Part II (6) Non-plastic substitutes

Non-plastic substitutes are important for reducing reliance on plastic. The Philippines, therefore, agrees with the proposed provisions under this section.

Policy directions related to trade and industry development including micro-small-medium enterprises (MSMEs), product quality assessments, fiscal and non-fiscal incentive schemes, safeguards to competing uses that may affect food security, infrastructure credits, and support to the development of indigenous and endogenous technologies/facilities should be taken into account. Natural polymers should likewise be explored.

Part II (7) Extended producer responsibility

The Philippines believes that the establishment and operationalization of EPR systems play a key role in realizing the objective of the instrument, and favors the language set out in Option 1. While this is so, the Philippines suggests the deletion of the phrase “including based on the modalities contained in Annex D” in paragraph 1, taking into account that implications and applicability of Annex D should be reviewed in light of domestic laws. Considering that Parties may design their own EPR systems, it is encouraged that Parties consider an EPR system that also incentivizes avoidance and reduction, and coverage of imported goods, as applicable.

Option 1

Par 1

Each Party shall establish and operate Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems, including based on the modalities contained in annex D, to incentivize increased recyclability, promote higher recycling rates, and enhance the accountability of producers and importers for safe and environmentally sound management, of plastics and plastic products throughout their life cycle and across international supply chains.

…
Part II (8) Emissions and releases of plastic throughout its life cycle

The Philippines generally agrees with the current language proposed under this section with the following proposed modifications:\footnote{Language proposals are underscored. Proposed deletions are struck out.}

Par 1

Each Party shall prevent and eliminate the emissions and releases of plastic polymers, plastics, including microplastics, and plastic products across their life cycle, to the environment and ecosystems from the sources identified in annex E by the dates identified therein. The emissions and releases covered under this provision should include:

…

Par 2

Each Party shall prevent and eliminate emissions and releases of plastic pellets, flakes and powder from production, storage, handling and transport, taking into account, as appropriate, the relevant provisions and guidance agreed in the framework of international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization on MARPOL and International Labor Organization on Occupational Safety and Health.

…

Par 5

Parties are encouraged to\footnote{Proposed deletions are struck out.} promote, and provide access to, scientific and technical innovation to prevent and capture the releases of plastics and plastic products, including microplastics, into the marine environment.

Part II (9) Waste management

a. Waste Management

Waste management is essential to environmental sustainability and has a wide range of benefits to the environment, public health, economy, and society. Under this section, the Philippines proposes the combination of Option 1.1 and the second part of Option 2.1.

The Philippines thus recommends this section to read as “(1) Each Party shall take effective measures to ensure that plastic waste is managed in a safe and environmentally sound manner throughout its different stages, including handling, collection, transportation, storage, recycling and final disposal, taking into account the waste hierarchy; and (2) The measures taken to implement this provision shall be reflected in the national plan communicated pursuant to [part IV.1 on national plans], …
with an aim to achieving nationally determined targets and minimum requirements developed based on the harmonized indicators set out in part II of annex F."

The applicability of global targets on collection, recycling, and disposal rates should be studied in light of differing national circumstances. Nationally determined goals with progressively increasing targets may be more feasible. Measures should be prioritized according to the waste management hierarchy, i.e. prioritizing upstream measures while implementing proper waste management.

b. Fishing Gear

The Philippines supports the inclusion of the section on fishing gear and generally agrees with the proposed provisions.

Abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALFDG) from fishing vessels and, to a certain extent from the fishing communities, are causes of concern due to the entanglement of marine animals such as turtles and dolphins. The wear and tear of fishing nets has been found to contribute to the number of microplastics in the ocean. Fragmentation of fishing nets in the marine environment may take decades. However, the material remains a source of microplastic particles that can enter and move up to the marine food chain, and eventually return to our plates hidden in delicious seafood.

The Philippines will ensure that national measures are aligned with international instruments to reduce the environmental and economic impacts of ALFDG, protect human health, and ensure the sustainability of fisheries. Consultation with local and national stakeholders is also essential to tap their wealth of knowledge and expertise to develop sustainable solutions.

The Philippines has developed an action plan for the prevention, reduction, and management of marine litter, including ALFDG. Nevertheless, the country needs international cooperation in the form of access to technology (gear tracking devices, transponder, remote monitoring systems), technical assistance (gear design, spatial management, gear recovery), and a scientific approach to gear location and disposal.