11. OTHER UN ORGANISATIONS AND GLOBAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES INVOLVED IN COMBATTING POLLUTION FROM MARINE PLASTICS

11.1 Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Summary of role: *GEF provides funding for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet the objectives of the international environmental conventions and agreements. GEF support is provided to government agencies, civil society organisations, private sector companies and research institutions, to implement projects and programmes in recipient countries.*

Summary of recommendations and work status: *Under the 7th replenishment of the GEF fund, marine litter and microplastics is now a GEF's focal area.*

Keywords/research fields: *Global Environment Facility; GEF; funding marine litter and microplastics projects and programmes; GEF Trust Fund; GEF assembly*

11.1.1 Background and aim

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle the most pressing environmental problems. It is an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organisations and the private sector that addresses global environmental issues. Its site indicates that it has provided over $17.9 billion in grants and mobilized an additional $93.2 billion in co-financing for more than 4,500 projects in 170 countries. GEF provided funding to many projects implemented by Regional Seas programmes worldwide such as the GEF/UNEP project 'Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand' under COBSEA. Available: http://www.unepscs.org/.

11.1.2 Ongoing work

GEF now has marine litter and microplastics within its focal areas, under the seventh replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund.

Marine plastics was a key topic of the 2018 GEF Assembly held in Vietnam. The statement made by the Assembly emphasises that the circular economy approach to marine plastics is well-aligned with the GEF commitments, and indicates strategic intervention points focused on plastic life cycle (material and design engineering; consumer use; and recovery and recycling). According to the GEF, because of the transboundary nature of pollution from marine plastics, global and regional alliances building on public-private partnership are critical to effectively combat this source of pollution. Available: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GEF%20Assembly_MarinePlastics%20Factsheet_9.4.18.pdf.

At the 56th GEF Council Meeting on 11–13 June 2019 in Washington D.C., the issue of pollution from marine plastic was discussed. Some Council Members encouraged GEF to work further on the issue.

See: https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-56th-council-meeting. The 57th GEF Council Meeting took place on 16–19 December 2019 and plastic was one of the numerous issues considered. However, agreed initiatives did not focus on this in the context of Southeast and East Asia. GEF 58 and GEF 59 were scheduled for June and December 2020 respectively.

11.2 G7 and G20 Action Plans to Combat Marine Litter

Summary of role: *Group of Seven (G7) is an intergovernmental economic organisation consisting of seven of the largest advanced economies of the world. The organisation regards itself as a "community of values". An annual Summit is attended by its Members' Leaders while its Members' Ministers and civil servants meet throughout the year to discuss issues such as energy policy, climate change, HIV/Aids and global security. Group of Twenty (G20) was founded at the G7 Finance Ministers' Meeting on 26 September 1999. Its Members are the G7 plus 12 major advanced and emerging economies and the EU. Issues discussed at the G20 focus on shared economic, political and health challenges.*

Summary of recommendations and work status: *In 2015, the G7 adopted an Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter. In 2017, the G20 also adopted an Action Plan on Marine Litter which is very aligned with the G7 Action Plan. However, the G20 is more active. In 2019, the G20 adopted the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter. It provides G20 Members' commitments for facilitation and collaborative actions to implement the Action Plan whilst emphasising the importance of UN and other relevant intergovernmental bodies.*

Keywords/research fields: *Group of Seven; G7; Group of Twenty; G20; Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter; Action Plan on Marine Litter; G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter*

11.2.1 Background and aim

The Group of Seven (G7) consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States and has been meeting annually since 1975. In 2015, the G7 highlighted marine litter (in particular, plastic litter) as posing a global challenge, and adopted a G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter. Overarching principles of the plan include prevention and removal. See: https://www.env.go.jp/water/marine_litter/07_mat13_2_%EF%BC%93-2ALD.pdf.

11.2.2 Work and Action Plan

The G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter is structured around the following priority actions:

- Address land-based sources, including improvement of waste management;
- Removal, including the identification of accumulation areas of marine litter and to alleviate threats to sensitive marine ecosystems;

- Sea-based sources, including through port reception facilities and the identification of key waste items from the fishing industry; and
- Education, research and outreach.

The Action Plan also states that G7 countries support the development and implementation of regional action plans to reduce waste entering inland and coastal waters and ultimately becoming marine litter, as well as to remove existing waste. It also states that they recognise the value of existing platforms and tools for cooperation, such as Regional Seas conventions and action plans and therefore support their use. (G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter, page 8)

In 2017, the Group of 20 (G20) also adopted an Action Plan on Marine Litter (available: https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000272290.pdf). The G20 is composed of the G7 countries plus Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, European Union (EU), India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Republic of Korea and Turkey.

