

Thailand's Position Paper
for The Ad hoc Open Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastic
29 - 31 May 2018, Nairobi, Kenya

1. Name of your organization

Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment,
THAILAND

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

Thailand has been strongly concerned on the marine debris problem, especially plastic, which is pervasive and increasing globally. Recent scientific reports revealed that the major source of ocean plastic pollution came from Asia and Thailand is ranked in the top ten countries of the world which contribute plastic debris to the ocean.

Most of marine plastic debris and microplastic is mainly from the land base pollution. The waste management play very important role on reducing the marine debris and microplastic. Government give a high priority to the National policy and financial support to reduce mismanagement of waste and plastic. Since the plastic industry has been rapidly growing up during last few decades. To increase reducing, recycling, and reused of the plastic need close cooperation with plastic industrial and private sectors to find an alternative and innovation as well as public. It may need some time for all sector to adapt themselves to this policy. Some initiative action is already on going with strong support from the public such as stop using the cap seal of drinking water bottle and stop release the cigarette butt on the beach, etc.

The efficiency of waste management has been increasing and cover the residual waste from previous year and plan to get rid all of residual waste in the near future. Microplastic has been concerning at the global, regional and national level. However, scientific information and knowledge is still limited due to lack of appropriate analytical method. While assessment of microplastic in marine environment is urgent need of the country to build up a view of microplastic pollution of the country. Scientist in Thailand have been joining an effort with other countries in the regional through UNESCO/IOC for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) and expert in the region to harmonize the method of microplastic analysis and set up monitoring network for

marine microplastic in marine environment. The data and information is being generate since 2016. It will also be a tool to be used for evolution after the measure of reducing plastic used and improve waste management system of the government is implemented.

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

Several efforts through the intergovernmental and international organization, especially the ASEAN have been undertaken, such as;

- volunteer commitment to the ocean conference at the United Nation (UN) to support an implementation of Sustainable Development Goal – 14 in Thailand to enhance the reduce of marine pollution, particularly marine plastic debris,
- implementation of the UN's resolution (70/235, 23 December 2015) under the Ocean and the Law of the Sea to seriously solve the problem of marine debris followed the convention of UNCLOS 1982 (Protection and Prevention of Marine Environment),
- cooperation with UNEP to implement to the relevance organizations, conventions, and international mechanisms to reduce and solve problem of pollutants, toxic chemical, and marine plastic debris etc.

The numerous national immediate actions have been implementing namely;

1. removing the abandoned marine litters from coastal ecosystems through cleanup campaign in the coastal provinces,
2. implementing plastic waste reduction measures in all 549 coastal municipalities, with selected target groups including artisanal fishing community, commercial fishing operators, coastal villages, eco-tourism operators, and communities operating small-medium enterprise,
3. not only undertaking researches for better understanding on situation and impacts of plastic debris in marine environment and also for achieving sufficient evidence to support proper management intervention, and
4. establishing national database of marine debris according to the International Coastal Cleanup format for future reference.

As marine plastic debris degrades extremely slow in natural environment and is highly transported by currents and ocean circulation, so that its devastating impacts and treats can be

extended from local to regional-wide areas. This suggests the need of cooperation and coalition concerning prevention and management, as well as information sharing and capacity building. Thailand expresses its full intention to actively participate and cooperate with countries in the region including international and intergovernmental organizations to reduce plastic debris in the ocean.

As the existing large amount of plastic debris in the Gulf of Thailand and South China Sea could be degraded to be microplastic which could impact on marine living resources and health of the ocean. This problem was concerned and given to be high priority to carry out systematic monitoring and study to reduce the plastic debris in the ocean including cooperate with existing intergovernmental organization such as UNESCO-IOC sub-commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC), UNEP, ASEAN, and etc. To take the action, Thai government hosted the first ASEAN Conference on Reducing Marine Debris in ASEAN Region, at Phuket, Thailand, during 22-23 Nov. 2017, which was co-organised with ASEC, WESTPAC, IUCN and KU (Kasetsart University, Thailand) and got support from several national and international organization. This effort will be kept continuing to carry out with regional partner and intergovernmental and international organization.

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

To collect and clean-up waste/ litters from environment are necessary but we need to focus on how to reduce litters in effective way too. Our daily activities produce lot of solid wastes, if we can create new technology to turn them to something that utilizable again, these can be benefiting to reduce waste into the nature. To turning recycle plastics to be new type of materials for create clothes, stylist furniture, luggage, etc.

Innovation in any aspect such as produce material that can degrade without any harm to environment, genetic engineering science to develop and/or improve digestive system in some organisms which can digest plastic and transfer to usable form for them.

5. Any other inputs

Effective waste management system or technology will be definitely useful for reduce pile of litters and microplastic, which could safeguard the environment and protect human health.