

AGENDA ITEM # 4

COUNTRY: JAMAICA

Date: 29 May 2023

Jamaica's Statement at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee 2 to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

Jamaica remains committed to the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, and therefore anticipates an ambitious, bold and concrete actions as we mutually agree on the elements of the instrument at this INC 2.

Several countries, including Jamaica, have already instituted various measures to reduce the import/export, manufacture and use of specific types of single use plastics. In support of this agenda, the Government of Jamaica on January 1, 2019, commenced the phased implementation of the ban on the importation, distribution, manufacture and use of certain types of single use plastics. The ban targeted plastic bags of a specific dimension and thickness, expanded polystyrene foam products used in the food and beverage industry, plastic drinking straws, as well as straws attached to the packaging of drink boxes and juice pouches. The ban, which is governed by two Ministerial Orders - The Trade (Plastic Packaging Material) Order, 2018 and The NRCA (Plastic Packaging Material) Order, 2018. This year, the Government intends to implement a fourth phase of the ban which would constitute plastic packaging food containers and microbeads utilized in cosmetic care products.

Jamaica is of the view that the treaty being negotiated must include the following key elements:

- I. Consideration of the entire lifecycle of plastic production and consumption, including importantly, a targeted focus on innovation in production of sustainable alternatives – both materials and technologies.
- II. The requirement for plastic and their derivatives to conform to established criteria to achieve minimum use;
- III. A mechanism to tackle and treat with existing and legacy plastic waste especially in the marine environment;
- IV. Means of implementation commensurate with the level ambition of the treaty, taking into national circumstances and capabilities.

Plastics and plastic packaging material have become common place in our societies and in fact has its utility especially with respect to public health and sanitation. Plastic material is cheap and readily available. Efforts to minimise its use must consider the overall impact to the society, particularly the cost to the most vulnerable.

Jamaica, like all Small Island Developing States, are big ocean states. Indeed, our economies are built on the Blue Economy. Hence, pollutants, such as plastics which are pervasive and may be transboundary in nature will have a wide-ranging and long-term effect on our economic growth and -development as well as social well-being. Indeed, our oceans is not only an important component of our economies, but is also intrinsically linked to our cultural identity and heritage. Hence, it is particularly important that the new treaty also addresses plastic pollution in the marine environment.

Jamaica looks forward to working with member states, industry players, including manufacturers, civil society, and the scientific community in a spirit of partnership and compromise in order to arrive at an agreement in keeping with UNEA Resolution 5.14.