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Submission by Norway

Draft resolution

Strengthening global governance on marine plastic litter and microplastics

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Noting with concern that the high and rapidly increasing levels of marine plastic litter and microplastics represent a serious environmental problem of a global scale, negatively affecting marine biodiversity, ecosystems, animal well-being, fisheries, maritime transport, recreation and tourism, local societies and economies;

Noting also that microplastics, intentionally added in products or unintentionally generated during their lifecycle, are found in a variety of species consumed by humans and thus there is concern about their potential to negatively affect food safety and that, hence, those aspects require further examination;

Stressing the importance of long-term elimination of discharge of litter and microplastics to the oceans and of avoiding detriment to marine ecosystems and the human activities dependent on them from marine litter and microplastics, as stated by the United Nations Environment Assembly in its resolution 3/7, as a guiding principle for all efforts;

Affirming that prevention and reduction of marine litter and microplastics from both land and sea sources constitute an essential contribution to achieving sustainable development goal 14 and its target 14.1, to "by 2025, to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution", as well as to the sustainable development goal 12 and its target 12.4, to "by 2020 achieve the environmentally sound management chemicals and all wastes throughout the their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts human health and the environment";

Stressing the importance of a more sustainable management of plastics throughout their lifecycle in order to increase resource efficiency, support circularity in plastics production and consumption, and reduce marine plastic pollution;

Stressing also the importance of promoting measures such as the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), sound waste management, recovery of marine plastic litter and innovation of related technologies, and assist developing countries to most effectively prevent pollution of marine plastic litter and microplastics;

Stressing as well the urgent need to strengthen the science-policy interface at the international level and to do more to support evidence-based approaches, improve understanding of the impacts of the marine plastic litter and microplastics on the marine

environment and promote local, national, regional and global action on eliminating discharge of marine plastic litter;

Welcoming important developments to explore options within the mandates of relevant existing international agreements and organizations, in particular

- the recommendations of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) under the Basel Convention to its Conference of the Parties at its 14th meeting to consider further options under the Convention including the control of transboundary movements of plastic wastes and their disposal, and to establish a Partnership on Plastic Waste.
- the agreement of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee to adopt of an action plan which aims to strengthen and introduce new measures to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics from ships.

Recognizing the work of Regional Seas Conventions, Programmes and Action Plans for the protection of the marine and coastal environment and *reiterating* its invitation on relevant international and regional organizations and conventions to increase their action to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics and their harmful effects, and coordinate where appropriate to achieve this end;

Acknowledging the need for harmonizing concepts and methodologies for monitoring and assessing quantities and impacts of marine plastic litter and microplastics;

Welcoming also the framework document for the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) decided by its Steering Committee October 2018, outlining the purpose, function and organization of the GPML as a platform for all stakeholders for bottom-up, voluntary cooperation on activities such as sharing of experiences, information and match-making for project cooperation;

Guided by the outcome of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group established by the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly pursuant to resolution UNEP/EA/3/7 operative paragraph 10, particularly in relation to the need for increasing coherence, coordination and synergies between existing mechanisms and to improve governance with a view to better address marine litter and microplastics challenges at local, national, regional and global levels;

Mindful of the particular responsibility of United Nations Environment Programme pursuant to its 1972 mandate to keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems with international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments,

(Placeholder: Noting the synergies of this resolution with other relevant resolutions adopted at this session of the Environment Assembly.)

1. *Underlines* the urgent need for strengthened global governance and immediate action to more effectively implement the United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions 1/6, 2/11 and 3/7, and *recognizes* the need for a dedicated global governance structure to coordinate and align the national, regional and global actions and initiatives and relevant international instruments,

