaign at the beginning of each summer, before hitting the Lebanese beaches.

This year as usual, during the environmental week on May 27th, HEAD will execute 2 main objectives; awareness and on the ground cleaning of Byblos casa coast. Moreover, this year HEAD is awarded a special high support from UN Environment, “Ex-Director of Regional Representative on West Asia Dr. Iyad Abumoghli” such support is very motivating to our community, as well as the engagement of the public sector, municipalities, private sector, partners, media, NGOs such as Red Cross, civil defense, schools, universities and scouts.

HEAD made sure to have different sectors on board for efficient awareness with four objectives:

- Send a message to the world that the Lebanese citizens are against the establishment of coastal dump-sites along the Lebanese littoral.
- Promote and motivate citizens’ engagement in:
 - a. Buying less in order to dispose less in the dumpsites
 - b. Becoming members with companies and NGOs specialized in recycling and composting
 - c. Taking part in cleaning campaigns executed by the civil society
 - d. Being responsible while enjoying their time at the beach or at any other outdoor location
 - e. Being mindful of the harm that can be caused by marine litter and microplastics
 - Adopt and support sustainable tourism
 - Help municipalities to monopolize development

4. HEAD proposes regional and international cooperation of different NGOs for Greens and Blues; The financial capacity and personnel capacity of each NGO are limited, thus HEAD believes that we need a combined effort to accomplish this goal. By doing so, we shall avoid duplication of work and we will ensure the completion of all the steps that shall be delegated to each organization.

The project should not stop at the awareness stage; the preached topics shall be executed. HEAD is convinced that the power of cooperative NGOs can support the government in establishing legislations regarding the responsibility and commitment of each citizen and municipality through a clear vision and precise rules to demonstrated significant improvements.

The expertise and financial contribution of international NGOs are a must. For each part, to be accomplished efficiently, needs highly trained and skilled personnel along with well-defined and justified budget for the execution.

5. A powerful and combined civil society can do miracles. The marine litter and microplastics are, and will keep on affecting our health, our wellbeing, our environment, and our food and therefore our lives as a whole. Hence, beside the awareness and cleaning campaigns, HEAD has a bigger role; to dig deeper and start eliminating causes of the microplastics in our sea water. Therefore, it is studying the possibilities to launch a project aiming to ban plastic bags from stores. Another blue/green step forward that HEAD holds itself responsible to resolve.

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