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Greenpeace intervention on microplastic

Given by Dr. Melissa Wang

Thank you Mr President.

And many thanks for the great work the regional centers have been doing, including the working group document on marine litter plastics and its POPs and EDCs components. It was co-prepared with academia and civil society organizations and provides constructive recommendations to both the Stockholm and Basel Conventions.

The presence of plastic litter and microplastics in the marine environment is indeed a rapidly increasing serious issue of global concern that needs an urgent global response. The UN General Assembly therefore in its resolution 70/235 expressed concern regarding their negative effects and urged for actions.

The relevance with Stockholm & Basel conventions – among other international instruments - have been identified in the 2016 UNEP Marine Plastic Debris & microplastics report, which, in line with the UNEA2-resolution 11, recognize the importance and invites cooperation between conventions and international instruments for contribution towards this urgent issue.

Action has started. For example, the governing body of London Convention/London Protocol (LCLP) on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter has in 2016 adopted a recommendation encouraging all its Member States – lots of them are here in this room today - to make every effort to combat marine litter & microplastics, including through the identification and control at source. Progress has also been reported under LCLP from countries over the world, like China, UK, France, Canada, and US. However, it will only be possible to deal effectively with the problem at source with the support and engagement of the Stockholm and Basel conventions, as minimization of environmental POPs release & waste generation are in their expertise and mandates.

Therefore, we appeal to the COPs on the following issues:

1. To ask the regional centers to specifically address the issue of marine litter and microplastics, and their contribution to the transport of, and exposure to, POPs and EDCs within their future work plan, starting from the possible future activities identified in Annex VI of the activity report, and continuing with multi-stakeholder consultation and engagement.
2. Ask Parties to implement the recommendations proposed in this report to the Stockholm and Basel Convention, and for the secretariat to establish an action plan to implement those recommendations.
3. For Stockholm and Basel Convention to expand international cooperation with relevant international instruments, including, for example, LCLP under International Maritime Organization, and the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP).

By doing so, parties will be honoring their commitments under these conventions, contributing to the vital need for sharing of information and technical expertise on these issues and taking some further important and very practical steps towards addressing the threats posed by plastic pollution.

Thank you.