2. *Agrees* that coordination of United Nations Environment Programme's activities on marine plastic litter and microplastics with other issues linked to land-based pollution, including as a secretariat for the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, should be an integrated part of United Nations Environment Programme medium-term strategies and accompanying programme of work to be hosted directly by United Nations Environment Programme, and as regards marine litter, the Intergovernmental Review Meetings of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) will be replaced by United Nations Environment Assembly as the decision-making body,
3. *Decides* to immediately strengthen the activities related to marine plastic litter and microplastics, and requests the United Nations Environment Programme to establish:
 - a. A scientific advisory body to compile and assess available environmental monitoring data on the pathways of marine litter and microplastic pollution from land to sea, on the presence of marine plastic litter and microplastics pollution in the rivers and oceans, scientific knowledge about adverse effects on marine ecosystems and human health, and to advise on a process for developing harmonized monitoring, reporting and assessment methodologies for marine plastic litter and microplastics.
 - b. A dedicated unit within the existing structures of the United Nations Environment Programme to reflect the strengthened mandate and attention given by the United Nations Environment Assembly, in order to consolidate and strengthen the role of the organisation in providing access to technological and policy advice on how to effectively reduce the risk of discharges of plastic litter and microplastics to the marine environment from production and both land- and sea-based use of plastics and microplastics, taking into account the whole life-cycle of plastics, in support of local, national, regional and global action, bringing together relevant capacity and initiatives on marine litter as well as inviting private sector actors across the value chain to support the programme's activities.
 - c. A dedicated expert group to develop modalities for a mechanism enabling member states to periodically take stock of collective progress towards achieving the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 ambition of long-term elimination of discharges into the oceans, and the corresponding needs for further contributions to reducing marine plastic litter and microplastics by governments, global and regional instruments, international organizations and other relevant contributors.
4. *Decides* to establish an Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group, in parallel with the activities as described in paragraph 3 above, to prepare for consideration by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its Fifth Session on recommendations the design and elements of a new and comprehensive global governance and coordination agreement (including the consideration of a legally binding agreement), for enhanced international cooperation towards

the long-term elimination of discharges into the oceans of plastic litter and microplastics, including the following:

- a. Environmental norms, frameworks, measures and guidelines for enabling, enhancing and supporting preventive action, in particular preventive action upstream covering all sources (both land- and sea-based) of discharge of marine plastic litter and microplastics,
 - b. The role of a global governance agreement in preventing marine plastic litter and microplastics and for acting in coordination with, building on and clarifying the respective roles, responsibilities, strengths and contributions by relevant:
 - i. global international instruments and/or organizations,
 - ii. regional international instruments and/or organizations, including Regional Seas Conventions, Programmes and Actions Plans and
 - iii. voluntary initiatives, partnerships, platforms etc. within the private sector, civil society, consumers and others,
 - c. Technical and financial support mechanisms, including a database of donors,
 - d. A framework for recognizing contributions through international voluntary partnerships to promote various programs/activities, such as development of source inventories, improvement of waste management, awareness raising, promotion of innovation, and with a clear scope and mandate,
 - e. The continued functions, within a new and comprehensive global governance and coordination agreement, of the scientific advisory body, the dedicated unit within the United Nations Environment Programme and a global stocktake mechanism, according to paragraph 3 a-c above.
5. *Decides* that the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group will be informed by and build upon, among others, the United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions 1/6, 2/11 and 3/7, the work of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics and other relevant resolutions, decisions and reports as appropriate,
 6. *Requests* the Executive Director to provide the secretariat for the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group,
 7. *Decides* to convene at least four meetings of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group before the Fifth United Nations Environment Assembly, including enabling the participation of developing countries,
 8. *Invites* the Environment Management Group (EMG) to engage in and contribute to the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group by providing inter alia a mapping of all United Nations agencies, programmes, initiatives and expertise with relevance to marine plastic litter and microplastics as well as system wide strategy to increase coherence, coordination and synergies between existing

bodies, mechanisms and programmes working on marine litter and microplastics as well as resource efficiency at regional and international levels within the United Nations system.

9. *Requests* the Executive Director to invite representatives from all relevant existing global instruments such as the Basel Convention, the International Maritime Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes to engage in and contribute to the Ad Hoc Open-Ended working group with a view to promote the strengthening, co-operation and coordination between the Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes as regards, inter alia, monitoring, evaluation and reporting as well as implementation of action plans on marine plastic litter and microplastics;
10. *Requests* the Executive Director to report on the progress of the implementation of this resolution to the Fifth United Nations Environment Assembly.