



Potential Response Options for Consideration by the Ad Hoc Open- Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics (AHEG)

United States Submission

May 2020





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Department of State

Environmental Protection Agency

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Background

- The United States continues to support practical and effective action by all countries to reduce discharges of marine plastic litter (MPL) to the ocean.
- The work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Expert Group (AHEG) should consider the potential for numerous approaches to help solve this problem, prioritizing actions that are cost-effective, and that focus on large-scale reductions in major source countries.
- There is no one-size-fits-all approach that will work for every country and situation, and many solutions will be carried out or are best implemented at regional, subnational and local levels of government or by nongovernmental entities.



U.S. Submission on Potential Response Options

- Paragraph 7(d) of UNEA 4/6 mandates the AHEG to "Analyze the effectiveness of existing and potential response options and activities on marine litter and microplastics at all levels to determine the contribution in solving the global problem"
- In the letter to participants of 11 December 2019, the AHEG chair requested Member submissions of potential response options in the context of prior UNEA resolutions.
- Our [submission](#) of potential response options is outlined in the following slides.



U.S. Submission Overview



- Response options should promote enhanced on the ground actions that will:
 - (1) build capacity for environmentally sound waste management,
 - (2) incentivize recycling and support the global scrap market, and
 - (3) promote innovative technology and business models.
- Response options should also ensure that a life-cycle approach is considered in any path forward, so we understand the environmental impacts of alternative technologies or materials.
- We do not view a legally-binding instrument as the most effective approach to achieving reductions of MPL due to the inherently localized nature of waste management and the need to continue to accrue best practices in waste management rather than prioritize identifying international obligations.



Combination of Response Options

A combination of response options of differing size and scope will be most effective to achieve reductions in MPL discharges. Those options should encompass regional, national, sub-national, and local governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and philanthropic foundations.



Build on Previous Discussions

Future meetings should be informed by the prior deliberations in the AHEG on response options. For example, the Annex of the AHEG-2 report identifies a range of issues and possible response options and appropriately does not endorse any specific approaches. The AHEG should continue its work with the purpose of informing the broader policy discussions rather than pursue a specific recommendation.



Public Private Partnerships

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The AHEG should consider the role for existing, enhanced, or new public private partnerships that can promote targeted actions and capacity building or assist with resource mobilization.



Innovative Approaches

The AHEG should consider innovative approaches to mobilize non-governmental resources and financing. The business community has already committed more than one billion dollars of finance that will help countries reduce their MPL discharges. Foundations and non-governmental organizations can further compliment private sector investment.



Global Partnership on Marine Litter

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The AHEG should recognize and build on the current work undertaken by the Global Partnership on Marine Litter to reduce MPL. This effort could be given further attention and strengthened to improve its reach and effectiveness.



Multi-stakeholder Model

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We should consider options, including existing forums, for collaboration tailored to spur regional, national, sub-national and local action and to include appropriate participation by non-governmental actors. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) multi-stakeholder model (or the SAICM body itself) could be considered as a possible approach that would allow for broad participation across government and non-government interests. If there is a need for traditional government to government engagement, it could be accommodated by handling some issues outside of the multi-stakeholder model.



Multi-level Approaches

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We continue to emphasize the benefits of regional, national, sub-national, and local approaches that can take into consideration circumstances on the ground, rather than press for universal approaches that may not suit all circumstances.



Existing Instruments

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Regionally, the AHEG should consider the existing instruments such as regional seas programs, regional fisheries bodies, and river basin committees as effective options to galvanize action.



National Action Plans

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The AHEG should also consider ways to facilitate the development and support of national action plans that may also facilitate action at the subnational or local levels.



Thank you.

Questions? Please reach out to Larke Williams and Maureen Weiller Limon, U.S. Department of State