The G20's Action Plan mostly reiterates the priorities of the G7 Action Plan and adds financial, socio-economic and research considerations as well as a risk management approach. It also includes the launch of a Global Network of the Committed (GNC), a platform linked to UNEP GPML. In their Action Plan, the G20 affirmed that it will work to promote and initiate measures and actions at regional levels to prevent and reduce marine litter. Many concrete actions are also to be implemented at the regional level, such as communication and cooperation between different regions, as well as research and coordination to identify and remediate, through environmentally sound methods, sources of marine waste and concentrated areas of marine litter. The G20 also committed to contributing to the implementation of existing regional plans tackling marine litter and the development of new such plans.

In June 2019, the G20 adopted the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter (available: https://www.env.go.jp/press/files/jp/111826.pdf). This Implementation Framework commits G20 members to the facilitation of and collaborative actions for the effective implementation of the Action Plan. Notably, collaborative actions include the establishment by G20 presidencies of a G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue and a multi-stakeholder platform, as well as the development of a portal website by IGES with the support of the Japan government to share actions and progress on marine plastic litter by G20 members. The site was launched on 23 November 2019 and is available at https://g20mpl.org/. For each member, this site aims to provide a summary of the policy framework, measures, achievements and best practices with respect to marine plastic litter. The countries from Southeast and East Asia that are included on this site are China, Indonesia, Japan, RO KOREA and Singapore. The 'G20 Report on Actions Against Marine Plastic Litter - First information sharing based on the G20 Implementation Framework' is available at https://www.env.go.jp/press/files/jp/112576.pdf.

The G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter also highlights regional cooperation. It states that the G20 will promote international and regional cooperation, with an emphasis on regional cooperation in collaboration with relevant Regional Seas programmes, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and other regional initiatives. (G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, page 3)

Of note is the proactive role played by Japan in these fora, as well as the ASEAN as a dialogue partner. The next G20 Summit is scheduled for November 2020.

Finally, both G7 and G20 Action Plans also highlight the central role played by UN bodies and initiatives, including UNEP and GESAMP and the need for tighter cooperation in all relevant fora.

11.3 Convention on Biological Diversity

Summary of role: *The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was signed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 to achieve three goals, including conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.*

Summary of recommendations and work status: *Under the CBD, an expert workshop was organised to prepare practical guidance on preventing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats in 2014. In 2016, the COP of the CBD acknowledged and urged states to take into account the Voluntary Technical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats.*

Keywords/research fields: *Convention on Biological Diversity; CBD; background and aim; work; expert workshop; preventing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity; report "Marine Debris as a Global Environmental Problem: Introducing a solutions based framework focused on plastic"; workshop; Voluntary Technical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats*

11.3.1 Background and aim

Key objectives of the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components. The CBD applies to both terrestrial and marine biodiversity. The governing body of the CBD is the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (CBD COP), which meets every two years and advance implementation of the convention. All ASEAN member states are party to the CBD.

11.3.2 Ongoing work

For many other intergovernmental bodies, concern with marine litter and plastic arose initially in the context of the impact of marine debris on marine biodiversity. This triggered the attention of the CBD and the preparation of the 2011 report 'Marine Debris as a Global Environmental Problem: Introducing a solutions-based framework focused on plastic' (available: https://www.cbd.int /doc/meetings/mar/mcbem-2014-03/other/mcbem-2014-03-sbstta-16-inf-15-en.pdf).

Subsequently, in 2012, the CBD COP decided to organise an expert workshop to prepare practical guidance on preventing and mitigating the significant adverse impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats. The workshop took place in 2014 and identified a number of knowledge gaps including:

- On land-based sources of marine debris: quantity entering the ocean, quantification of impacts through habitat loss and degradation, lack of harmonised monitoring, analysis and reporting, distribution including habitat modelling for different indicator species and species risk assessments, rate of degradation or fragmentation, detection of invasive species on floating marine debris, socio-economic research and impact evaluation as well as social factors which lead to the production of marine debris.

- On sea-based sources of marine debris: types and magnitude of marine debris generated and location, valuation of marine debris (replacement and disposal costs and lost time) and impacts of marine debris on habitats and/or species, as well as a focus on aquaculture.

- To increase knowledge and information on the sources, volumes and areas of accumulation, develop a risk assessment-based approach to impact by:
  - Modelling the overlap between areas of accumulations and marine species habitats and migration routes; and
  - Focusing on potential hotspots of different debris types and sources to understand and quantify impact.

- On monitoring, modelling and data application, including microplastics and other microparticles, data for the deep sea and seabed.

- On contribution from offshore development industries and sacrificial fishing gear.

- Overall, on understanding the population-level effects of marine debris rather than on a limited number of species subject to entanglement or ingestion of large marine debris, pathways, trophic transfer, etc.

This report is available as UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/20/INF/7* and the background document for the preparation of this practical guidance is available as UNEP/CBD/MCB/EM/2014/3/INF/2.

