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## United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

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United Nations Environment Programme

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### Addressing single-use plastic products pollution\*

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Concerned that waste, in particular plastic waste, is not managed effectively in all member states,*

*Conscious that only nine per cent of the nine billion tonnes of plastics ever produced have been recycled<sup>1</sup> and that most of it ends in landfills, dumps and the environment,*

*Aware that if the current consumption patterns and waste management practices do not change, by 2050 there will be around 12 billion metric tonnes of plastic litter in landfills and the environment,<sup>2</sup>*

*Mindful that while plastic plays an important role in the economy, plastic packaging accounts for about half of the plastic waste in the world, and that its mismanagement leads to a loss of resources and value as well as affects the environment,*

*Alarmed by the serious environmental, social, and economic impacts of plastic waste/pollution including blocking waterways and clogging sewers and providing breeding grounds for mosquitoes and pests, and blocking animal airways and stomachs among others, as well as the health impacts of poor solid waste management practices,*

*Recalling the Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session entitled “Towards a pollution-free planet”,*

*Welcoming global efforts to raise awareness about the negative impacts of plastic pollution and in that regard appreciating the 2018 World Environment Day held under the theme “beating plastic pollution” with India as its global host,*

*Noting with appreciation the actions taken by Member States and regional integration organizations that have adopted policies and legislation to reduce and in some instances phase out certain single-use plastic products,*

*Noting the important role of key sectors such as plastics producers, retailers and the consumer goods industry, as well as importers, packaging firms, transport firms, and recyclers to contribute to*

\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

1 “Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made”, 2017, Roland Geyer, Jenna R. Jambeck and Kara Lavender Law - <http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/3/7/e1700782>.

2 “Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made”, 2017, Roland Geyer, Jenna R. Jambeck and Kara Lavender Law - <http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/3/7/e1700782>.

the reduction of plastic waste, arising from their products and activities, as well as to provide information on the impacts arising from their products and encourages innovative approaches such as the use of extended producer responsibility schemes, deposit refund schemes and other initiatives;

1. *Encourages* Member States to develop and implement national or regional actions, as appropriate, to address the environmental impacts of single-use plastic products;

2. *Also encourages* member states to take actions, as appropriate, to promote the identification and development of environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastic products, taking into account the full life cycle implications of those alternatives;

3. *Invites* member states to promote improved waste management that will contribute to reducing the discharge of plastics waste into the environment;

4. *Also invites* Member States to work together with industry to encourage the private sector to innovate and find affordable and environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastic products and to promote business models that take into account the full environmental impact of their products;

5. *Encourages* Governments and the private sector to promote the more resource-efficient design, production, use and sound management of plastics across their life cycle; and encourages in particular member states to carry out environmental education actions about the impact of plastic pollution, promote sustainable consumption patterns, and on sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic products;

6. *Encourages* member states to take comprehensive action, in regard to single-use plastic products, to address the waste through, where appropriate, legislation, implementation of international agreements, provision of adequate waste management infrastructure, improvement of waste management practices and support for waste minimization, and environmentally sound clean-up activities, as well as information sharing and supporting innovation;

7. *Invites* Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders to promote and enhance cooperation in scientific research and the development of environmentally sound alternatives to the single-use plastic products where appropriate, as well as to tackle plastic pollution within local, national and regional voluntary and regulatory frameworks, as appropriate;

8. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in partnership with other UN agencies, funds and programmes, to:

(a) Support Member States, upon their request, in the development and implementation of national or regional action plans to address the environmental impacts of single-use plastic products;

(b) Facilitate and/or coordinate technical and policy support to governments, especially of developing countries that so request, the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders, regarding the environmental impact of single-use plastic products and the promotion of innovative and environmentally friendly solutions for their replacement, taking into account their full environmental impact;

(c) Make available existing information on actions member states have taken to address plastic pollution and the full life cycle environmental impacts of plastics to the full life cycle environmental impacts of other alternative materials and share this information in advance of UNEA 5.

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