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**Position paper on the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group
by the Plastic Soup Foundation**

1. Name of your organization

Plastic Soup Foundation

2. Your view on major barriers to combatting marine litter and microplastics

- One major barrier is the lack of an international treaty or protocol to specifically address marine litter within the framework of the United Nations. Such an international treaty should aim to reduce plastic production worldwide with a special focus on single use plastics. Hereby it should not focus on marine litter as such, but on the causes of marine litter.
- Another barrier is that currently, plastics are not viewed as a hazardous substance when uncontrolled in the environment.
- Currently, international agreements on combatting marine litter can be characterised as soft law. However, recognising the magnitude of this environmental problem, any international agreement should be binding.
- Finally, there is no international mechanism that prevents investments in new plastic production facilities, with the alarming result that there will be overproduction of new virgin plastics, making them cheaper and abundant than ever before.

3. Your view on potential national, regional and international response options and associated environmental, social and economic costs

- Member States should be made responsible for their land-based contribution of plastics into the open seas, since rivers are the main source of marine litter. Clear reduction targets should be set, which can also be realised in a regional setting.
- Furthermore, global trade in plastic waste should be restricted.
- The international community should assist any country asking for support with implementing regulations to mitigate plastic pollution.
- Environmental costs should be systematically integrated in the price of any plastic product.

- Among the response options we like to mention a universal ban on (intentionally added) microplastics in consumer products, such as cosmetics.
- Single-use plastics should be avoided as much as possible, like the light weight plastic bags (cf. The Montreal Mechanism).
- The most problematic plastics should be phased out, being the plastics that cannot be recycled and are too toxic because of additives used.
- There should be an international mechanism to regulate the investments in new plastic production facilities.
- The responsibility of producers should be extended for the end-of-pipeline phase of their products, for instance by imposing deposit-schemes.
- Finally, a fund for research and development should be established targeting the most problematic sources of plastic pollution, like the release of microfibers from synthetic textiles when washing.

4. Your view on the feasibility and effectiveness of different response options

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5. Any other inputs

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Best Regards,

Maria Westerbos
Director and founder Plastic Soup Foundation