

# First Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Micro-plastics

Business and Industry major group intervention regarding UNEP Discussion Paper UNEP/AHEG/2018/1/3 “National, regional and international response options, including action and innovative approaches, and voluntary and legally binding governance strategies and approaches”

- We believe there are a number of policy responses, economic responses, technological responses, and educational and informational responses that will help to better address marine litter and microplastics.

## Policy Responses

- **We believe that policy responses must be viewed in the context of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** Plastics are critical to achieving the SDGs, plastic packaged food lasts longer, reducing wastage; use of plastic in pipes facilitates clean drinking water supplies; plastic enables life-saving medical devices such as surgical equipment and drips; and due to its light weight, plastic use in vehicles has reduced carbon dioxide emissions from the transportation sector.
- Industry fully supports a circular economy approach. Different regions have established targets to increase re-use and recycling. For example in the US and Europe industry has committed to reach 100% re-use, recycling, and/or recovery of ALL plastics packaging by 2040.

## Economic Responses

- As noted previously we believe that improving **waste management is critical to addressing marine litter**. We note the interventions from other member states indicating that waste management is ultimately an issue that is addressed at the municipal and sub-national level. Different solutions will be required for different localities and thus we recommend that recommendations and potential next steps take into account the flexibility needed for countries to implement solutions that meet their specific needs.

## Technological Responses

- **We do not believe it is prudent to limit innovation or potential solutions at the outset.** For example, waste to energy technologies are being used in some of the cleanest and most advanced cities in the world. Plastics to fuel technologies may help small island states where issues of scale may limit the application of other technologies and developing countries when access to clean fuel is limited. Chemical recycling is providing recycling options for materials that were previously unrecyclable, as well as providing feedstock for

other processes. We must treat waste as a resource and do a better job to capture its inherent value

- For years industry has been developing more efficient uses of plastic through lightweighting. More recently we have started looking at eco-design guidelines so that we are designing for recyclability.

### **Educational Responses**

- Industry has also developed labelling standards to help consumers recycle. We are working with various groups to increase availability of recycling in local communities and have developed policy guidelines to encourage the responsible use of plastics.