

Norwegian comments on zero draft – Ministerial declaration for UNEA 4

Norway welcomes the draft from the Estonia presidency. We are pleased to see Estonia is taking their responsibility seriously and with commendable ambition. They have presented a draft which is both action and solution oriented. Norway will continue to work closely and support Estonia in their efforts for an ambitious, outcome-oriented ministerial declaration.

Norway is pleased to see that marine litter is one of *several* topics on which Estonia are making concrete proposals. Norway is committed and working hard so that UNEA-4 takes the next step to addressing marine litter. Norway has its primary focus is on establishing a more holistic, comprehensive governance approach at the global level that is dedicated to combat marine litter and micro-plastics.

Nevertheless, Norway is cognizant of the risks of creating a situation where the same issue is being negotiated in two different settings, one in the context of a resolution, and one as part of the Ministerial declaration. Our preference would be to consolidate the negotiations in one place.

Norway believes that a new global framework is the best means of ensuring the elimination of all leakage of plastic litter into the marine environment. No doubt that phasing out of single use plastics is an incredibly important contribution, but would we not be better served with a longer-term approach, built on multilateral co-operation which fosters long term action?

There are other important issues and proposals in the draft which we will give due consideration to. Norway remains supportive of the Estonian efforts for a successful UNEA-4 which delivers a concrete result for the environment and sustainable development.

More specifically, Norway would encourage using language which is closer to Agenda 2030. It is important to maintain the integrity and balance of all three dimensions. Each dimension should therefore be identified in its own right and not in terms of any of the other dimensions.

It is also important that some of the specific proposals should be more clearly addressed in the context of the relevant SDGS, including SDG 12.3, 12.5 and 14.1. Marine litter is largely as a result of poor waste management, and then particularly of plastic waste. These should therefore be considered in tandem.

Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind the need for exemptions and relevant national circumstances, such as in the case of a blanket phase out of single use plastics.

Norway would also like to explore the possibility of including a reference that recognises the importance of managing environmental causes and

consequences of crises and armed conflicts. We would foresee addressing this through strengthening partnerships between governments, international and civil society organisations, academia and the private sector.

Norway welcomes the opportunity to engage further with both the presidency and hearing the views of other member states on the draft. This will be the basis on which we can find common space for the ministerial declaration.