

STATEMENT BY THE WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS MG

AGENDA ITEM 6 - environmental, social and economic costs and benefits of different response options

Chair,

We believe that the costs associated with any of the 3 options will impose heavier burdens on workers and other vulnerable groups such as women, children and indigenous people rather than on the industry. Even if finally option 3 is chosen we will not be able to avoid catastrophe if an adequate financial mechanism is not put into place to safeguard the welfare and livelihoods of workers and the other vulnerable groups. A new instrument has to include a special fund for this purpose. The industry that has benefitted a lot from sale of plastics and which has contributed to the emergence of this new threat has a moral and ethical responsibility to contribute to the fund. The fund can be christened THE MARINE FUND.

Chair

Though the problem of marine litter and microplastics is real and extremely dangerous, there is a serious lack of data to allow us to make realistic and just decisions. For example there is yet no concrete gender segregated data on the number of workers employed in the sector. Therefore we do not know how many workers will be affected by our actions under any of the 3 options.

We also do not know how many people are involved in the trade of plastics in the informal sector where the majority are women struggling to support their families. It is therefore not ideal to take any action under any of the 3 options without this kind of data. It is our hope that necessary data will be generated before we take any decision in UNEA 4.

I thank you Chair