

## **Statement of Bangladesh in the Agenda 4 session of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Micro-plastics meeting**

1. We believe that measures for combating pollution of marine litter and micro-plastics should be considered and be taken based upon appropriate and sufficient scientific knowledge and with adequate legal instruments in place. Resource allocation and awareness of communities are also important.
2. The Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act 1995, as the main legislation for environmental protection and conservation of Bangladesh, covers the solid and liquid waste management of the whole country including marine waters. However, the management and reduction of marine litters need specific conditions. We need to harmonize the laws with existing conditions and requirements for better management.
3. Although the country has a number of acts and rules focused on the pollution of the seas and solid waste management within the country it does not have any specific law or rule on the management of marine litter pollution. The Article 18A of the Constitution of Bangladesh provides that ‘the state shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to preserve and safeguard the natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forests and wildlife for the present and future citizens’. The Bangladesh Biodiversity Conservation Act 2017, The Territorial Water and Maritime Zones Act 1974 and The Territorial Water and Maritime Zones Rules 1977 have provisions on management of marine pollution. Marine Fisheries Ordinance of 1983 also provides protection of fisheries from marine pollution to some extent. The Coast Guard Act 1994 gives the opportunity to the coast guards of the Bangladesh to detect activities causing marine pollution and taking measures to stop it. The Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act 1995 has provisions to protect the environment by enforcing against any pollution to air, water and soil. Although the Rules of Medical Waste Management and Processing 2008 and the rules on the management of wastes from ship breaking industries (2011) have provisions for control of pollution from solid and liquid wastes, they are not specifically focused on marine litters.
4. The country banned use of some plastic shopping bags since 2002 but there are challenges to identify the alternatives to plastic bags. The country is working on developing biodegradable shopping bags using cellulose of jute fibres.
5. Bangladesh has developed the action plan for ‘the sustainable abstraction of marine resources and its environmental management’. As part of the action plan a number of acts relating to pollution control of the marine environment are being developed. However, the grave nature of the current pollution of marine litter at the coastal areas requires stringent provisions both in national and international arena.
6. There are limited understanding of the costs of marine litter pollution and its recovery. The cost of impacts on the human health is not yet known and sometimes

they are not factored in. Although the 3R strategy has been adopted by the Government of Bangladesh the technologies of recycling of plastics and the cost of them are yet to formulate.

7. Bangladesh recently prepared a position paper on the marine litter pollution with SACEP initiatives. A preliminary study identified the categories of marine litter along the coasts of the Bay of Bengal. However, the quantities of the litters are yet to estimate.
8. Lack of consumer information, awareness and public participation is another barrier for proper management and reduction of marine litter. We also think that there is little recognition at the national and international policy level of the potential risks to human health, particularly from micro- and nano-plastics, and the application of the precautionary principle and of freedom of information in this regard;
9. Our oceans are sick, and we humans are responsible for that. We can help make our oceans healthy only. I hope that this ad-hoc expert group meeting would come forward with integrated planning, integrated design, integrated implementation with integrated legal and governance initiatives to beat marine plastic pollution, and protect and conserve marine ecosystem with global effective support and initiatives.