**FORUM:** Environmental Commission

**QUESTION OF:** Measures to combat plastic pollution

**SUBMITTED BY:** Republic of Cuba

THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION,

*Recalling* earlier decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Environment Commission, such as UNEP/EA.3/L.20 “Draft resolution on marine litter and microplastics”,

*Noting with deep concern* that 8 million tonnes of plastics are washed into the world’s oceans every year, with 80% of the ocean’s wastes being plastic, and that by some estimates there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans by 2050,

*Expressing its gravest concern* at the continuing increase in global temperature that has already reached 1℃ since industrial times and the attendant climate change that continues to devastate the lives of millions through extreme weather events which have tremendous potential to create surges of plastic flow into the world’s oceans,

*Acknowledging* the pioneering initiatives launched by organisations such as Ocean Cleanup (for passive plastic removal), Plastic Pollution Coalition (for awareness about plastic pollution), Precious Plastic (for DIY projects to convert plastic waste to useful products) and others,

*Further acknowledging* the cruciality of the preservation of marine life to a global environment, and the importance of plastics in this endeavour,

*Respecting* the role of disposable plastics in the development of upcoming economies, and the difficulty of reducing plastic usage,

*Noting* the fact that of 79% of plastic accumulated in landfills or the natural environment, only 9% is recycled, whereas annually about 10 million tonnes of plastic end up in the ocean,

*Deeply disturbed* by the fact that by 2050 the weight of plastic in the ocean will be greater than that of fish (Plastic Pollution Coalition),

*Noting with deep concern* a negative effect on the land, considering that some toxic plastics may have contaminated the soil and groundwater, posing a serious threat to the ecosystem,

*Believing* that the problem of plastic pollution can only be overcome by a combination of national schemes and full international cooperation,

*Admiring* the efforts of Belize in reducing plastic pollution through the ban of single use plastics by April 2019,

*Inspired by* the Danish Phthalate Strategy in order to reduce the amount of plastics and phthalates that are used by people,

1. Calls upon United Nations member states to form a Plastic Waste Management Task Force (PWMTAF) under the sponsorship of the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to work cooperatively towards addressing the issue of reducing plastic pollution and propose a roadmap for a phased ban on the use of single-use plastics by 2022 and reduction in use of microplastics for commodity items, while recommending:
   1. PWMTAF to be chaired by the High Representative of the United Nations Environment Commission
   2. that members be nominated by member states and approved by the UN Environment Commission for a 3-year term with a 2-term limit
   3. that PWMTAF reports back to the UN Environment Commission every quarter on its efforts to document the reduction of plastics in the environment by 2022 and reduction in use of microplastics for commodity items;
2. Reiterates that UN member states should include the private sector, civil society and NGOs in their efforts to find solutions to reduce plastic content in commodities and plastic wastes including recycle avenues through the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML);
3. Recommends that PWMTAF petition the UN Environment Commission to widen the remit of the GPML to include land-based plastic disposal solution, reuse and recycle options;
4. Proposes an incentive-based aid package subject to an UN Environment Commission-approved National Action Plan for Plastics (NAPP) for reduction of plastic wastes by qualified member states (such as Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs));
5. Further proposes a gradual development towards heavy, United Nations-organised tariffs on the international trade of (products containing) disposable plastics by:
   1. establishing a United Nations Global Tariff Agreement (UNGTA) which would be a legally binding contract between each individual nation and the United Nations, which would:
      1. establish a tariff on the imports of disposable plastics into that country from another member country or sovereign state of the UN
      2. in its terms, establish a gradual increase over time in the percentage tariff in order to encourage countries’ governments to allocate more attention to research into plastic alternatives
   2. storing the tariffs collected in a United Nations Sustainable Development Fund (UNSDF), with the purpose of:
      1. providing sustained funding to developing countries, which would use this funding for sustainable alternative projects of their own, which would be closely monitored by the UNSDF to prevent misuse via corruption
      2. funding the projects of individuals with remarkably innovative ideas relating to cleanup methods, environmentally friendly disposal or scientific research into new alternatives for disposable plastics
      3. providing funding to organised campaigns to raise awareness of the long-term damage that plastics will have on the world as a whole
      4. making the agreement to international tariffs a mandatory condition for full UN membership, for the greater good of the planet;
6. Further calls upon member states to impose inverse quotas on plastic consumption per capita, which would:
   1. be relative to the factors of:
      1. time passed since the quotas were implemented, such that the limit on plastic consumption becomes stricter every 5 years, until it eventually reaches 10% of the original quota and the decreasing process stops
      2. the population of the country, such that larger countries may compensate for their higher demands
      3. the Gross National Income (GNI) of that state, such that rapidly developing economies like Brazil and India may continue their expansion in a realistic fashion without being unfairly limited by caps on resources that could be crucial
      4. regulation by the governments of the countries themselves, which could implement additional taxes on corporations which violate their allocated plastic consumption
   2. be monitored by the UN using impromptu inspections of growth of plastic disposal dump sites;
7. Suggests the increase of monitoring of plastic waste output from South-East Asia, by means such as the assessment of the growth of the gyre in the Indian ocean, so that the efforts of the aforementioned member states can be assessed objectively.