

FORUM: Environmental Commission, Sub-commission 2

QUESTION OF: Measures to reduce the use of single-use plastics

SUBMITTED BY: Czech Republic

CO-SUBMITTERS: Germany, Fiji

THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION,

Recalling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted by the General Assembly in 2015, specifically goal 12: responsible consumption and production,

Noting that over eight million tonnes of plastic enter the world's oceans each year, and 100 thousand marine mammals die annually as a result of plastic pollution,

Concerned with the fact that only nine percent of the nine billion tonnes of plastic that has ever been produced has been recycled, with rest ending up in landfills,

Conscious that approximately half of all plastic produced is plastic packaging, albeit an important contributor to the economy,

Approving of the current efforts made to spread awareness of the environmental harms that plastic causes, notably United Nations (UN) initiatives such as World Environment Day,

Deploring the fact that plastic waste poses an important health risk for humans and other animals,

1. Reminds all member states of the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4), which approved the adoption of resolution 9: addressing the question of single-use plastic products pollution;
2. Encourages each member state to establish a required school course, through every grade level of school, with curriculum about sustainability and normalized eco-friendly behaviors both in school and at home, through:
 - a) teaching responsibility for students' own actions, such as:
 - i. cleaning the schoolyard and recycling the rubbish picked up
 - ii. recycling the appropriate materials in classrooms and encourage behavior at home
 - b) learning sustainable behavior in classrooms, such as:
 - i. using reusable water bottles
 - ii. buying goods in cardboard boxes rather than packaged or plastic-wrapped items
 - iii. providing school children, age 7 or 8, with reusable bottles, financed by the UN, to teach responsibility and sustainable behaviors
 - iv. distributing posters, with pictures of plastic pollution in nature, to further deter pollution behavior;
3. Calls upon all member states to implement feasible national or regional regulations on citizen consumption of plastic products in order to reduce the pernicious environmental impact of single-use plastics, through means such as but not limited to:
 - a) banning or limiting the usage of single-use plastic bags by:
 - i. implementing mandatory taxation with annually increasing the mandatory taxation on plastic bags by 20 percent, taxation calculated as a percentage of the company's revenue generated from plastic products, in establishments and businesses
 - ii. aiming to ban single-use bags in all member states by June 2022
 - b) reducing the amount of plastic the general population uses in conjunction with the consumption of beverages by:
 - i. increasing taxation on single-use plastic beverage containers

- ii. banning plastic straws, drink stirrers, and other excessive single-use beverage-related plastic items, while still allowing those with disabilities or medical needs to purchase straws at pharmacies when necessary
 - iii. Incentivizing major beverage distributors to switch from single-use plastic to paperboard or glass beverage containers by exempting them from tax posed on single-use plastic
 - iv. Encouraging coffeehouses give discounts to customers who bring in their own reusable beverage containers
 - c) Introducing a tax for every company that produces, or manufactures, plastic that adds the equivalent of one euro per kilogram, annually increasing the mandatory taxation by 20 percent, starting at the nation's equivalent to 0.20 USD, in establishments and businesses;
4. Suggests the creation of a yearly sub-conference to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which focuses primarily on setting limitations to, and decreasing the amount of, plastic that can be sold, produced, and is currently polluting by companies through:
- a) enforcement of taxation, suggested in clause 3
 - b) asking all member states to contribute to the cleaning of all international waters by providing subsidies for companies that develop green technologies focused on cleaning the oceans
 - c) imposing laws and suggesting policies aimed to limit businesses' usage of single use plastic by:
 - i. creating a tax on food service businesses to be carried out monthly, which charges every business a fee for every single-use plastic sold at their establishment, with larger producers being subject to larger taxes
 - ii. encouraging businesses that use single-use plastic food utensils to instead provide wooden or metal utensils;
5. Calls for the creation of an international plastic waste trading market by an international agreement between UN member states, similar to the European Union Emissions Trading Systems (EU-EHS), to reduce the use of single-use plastic, by:
- a) giving out limited fee-based waste-certificates to companies according to their product's life cycle assessment and restricting the amount of these by set caps
 - b) letting the companies trade these certificates according to their own demand, and allowing companies to keep surplus certificates
 - c) obligating the companies to compensate their plastic waste with certificates by the end of the year, and letting companies, which fail to do so, pay a high penalty charge;
6. Further calls for the UN to create an environment fund, where every member state collaborates to donate money to and where the penalty charges from the trading market for plastic waste, will go to, recommending that the fund resources will then be used for financing activities, such as:
- a) awareness campaigns, and the Plastic Bag Free Alonnisos Project
 - b) the Clean Ocean Project, a donation-based NGO dedicated to raising awareness of the pollution of oceans and encourages the avoidance of plastic bags and other single-use plastic items;
7. Invites member states to collaborate with large food suppliers and supermarkets to implement sustainable incentives for customers to reduce their single-use plastic consumption, such as:
- a) providing financial incentives for recycling plastic bottles by attaching a deposit of around 15 to 30 cents, which will be redeemed when it is returned to a recycling point, mainly located in grocery stores
 - i. The deposit can be used in the grocery stores, from which each store receives a small percentage
 - b) allowing customers to bring in their own multi-use plastic containers when buying directly from deli and fish counters within stores

- c) urging supermarkets and similar stores to reduce the amount of single-use plastic packaging they sell, through means such as but not limited to:
 - i. offering more dry goods to be sold in bulk, reducing packaging waste
 - ii. opting to preserve the shelf-life of fruits and vegetables by 'dry-misting'
 - iii. exchanging round-lidded plastic containers with top-seal packaging to reduce the amount of plastic used;
8. Recommends that member states distribute water fountains throughout cities, which have the means as well as house over half a million residents, with a ratio of 1 for every 50,000 people, aiming to discourage the purchase of single-use plastic water bottles and creating these fountains through:
- a) using urban planning and statistics regarding district popularity to determine the most effective areas for water fountains to be placed
 - b) conducting regular maintenance on the fountains, both ensuring that people are still able to fill their reusable bottles and creating jobs in the public sector;
9. Calls all member states to further promote and develop single-use plastics alternatives, by:
- a) making reusable alternatives available to producers and consumers made of materials such as:
 - i. metal, glass, paper, or cardboard
 - ii. bioplastic, as long as adequate recycling facilities or industrial compost sites are available
 - b) investing in research and using modern technology to create new economic alternatives for single-use plastics
 - c) promoting recycling companies that sorts, dries, cleans and then shreds the plastic bottles into plastic flakes in which other companies can buy these to from into new products that can be recycled again
 - d) giving an advantage to companies using single-use plastic alternatives, instead of normal everlasting plastics, over other companies.
10. Suggests that all member states conduct a baseline assessment tailored to their profile and needs in the areas of production, consumption, and disposal in order to:
- a) Identify the most problematic single-use plastics as well as industrial sectors producing the most plastic, including but not limited to:
 - i. packaging
 - ii. building and consumption
 - iii. textiles
 - iv. consumer and institutional products
 - b) understanding the current causes, extent, and impacts of single use plastic mismanagement,
 - c) evaluate consumer willingness to pay for eco-friendly and sustainable alternatives for single-use plastics.