Proposal by the European Union and its Member States on Part II.11 – Existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

Rationale

- The EU and its Member States submit the text proposal below with regard to Part II.11 on Existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. This proposal builds on elements contained in the streamlined document submitted by the co-chairs on 24 April 2024.

- In the first §, the document integrates elements from the co-chairs' technical streamlined text, consolidating points under both a.i) and a.ii) into a single section.
  
  o Additionally, it introduces the term 'main transfer channel', to define a confined route which facilitates the movement of plastics between areas.
  
  o Another addition deals with ALDFG. Fishing gear rank as an especially problematic and distinct form of marine litter harming biota and habitats especially due to entanglement, physical damage and smothering. According to scientific research the remaining fishing capacity of ghost gear varies from 6-20 percent of their initial fishing capacity and with that posing a major threat to endangered and other species and also for human nutrition by reducing commercially exploited fish stocks. Therefore, removal of ghost gear by divers and other means deserve special consideration among the general issue of removal and remediation of litter from the environment.

- The second § builds upon OP 1.b.bis and the second § of the co-chairs' technical streamlined text. As these passages address aspects related to monitoring and information, it is proposed to merge them into a unified section, incorporating the term 'trends'.

- In the third §, the content from 1.c. in the co-chairs' technical streamlined text (dealing with engagement of stakeholders) is introduced as a distinct element, for a clearer delineation.

- The EU and its Member States believe that the topic of resource mobilization should be discussed under Part III. Additionally, it is not necessary to keep § 3 in the streamlined text, as reflecting the measures in national plans is a common feature for all obligations under the treaty (Part IV.1).

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Text proposal

1. Parties shall

   a) assess, identify and prioritize main transfer channels of plastics, hotspots and sectors, most affected by existing plastic pollution, in the terrestrial, freshwater and the marine environment and where quantities and types of plastic pollution pose a threat to species or habitats.

   b) take effective mitigation and remediation measures and carry out removal actions, including clean-up activities for the hotspots, on verified locations of ALDFG
(Abandoned, Lost and otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear) and for other critical sectors identified beside the fishing sector, taking into account the provisions in existing international agreements, including those relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial, freshwater and marine environment and biological diversity, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction and taking into account special circumstances of Small Island Developing States.

2. Parties
   a) shall collect and assess data and information on existing plastic pollution to support monitoring in accordance with [Part IV.4.a on assessment and monitoring] and
   b) should make publicly available information on common plastic pollution types and trends, as well as on the practices and behaviors that lead to plastic pollution to raise awareness and prevent further plastic pollution.

3. Parties shall promote engagement of all stakeholders in safe and environmentally sound remediation and removal activities.

4. The governing body shall adopt
   a. Indicators to identify and monitor hotspots and sectors and main transfer channels
   b. Guidance on best available techniques and best environmental practices, developed on the basis of best available science, with a view to ensuring the clean-up-activities do not have negative impacts on the environment, biodiversity and human health.