

Republic of Peru

**Contribution of the Government of the Republic of Peru to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea,
for consideration by the General Assembly at its seventy-first session**

Topic: Marine debris (plastics and microplastics)

The response of the Government of the Republic of Peru to LOS/SGR/2016/ST is set out below:

Challenges posed by marine debris, plastics and microplastics

1. The treatment of marine debris in general, and of plastic debris in particular, is one of the great environmental concerns of our time, alongside climate change, ocean acidification and the loss of biodiversity. Indeed, a healthy marine environment provides the necessary support for the existence of all forms of life in the oceans. Its protection is thus of paramount importance and its comprehensive regulation must be deemed to be of general interest to the international community in the twenty-first century. This is one of the main challenges posed by marine debris.
2. While the negative effects of plastic objects on birds, turtles, marine mammals and others are known, the adverse effects of microplastics, which are invisible particles, on a broad range of smaller organisms are still not very clear. This is a second great challenge. In any case, plastics - whose decomposition is prolonged over time - constitute a vast category of marine debris in all the world's oceans. Plastic debris therefore represents a growing problem on a global scale that knows no national borders and extends from the shoreline to areas beyond national jurisdiction.
3. Marine debris is also a major cause of degradation, although it is often difficult to distinguish its adverse effects from other anthropogenic effects that influence the environment. Addressing the impact of marine debris on biodiversity using the same approaches and techniques that are used to counter other manmade impacts on the marine environment (for example, overexploitation, noise pollution or the introduction of invasive species) would hardly be practical. The considerable mobility of marine debris and its

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capacity to accumulate in habitats far from its place of origin represent an additional challenge that is difficult to confront once the debris is floating.

4. Under such circumstances, conservation methods based on coastal and marine spatial planning would not be effective for dealing with the problem of marine debris. For all these reasons, prevention is key to mitigating an increase in marine debris.

Actions and activities that have been undertaken at the national and regional levels to deal with marine debris (plastics and microplastics)

5. To a great extent, the problem of marine debris can be either aggravated or alleviated by local, national, regional and global measures. Interaction between the responses at those various levels is an important aspect of the issue and of solutions to it.
6. Recently, the Minister of the Environment launched a campaign to build local government capacities, raise public awareness of ocean pollution and collect and clear solid waste from the beaches. The campaign is called REEDUCA-Océanos and its goal is to highlight the importance of proper solid waste management on the beaches. See: Campaña Reeduca Océanos 2016 (<http://www.minam.gob.pe/reeduca/>).
7. Another initiative is the private-sector, female-led Peruvian social enterprise called Life Out of Plastic (LOOP), which seeks to raise public awareness of plastic pollution and promote responsible plastic consumption. This enterprise has been organizing social campaigns known as “Ecoacciones” (“Eco-actions”) since 2012, which are environmental education activities to raise awareness of the negative impacts of plastic pollution, especially in marine and coastal ecosystems, and to demonstrate the social, environmental and economic benefits of recycling.
8. At the regional level, within the framework of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, the Regional Programme for the Integrated Management of Marine Litter in the South-East Pacific (2007 proposes regional and national actions for minimizing the discharge of persistent solid waste from land- and ocean-based sources into the South-East Pacific. This regional programme forms the basis for carrying out pilot projects in Permanent Commission member countries. Under it, national action plans have been implemented to tackle problems caused by pollution from land-based sources. Training workshops on marine litter have also been conducted in South-East Pacific fishing communities. In Peru, a workshop was held in the province of Pisco in 2013.

Suggestions for further action to prevent and significantly reduce marine debris, plastics and microplastics

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9. As of this date, there are no comprehensive programmes to evaluate the quantity and impact of waste in, or on its way to, oceans. Nor are there comprehensive measures for eliminating such waste. In that regard, initiatives should be launched to address the problem of marine debris, plastics and microplastics at the global level through international cooperation.

A review of the scope of annex V of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships might be useful for determining preventive measures. In particular, the definition of “reasonable precautions”, contained in regulation 6 (c) of annex V, should be evaluated.

10. The prevention and reduction of marine debris, plastics and microplastics should be supplemented by the organization of workshops in various parts of the world for the exploration of new approaches to identifying effective solutions, and to better understand the causes and impacts of marine pollution.
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