I. Substantive elements

1. Objective(s)

a) What objective(s) could be set out in the instrument?

Proposed Objective:

1) Minimize leakage of plastic into the environment (marine and land) at all life stages of plastic
2) Encourage wise use of plastic & design for circularity
3) Ensure health impacts of plastic are adequately accounted

Explanatory Text:

Plastic waste generation is expected to be multiplied in the next decades if the current trend continues. Plastic waste is generated mostly during land based activities. As identified in previous studies have identified major contributors to the plastic waste is packaging plastic. Textiles, Consumer and institutional products, building and construction sector, e-waste are also recognized as significant contributors. Plastic ends up in the environment because it lacks end of life value. Recycling is a failed solution and most countries do not have developed collection mechanisms and infrastructure for recycling. Even global north countries have sent their plastic waste to the countries in global south. Plastic waste generation is often linked with luxurious lifestyle and purchasing power. But it always does not have to be that way as habits can change the above hypothesis. However, developed countries generate large amount of plastics.
Current business models are accustomed to use plastic to manufacture goods. Therefore, individuals are forced to buy plastics. But the manufacturer does not consider the externalities associated with the generated plastic waste. On the other hand, they are making large profits. In order to find a solution, we propose the new treaty create a system change. During the INC1 all countries agree to take full life cycle of the plastics.

As stated above minimizing leakage of plastic into the environment has several approaches. The plastic waste generation has to be brought to a level that can be managed. Current plastic waste generation levels are not manageable. In addition, alternatives must be promoted. i.e pottery industry. Unnecessary packaging must be avoided. Collection mechanism has to be formalized with adequate finance, labour transportation etc Extended producer responsibility can be applied to certain products such as electronics

Promoting wise use of plastic can contribute solving the issue to a greater extent. This can be applied to both manufacturer and the consumers. One example is refill systems which can be introduced to wide range of products. i.e detergents, tooth paste, coconut oil etc Consumers which use refill systems must be rewarded. This can simply be done by discount schemes. Encouraging dine in instead of delivery, avoid unnecessary items such as plastic cutleries, straws etc. Use of carrier bags also need to be regulated either by Banning or taxation. Food delivery systems also have increased plastic usage. Goods have to be redesigned in a way that it contains less plastic.

Plastic comes into the market as a cheap material compared to other materials. However, the hidden health cost is often not considered. Most plastic made articles are not up to the standard. Foods is stored in non food grade plastics. In Asian countries thin plastic sheets are used to pack foods and even used in restaurants. Hot beverages are sold in plastic cups. Burning plastics in corners of cities in evening is a common scene in Sri Lanka even though it has been banned. Studies found that toxic chemicals such as BPA was found in baby feeding bottles and some were even labelled as BPA free. Micro plastic issue is a serious concern and levels of micro plastics in water, food chain is rising.

2. Core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches

a) What core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches would provide a comprehensive approach to addressing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, throughout the full life cycle in line with the future objective(s) of the instrument?

Core Obligations

1) Limit direct imports/exports of plastic as raw materials, resins or articles made of plastic including plastic waste

2) Establish legally bound mechanisms to control leakage of plastic into the environment at all life cycle stages while taking actions to recover already leaked plastics into the oceans, rivers, lakes etc
3) Inventing new business models, plastic free lifestyle and product redesign and Incorporating externalities of plastic pollution to the product price

4) Discourage plastic waste incineration and open burning

5) Quality control of plastic products for intended uses

Control Measures

1) Each country to produce a banned/controlled import list of plastics
2) Establish efficient collection mechanism to maintain near 100% collection rate for identified plastic categories (These collection and recycling mechanism can be government operated with cost born by manufacturers)
3) Introduce deposit refund systems for PET bottles
4) Encourage manufacturers to Increase the number of refill stations to cater the city population/mobile refill stations
5) Conduct plastic recovery programs in the ocean (regionally)
6) Declare national parks, public beaches, tourist areas as plastic free areas
7) Regulate plastic raw material transportation
8) Ban import/export of plastic waste in all forms
9) Make plastic reporting mandatory for companies (including raw material usage, recycling rate)
10) Introduce standards for plastic in order to increase circularity
11) Declare plastics property rights based on labelling
12) Introduce new business models which avoid unnecessary plastic packaging
13) Ban selected plastic based items to create space for alternatives
14) Introduce and legalize return to manufacturer programs
15) Introduce fishing net disposal management programs by relevant government agencies
16) Surveillance of micro plastic levels in water, blood, foods, milk etc
17) Identify, ban use of toxic chemicals in food grade plastics and make new international laws to take legal actions against manufacturer

voluntary approaches

1) Organize industry orientation programs for small and medium scale industries to minimize plastic usage in their production
2) Promote new bilateral agreements, partnerships to explore alternatives to selected plastic products/uses
3) Introduce benchmarks for different industries on plastic usage i.e Textile, FMCG, Automobile, Service sector, healthcare
II. Implementation elements

1. Implementation measures

   a) How to ensure implementation of the instrument at the national level (e.g., role national action plans contribute to meeting the objectives and obligations of the instrument?)

   b) How to ensure effectiveness of the instrument and have efficient national reporting?

   c) Please provide any other relevant proposals or priorities here on implementation measures (for example for scientific and technical cooperation and coordination as well as compliance).

      a) In terms of convening stakeholders, National Action Plan can be useful in achieving target obligations of the treaty. However, we emphasize the necessity for a lead government agency responsible for setting targets, incorporating selected targets in the NAP to the legal system, monitoring progress. Without a global coordination, NAP process will not be ambitious. Therefore, we propose an advisory committee appointed by UNEP to guide each country on developing and implementation of the NAP Process. Target must be updated in a timely manner. NAP should be communicated to the grass root level adequately. Implementation of the NAP at local level can be delegate to government agents.

      b) National reporting must be transparent and based on digital technology. Penal Actions must be introduced for effective implementation of the treaty.

      c) Discouraging false solutions practiced by Corporates can increase implementation of real solutions. We propose to get the support from local universities in terms of local solutions generation.

2. Means of Implementation

   With respect to means of implementation, document UNEP/PP/INC.1/5 covers the following elements: capacity-building, technical assistance, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and financial assistance.

   a) What measures will be required to support the implementation of the instrument?
Capacity Building

The capacity building is required to train current waste management workforce. However, strict measures have to be taken to ensure their toxic belief do not jeopardize the new work. Recycling facilities, material recovery facilities are limited in the country and need to be increased. Safety of the workforce also must be considered.

Technology Transfer

Sri Lanka will need technical knowhow on many of the above discussed interventions. We propose UNEP to work as a mediator to share the technical knowhow between countries in a timely manner. Industries especially medium and small scale need support in terms of technical transfer. National Cleaner Production Centre, UNIDO can play a role in this. Network building across major cities can also can support technology transfer in an efficient manner.

Financial Assistance

Considering the current economic hardships, sustaining public money is very tough for this work. Therefore, we propose other types of funding such as grants.

III Additional input

Please provide any other relevant proposals or priorities here (for example introductory elements; awareness-raising, education and exchange of information; research; stakeholder engagement; institutional arrangements and final provisions).