

Ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics

Seychelles Statement- Agenda 5 30th May 2018

In 2017 Seychelles started the implementation of the ban on plastic carrier bags and other plastic cutleries into the country. This started with the restriction on importation of those items from January of that year and the total restriction on the production, sale and distribution of plastics and other plastic cutleries from July 2017. We are however providing alternatives to our people and thus since 2017 importers have been venturing into alternatives to plastic carrier bags and other cutleries. However, it must be noted that there are exemptions to this ban for some specific purposes. New regulations have been put in place so as to implement his ban. The Government is now in the process of reviewing this exemption list which may result is further removing some of the things on the list.

Simultaneously we have been implementing the complete ban on Styrofoam take away boxes since 2017 and thus promoting biodegradable boxes.

This ban on plastics came about after several attempts have been made in order to ensure that the three R's are implemented. Some of the actions taken previously include the importation of plastics of 30 and 50 microns respectively. However, this was not successfully embraced and implemented thus why the total restriction on plastics in 2017.

As from January 2019 we will be starting ban on plastic straws this is also part of the long time waste management of the country. Already we've gotten our partners on board (for example several discussions with the Tourism Industry as this is the industry where the plastic straws are mostly used in the country) we hope that this will be successfully implemented. This also means that a new regulation will soon be in place so as to implement such ban.

We now carry out beach clean ups on at least every two months lead by the Ocean Projects a group of young people. With one being organized next week as part of the World Environment Day activities. Such voluntary activities attract many people thus create the platform for information sharing, and awareness raising. In order to continue raise the awareness on the impacts of plastics on the environment we are actively working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education so that their curriculums also take into account the environmental issues including waste management.

Since 2009 the Seychelles have implementing a successful scheme of PET bottles. This schemes means that there is a levy imposed on such items coming into the country and there is a refund to consumer when such products are deposited at designated redeem centres. It is also a way of providing an income to low income earners of the country.

It must be noted that a number of Seychelles outer islands are located right in the region's marine highway thus very exposed to marine plastic litter. Presently there is an ongoing competition being organized by the Seychelles island Foundation to recruit volunteers to go on Aldabra one of the world heritage sites to carry out beach clean ups for six weeks. An opportunity not to be missed.

Our Government is now working with both the EU and the World bank so as to be assisted in specific areas of waste management of the country. For example we need technical assistance in the development of the waste master plan for the country. Our Solid Waste Management Policy review is

nearly completed this means that we will soon be implementing several actions in the management of different waste types. Thankfully Seychelles is a member of several MEA's (such as the Nairobi Convention, the BRS, Montreal Convention) thus we rely a lot on those agreements to be supported in different areas of waste management.

Studies have been carried out by several universities from Germany and Switzerland during the past two in the country on waste characterization in the and results have shown that approximately 33% of the total waste is made up of plastics. Therefore, this calls for immediate interventions (especially how to divert the plastics from the landfill).

It must be noted that, we are yet to look closely at the issue of miro-plastics, as we do not have the required capacity to do so.

Thank You