In 2016, the CBD COP acknowledged a Voluntary Technical Guidance on Preventing and Mitigating the Impacts of Marine Debris on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity and Habitats and urged states to take them into account.

This guidance document (available: https://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-83-en.pdf) focuses on actions to address:

- Land-based sources of marine debris through the prevention of waste from reaching the ocean, including via empowering relevant stakeholders/civil society groups, engaging the private sector on a series of possible paths, mainstreaming marine debris issues into

national regulatory and policy frameworks, enhancing international and regional cooperation and influencing consumer choice and behaviour;

- Sea-based sources of marine debris, including ALDFG, area-based management to minimise loss of fishing gear, vessel-associated inputs and aquaculture; and

- Emerging issues including wet storage, recreational fishing and tourism sector and inclusion of marine debris considerations in labelling and certification schemes.

In 2018, the CBD COP reiterated earlier decisions and emphasised the importance of consultation and cooperation among relevant bodies. The next CBD COP is scheduled for the last quarter of 2020.

11.4 The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Summary of role: *The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN agency in charge of the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequalities and exclusion. It focuses on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

Summary of recommendations and work status: *UNDP supports activities relating to the protection of the marine environment in Southeast and East Asia through and with PEMSEA. UNDP also partners with local actors to promote awareness about plastics such as in Thailand and Cambodia.*

Keywords/research fields: *United Nations Development Programme; UNDP; background and aim; SGDs; promoting awareness about plastics, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

11.4.1 Background and aim

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN agency in charge of the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequalities and exclusion. It focuses on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDG relevant to marine plastics is SDG 14 in the context of pollution of the marine environment.

11.4.2 Ongoing work

UNDP also contributes to UN work on waste management to prevent marine litter. Along with UNEP, UNDP has been involved in the protection of the marine environment in Southeast Asia for decades, including through and with the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA).

UNDP has partnered with local actors to promote awareness about plastics, for example in Thailand and Cambodia. See: https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home

/presscenter/pressreleases/2019/undp-unveils-nationwide-campaign-to-combat-single-use-plastics--.html and https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/projects/our-action-for-plastic-pollution-in-cambodia/what-we-re-doing-to-combat-plastic-0.html.

11.5 World Health Organisation (WHO)

Summary of role: *World Health Organisation (WHO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations in charge of international public health. Its objective is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people.*

Summary of recommendations and work status: *WHO has highlighted pollution from marine plastics and participated in the UN call to "beat plastic pollution" on 2018 World Environment Day. In August 2019, WHO released research results on "Microplastics in drinking water" on the level of microplastics in drinking water*

Keywords/research fields: *World Health Organisation; WHO; background and aim; public health; marine plastic; beat plastic pollution; microplastics in drinking water*

11.5.1 Background and aim

The World Health Organisation (WHO) was established in 1948 and is based in Geneva. The regional office of WHO for Southeast Asia is in Indonesia. However, only Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand and Timor-Leste are a WHO country.

11.5.2 Work

While the Indonesian regional office has not published any work with a particular focus on the impact of marine plastics and plastic pollution in general, the WHO at the global level has highlighted pollution from marine plastics and participated in the UN call to 'beat plastic pollution' on 2018 World Environment Day.

In August 2019, the WHO released a research paper on 'Microplastics in drinking water'. The research concluded that with the current level of microplastics, drinking water does not yet pose any significant risk to human health. However, it does recognize limitations in the evidence for drawing a firm conclusion. Available: https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/microplastics-in-drinking-water/en/.

These conclusions are challenged by more recent reports which highlight the numerous sources of exposure of humans to plastics and microplastics, including airborne pollution.

11.6 World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)

Summary of role: *The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) provides a framework for international cooperation for the development of meteorology, climatology and operational hydrology. Its focused areas include environment, oceans and public health.*

Summary of recommendations and work status: *In 2018, WMO participated in the UN "beat plastic pollution" campaign.*

Keywords/research fields: *World Meteorological Organisation; WMO; background and aim; framework for international cooperation; World Environment Day; beat plastic pollution*

11.6.1 Background and aim

The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) was founded in 1950. It provides a framework for international cooperation for the development of meteorology, climatology and operational hydrology. Its focus areas include the environment, oceans and public health.

11.6.2 Work

In June 2018, WMO contributed to World Environment Day and participated in the UN 'beat plastic pollution' campaign. See: https://public.wmo.int/en/media/news/world-environment-day-beat-plastic-pollution.

However, the 2018 new global coalition of UNEP, WHO and WMO on health, environment and climate change notably appears to prioritise air pollution as a more pressing issue over pollution from marine plastics. See: https://public.wmo.int/en/media/news/new-coalition-health-environment-and-climate-change-launched.