Submission from the Philippines for Contact Group 2

Article 8: Plastic Waste Management

The text proposed is for Article 8 utilizing the Chair's Text as basis. The aim is to include a framework for the establishment, preservation and continuous development of reuse, refill, repair and other relevant circular systems. These additions support UNEA Resolution 5/14, specifically the decision to include measures such as resource efficiency and circular economy approaches.

The intention of this submission is not to prescribe a specific system for each country to implement, but to allow member states to preserve, maintain or set up alternative sustainable systems that are best suited to their needs and culture.

Text Proposal

The proposed text to Article 8: Plastic Waste Management of the current version of the Chair's Text are written in bold font below for additions and in [brackets] for deletions

Article 8 Plastic Waste Management

8.1 Establish appropriate systems and disaster-resilient infrastructure at the national and subnational levels for the safe handling, sorting, collection, transportation, storage, recycling and disposal, [including with energy recovery, of plastic waste] ***based on waste hierarchy principles;***

8.2 (b) Promote circular economy approaches ***through the establishment, maintenance, and scaling of toxic-free reuse, refill, repair, and other related circular systems, based on local practices and indigenous knowledge systems;***

8.2 (c) alt Set objectives and targets at the national level to ***implement reuse systems and*** *increase the collection and recycling rates of plastic waste;*

8.2 (f) ***[Promote] Ensure*** *a just transition* ***and the inclusion into the reuse, refill, repair and related circular systems*** *for plastic waste management workers, especially waste pickers and other [informal workers,]* ***workers in informal and cooperative settings,*** *including women, youth and small and artisanal fishers;* ***[or] and***

8.4 Each Party is encouraged to take measures to establish or promote the development of extended producer responsibility approaches and, as appropriate, other economic instruments within its jurisdiction, taking into account the shared responsibilities of relevant stakeholders to

ensure the environmentally sound management of plastics, throughout their life cycle ***prioritising waste avoidance.***

Rationale

To achieve a safe circular economy and address plastics pollution, alternative systems are crucial as countries seek to decrease the volume of single-use plastics in circulation. Reuse, refill, repair, and other supportive systems will ensure consumers and businesses will still have access to essential goods by providing alternative distribution, packaging and logistical models, as well as reusable and durable replacements, that reduce overall dependence on plastics designed for single-use applications.

Circular economy approaches, such as reuse, refill, and repair systems, are a key component to achieving near elimination of plastic leakage. According to the OECD's "Policy Scenarios for Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040", implementation of stringent policies throughout the plastics lifecycle in all countries can approximately reduce 96% of plastic leakage to the environment by 2040, compared to a business as usual scenario.[1] A World Economic Forum Report has similar findings - shifting 40-70% of all packaging to reuse systems can potentially eliminate all ocean plastic waste and cut down landfill plastic waste by 50-85%.[2]

Reuse creates opportunities for environmental and economic efficiency, as reported by Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF), which highlighted reuse models being both environmentally and economically more efficient compared to disposable alternatives, particularly for applications for beverages, personal care, fresh food, and food cupboards.[3]

In proposing toxic-free systems, the proponent aims to ensure approaches are as safe as possible for workers, stakeholders and consumers throughout the value chain. The presence of various chemicals of concern in plastics poses challenges for achieving circularity in the economy. Toxic chemicals, such as flame retardants, PFAS, and bisphenols, not only compromise the safety and value of recycled materials but also pose significant environmental and health risks. The World Health Organization has raised concerns about the potential risks to public health posed by the presence of such chemicals in a circular economy.[4] Achieving circularity requires addressing the presence of harmful chemicals that undermine efforts to promote reuse, repair, and recycling.[5]

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[1] OECD, Policy Scenarios for Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040, OECD Publishing, Paris, (2024). https://doi.org/10.1787/76400890-en.
[2] World Economic Forum. The Future of Reusable Consumption Models (2021) https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_IR_Future_of_Reusable_Consumption_2021.pdf
[3] Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Unlocking a Reuse Revolution (2023). https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/scaling-returnable-packaging/overview
[4] WHO Europe, Circular Economy and Health: Opportunities and Risks (2018), https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/342218/9789289053341-eng.pdf?sequence=1
[5] European Environment Agency, Chemicals in a Circular Economy (2022), https://www.hbm4eu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/ChemicalsCircularEconomy.pdf