

## **EAST ASIA SUMMIT LEADERS' STATEMENT ON COMBATING MARINE PLASTIC DEBRIS**

**WE**, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Australia, the People's Republic of China, Republic of India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America on the occasion of the 13<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS) in Singapore, on 15 November 2018;

**EMPHASISING** that the East Asia Summit, with ASEAN as the driving force, will continue to be a Leaders-led forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political, and economic issues of common interest and concern, with the aim of promoting peace, stability and prosperity in East Asia;

**NOTING** the common aspiration to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its focus on people, planet, and prosperity, peace and partnership, not only for this generation but for generations to come, with concern over the health of oceans and marine biodiversity which form an integrated and essential component of the Earth's ecosystem and are critical to sustaining it;

**NOTING** with concern the high and rapidly increasing levels of marine plastic litter and the expected increase in negative effects on marine biodiversity, ecosystems, animal well-being, fisheries, maritime transport, recreation and tourism, local societies and economies, and the urgent need for strengthened knowledge of the levels and effects of microplastics and nanoplastics on marine ecosystems, seafood and human health;

**RECOGNISING** the adverse impact of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters, among other factors, and the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and in this effort, recognising the importance of relevant multilateral environmental agreements;

**WELCOMING** the 5<sup>th</sup> Our Ocean Conference which was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 29-30 October 2018 which recognised the urgent need for collective and coordinated actions to address the challenge of marine debris in the region;

**EMPHASISING** the importance of sustainable lifestyle, consumption and production patterns to advance the reduction of marine plastic debris;

**FURTHER EMPHASISING** the importance of measures of resource efficiency, including circular economy, product life-cycle management, sustainable materials management, and reduce, reuse, recycle ("3R") approaches, as appropriate;

**RECOGNISING** that the efforts on environmentally sound plastic waste management contribute to the prevention and reduction of marine plastic debris;

**CONVINCED** that EAS participating countries should enhance cooperation to respond to maritime challenges and promote the sustainable development of the seas and oceans;

**COMMITTED** to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources;

**FURTHER RECOGNISING** that the seas and oceans connect our region and link it to other regions of the globe, and that the stability of this maritime area anchors our growth and our future;

**RECALLING** the United Nations General Assembly Resolution Oceans and the Law of the Sea in the General Assembly, adopted 5 December 2017, which called for national, regional and sub-regional actions to address the problem of marine plastic debris, as well as the commitment we made in the 2015 EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation, to enhance our cooperation in sustainable marine economic development, in protecting and preserving the marine and coastal environment, marine biodiversity, ecosystem and resources, as well as in protecting people who depend on them for their livelihood from harmful activities, such as land-based and sea-based pollution;

**RECALLING** the International Maritime Organisation's commitment to the "Development of an action plan to address marine plastic litter from ships" with a target completion date of 2020;

**RECALLING** the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations' (FAO) commitment to develop a global strategy to address Abandoned, Lost or Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG), as part of the FAO's work to address marine plastic debris issues;

**RECALLING** further the EAS Conference on Combating Marine Plastic Debris held in Bali, Indonesia, in September 2017, which highlighted the importance of regional action in order to prevent and reduce marine plastic debris, and the ASEAN Conference on Reducing Marine Plastic Debris in ASEAN Region held in Thailand in November 2017, which reviewed the status of marine plastic debris in ASEAN region from the global, regional and legal perspectives, and exchanged information on the existing national policies, initiatives and technology solutions to the issue;

**CONVINCED** that the EAS could play a significant role to reduce the incidence and impact of such pollution on marine ecosystems, including through the effective implementation of relevant initiatives such as ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly its target to, by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution;

**FURTHER RECALLING** our commitments as outlined in the Manila Plan of Action to Advance the Phnom Penh Declaration on the East Asia Summit Development Initiative (2018-2022) to promote cooperation on combating marine plastic pollution, to effectively establish and implement a coherent and coordinated regional approach, focused on prevention and management of waste and litter and promotion of investments in waste management infrastructure, also through cooperation with the private sector;

**DESIRING** to have further cooperation and collaboration among multiple authorities and agencies at the local, national, regional and international levels, including governmental, non-governmental, civil society, the private sector and the public to combat marine plastic debris;

**EMPHASISING** the importance of promoting maritime cooperation through dialogue and cooperation and optimising ASEAN-led mechanisms to address common challenges on maritime issues, including utilising the role of the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum as an effective platform to constructively engage in open and substantive dialogue;

**DO HEREBY DECLARE** that maritime cooperation especially in the area of marine plastic debris, merits further consideration, and **DETERMINED** to take concrete actions in combating marine plastic debris, namely to:

1. **IMPROVE** and promote environmentally sound management of plastic waste and resource efficiency, including circular economy, product life-cycle management, sustainable materials management, and “3R” approaches, as appropriate, and including by involving producers and manufacturers of plastics and related products, as well as recycling and waste management stakeholders; through activities such as improving relevant programmes on reducing plastic waste from land-based and sea-based activities; and through developing sustainable, quality and resilient infrastructure;
2. **PROMOTE** awareness, research and education on marine plastic debris by
  - a) Promoting public information campaigns for citizens and businesses to prevent and reduce marine plastic debris;
  - b) Increasing awareness of the threat of marine plastic debris among all relevant stakeholders, including by reaching out to schools and the community, especially fishing and coastal communities;
  - c) Supporting research efforts to evaluate the status of marine plastic debris, including by, where possible and appropriate, collecting relevant information on plastic entering the marine environment and assessing their impact on ecosystems and human health;
  - d) Involving research institutions and academia to improve future waste management on land as well as offshore waste reduction;

- e) Promoting knowledge sharing, including by expert exchanges, sharing of technological solutions and best practices on mutually determined terms;
  - f) Encouraging innovation or new technology shaped by government institutions, private sector and/or civil society in order to prevent and reduce marine plastic debris, including by exploring environmentally sound alternatives to conventional plastics;
- 3. ENHANCE** cooperation in policy reform and law enforcement where appropriate, including by stepping up capacity building involved in preventing and reducing marine plastic debris.
- 4. IMPLEMENT** policies that incentivise the private sector and end-user in reducing and combating marine plastic debris.
- 5. STRENGTHEN** regional and international cooperation by
- a) Strengthening the coordination and cooperation among EAS participating countries in preventing and reducing marine plastic debris, in accordance with their domestic laws and bilateral or multilateral agreements that they are party to;
  - b) Promoting international collaboration to prevent and reduce marine plastic debris in relevant ASEAN-led mechanisms and other relevant international, regional and sub-regional forums, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), G-20, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA);
  - c) Improving capacity building in preventing and reducing marine plastic debris and enhance coordination among EAS participating countries;
  - d) Promoting multi-stakeholder cooperation, and engagement among governmental institutions, civil society organisations, private sector, media, and all relevant stakeholders, to strengthen efforts in prevention and reduction of marine plastic debris;
  - e) Exploring the possible development of a regional plan of action and guidelines, to prevent and reduce marine plastic debris;
  - f) Encouraging prevention and management of marine plastic debris, including buoys for aquaculture and ghost nets;
  - g) Promoting efforts to support the development of national action plans, in accordance with national circumstances and applicable international and domestic laws to prevent, reduce and manage marine plastic debris.