



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS. CHULAMANEE CHARTSUWAN, AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND LAW OF THE SEA (New York, 13 June 2016)

Co-Chairs,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you upon your appointment as Co-Chairs of the seventeenth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (or ICP) on the topic "Marine debris, plastics and microplastics". I would also like to assure you of our Group's full support throughout the meeting. I am confident that, under your able guidance, the process will yield a fruitful outcome. We thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive report which provides us with an overview on marine debris, including plastics and microplastics, their environmental, economic and social impacts, the relevant legal framework and policies as well as ways forward their prevention and reduction. This is a valuable background for Members States before the discussion panel.

Co-Chairs,

In the coming days, we will discuss an issue of global concern. Marine debris, plastics and microplastics pose a major threat to oceans and human life. Their impact can hinder the sustainable development. This particular topic deserves to be included as one of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goal 14, which is to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution, including marine debris by 2025.

Marine debris have received more attention from the international community as it has once been a topic of focus of this process (during its 6th meeting) and the 1st Global Integrated Marine Assessment dedicated a whole chapter on this topic. We are pleased that this meeting addresses the issue of marine debris with an emphasis on plastics which, indeed form a major constituent of marine debris, either of land- or sea based sources. In our view, there are still knowledge and data gaps regarding plastics debris and their fragmentation into microplastics or even nanoplastics, their pathways, their actual impacts on marine biodiversity and marine food web as well as their potential impacts on human health.

Co-Chairs,

If the majority of marine debris originates from land-based sources, we also recognize the need to pay more attention to marine debris originating from activities in the sea such as shipping or fishing activities. We are of the view that the treaty bodies of relevant international instruments should take into account this particular form of marine pollution and address it within their frameworks. In this regard, the problem of derelict fishing gear has been taken up by concerned organisations both at global and regional levels in an attempt to address its impact on marine life, including impact on the fish stocks.

Co-Chairs,

We note the particular vulnerability of Small Island developing States, as custodians of vast areas of oceans and seas, to the impact of marine debris, which pose a significant risk to their economies, biodiversity, food security and human health. All States and relevant international and regional organisations must continue and enhance their cooperation and coordination to reduce the impact of marine debris. We are pleased to see that panelists from developing countries are present here to share extensive knowledge and exchange best practices in dealing with this problem of transboundary nature in their countries or regions. This meeting provides an opportunity to bridge knowledge gaps, enhance awareness and understanding of the topic as well as emerging issues while emphasizing its impact on different pillars of sustainable development. Subsequently, the outcome of this process will also help guiding the capacity building efforts in a more targeted areas relating to the prevention, control and reduction of marine debris. We need to take into consideration special needs of some developing States, especially in dealing with land-based debris with an adequate waste management infrastructure. It will also help informing decision making and creating synergy for further actions, particularly in the context of advancing the implementation of Goal 14. We are looking forward to the UN Conference in Fiji next year during which States and all relevant stakeholders would discuss ways and means to support the implementation of this Goal.

Co-Chairs,

As there will be a further review of the effectiveness and utility of the ICP at the 71st session of the General Assembly, let me assure you, on behalf of the Group, of our full support to this important UN process which is a pertinent forum for comprehensive discussions on issues related to oceans and the law of the sea. For the effective implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, the role of the ICP must be recognised. The selection of topics for future work must reflect the interaction with other processes and the need to integrate all 3 pillars of sustainable development in the consideration of the selected topics.

The Group of 77 and China would also like to support the interaction of this process with other ongoing oceans-related processes, such as the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects as well as other processes and events relating to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 14.

Co-Chairs,

Last but not least, we wish to echo the importance of States' contribution to the voluntary trust fund established for the purpose of assisting developing countries, in particular least developed countries, Small Island developing States and landlocked developing States in attending the meetings of the ICP. In this regard, we wish to call upon States which are in a position make additional contribution to do so and also thank States which have contributed. This is key to making this process most meaningful and inclusive as well as promoting capacity building for developing countries on issues related to oceans and the law of the sea.

Co-Chairs,

I would like to reiterate that the Group of 77 and China stands ready to constructively engage in this process.

I thank you.

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