

**FIRST MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN ENDED EXPERT GROUP ESTABLISHED UNDER UNEP,  
29 – 31 MAY 2018, NAIROBI**

**AGENDA ITEM 5 ON NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE OPTIONS,  
INCLUDING ACTION AND INOVATIVE APPROACHES, AND VOLUNTARY AND LEGALLY  
BINDING GOVERNANCE STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES**

**Singapore's Comments**

- Thank you for giving me the floor. I will share how Singapore does our part in addressing marine litter and microplastics through government policies, partnerships with public and private stakeholders, and regional collaborations.

Domestic efforts by the Government

- On governance, the Singapore Government is determined to ensure that all wastes, including plastics, do not end up in our watercourses. This is achieved through stringent and comprehensive regulations to control pollution and manage waste. We enforce strict anti-littering laws and incinerate our waste, and conduct clean ups of waterways and beaches to minimise marine litter.
- Our island is also fully sewered and all used water is collected and treated to international standards before discharge. During the water treatment process, microbeads, a form of microplastics, are substantially removed as sludge and disposed of by incineration.
- Singapore is also committed to the prevention of pollution from ships. We were among the first in Asia to ratify all six Annexes of MARPOL. As a party to MARPOL, Singapore has in place regulations to prohibit the discharge of garbage, including all types of plastics, from ships.

Engagements with 3P sector

- While the Singapore Government has played our part in addressing the issue of plastic waste in oceans, we recognise that these efforts alone are not sufficient. The Singapore Government works with the 3P Sectors (People, Private and Public) to reduce land-based solid waste. One such initiative is the Singapore Packaging Agreement. It is a voluntary agreement with the industry and non-governmental organisations to reduce packaging waste. Retailers in Singapore have also introduced policies to reduce excessive plastic bag usage, such as a plastic bag charge or rebate for consumers who bring their own bags.
- The Singapore Government also works with environmental groups such as the Public Hygiene Council (PHC) and the Waterways Watch Society (WWS) to foster shared ownership in keeping the environment clean. We also support environmental groups such as Zero Waste SG, which recently launched a Bring Your Own (BYO) campaign to reduce plastic waste in Singapore. Retailers in Singapore (such as Miniso, Bossini and Ikea) also encourage consumers to bring their reusable bags by either charging

for plastic bags or selling reusable bags. These ongoing efforts complement the many citizen-led efforts like the International Coastal Cleanup Singapore program that has been ongoing for 25 years.

### Regional Collaborations

- On international contributions, Singapore was among those which pledged voluntary commitments to the 2017 UN Oceans Conference and we remain committed to implementing them. Singapore also participates actively in regional seas initiatives such as the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia and UN Environment's Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia.
- Among our commitments are those pertaining to providing training and capacity building opportunities. We have established the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) in 1992 to provide training and capacity building courses for our partners. In 2015, we launched the Sustainable Development Programme under the SCP to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, focusing on climate change adaptation strategies and water quality management. Recently, we launched a course on Sustainable Oceans and Marine Resources. Through the IMO-Singapore Third Country Training Programme, also supported by the SCP, Singapore has provided capacity building assistance on the implementation of relevant international instruments for the prevention of pollution from ships, such as International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). We have conducted courses on MARPOL for countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Middle East. Under the Singapore-Norway Third Country Training Programme, we also conducted a "Regional Training Programme on Waste Management and Reduction of Marine Litter" last year.

### Approach to plastics

- Singapore is of the view that the key to a plastic-free ocean lies in having policies to ensure that plastics are used judiciously and more importantly, that plastic wastes are disposed of properly and do not end up in the watercourses leading to the seas and oceans.
- There has been a lot of debate on charging for or banning plastic bags like some other countries do. I would like to share Singapore's unique context and explain how certain policies with regard to plastic bags work for us. Specifically, the illustration I am sharing is to highlight that in coming up with global responses, it is important to recognise that flexibility should be given to each country in selecting measures and actions based on their national situations, and that a one-size-fits-all approach would not be ideal.
- Plastic bags are used for bagging refuse to maintain good public hygiene. With the majority of Singaporeans living in high-rise public housing with rubbish chutes, irresponsible disposal of waste down the chutes could lead to public health issues such as pest infestations especially in our hot tropical climate.

- In Singapore, we incinerate all of our waste, hence the challenges faced by countries that rely more on landfilling their waste are not identical to ours.
- Nevertheless, we are carefully studying the best ways to address this. For instance, we are carrying out a life cycle assessment of the cost and environmental impact of disposable bags and containers. We are also considering the practices and policies of other countries and their contexts, so that we can find a balanced and sustainable approach to managing the use of plastics.

### Conclusion

- To sum up, it is important to recognise the different national circumstances of countries, and that a one size fits all approach would not be an effective approach for the global community. Also, as raised earlier by a few countries, it is important that the discussion of solutions should be grounded in science. Thank you.