

United Nations Ocean Conference Preparatory Meeting
Plenary Session

NGO Intervention: The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education

Delivered By: Christopher CHIN, Executive Director

Date: Wednesday, 05 February 2020 (morning)

Thank you, and good morning co-facilitators, excellencies, distinguished delegates and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

I represent [COARE](#), The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education.

I also speak today on behalf of the [Center for International Environmental Law](#) (CIEL), the [Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives](#) (GAIA), the [Environmental Investigation Agency](#) (EIA), [Plastic Pollution Coalition](#), [OceanCare](#), [Sciaena](#), [Plastic Change](#), and the [Gallifrey Foundation](#).

As Ambassador Peter Thompson, Special Envoy for the Ocean reminded us yesterday, the Secretary-General opened COP 25 pointing out that "*...we are knowingly destroying the life support systems for our planet.*"

The impact of marine plastic litter and microplastics lends to this.

Yes, there is more to learn. There will always be more to learn. That is the nature of science.

We can and *should* support further studies and continue much needed research - but we know enough.

As the distinguished delegates from Spain and Iceland noted, we know enough to take action – and we know enough that it is imperative for us to act NOW. And the urgency is even more stark when we consider how the plastic and climate crises are linked.

In calling for innovation, we should start by looking upstream and realizing that marine plastic litter is not a waste management problem, per se, but it is simply a problem at every stage of the life cycle of plastics: from the wellhead, to disposal and leakage into the environment.

The more plastic we create, the more we have to deal with.

Current governance strategies and approaches are fragmented and cannot address the full lifecycle of marine plastic litter and microplastics.

Hence, our organizations call for your support for a new global framework as being discussed in the Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics established by UNEA.

Considering interlinkages, reducing the production of plastic is in direct concert with several SDG targets, including:

- 2.1 for food safety;
- 3.9 for protection from hazardous chemicals;
- 6.3 for water quality and reduction of pollution;
- 6.6 for protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems;
- 11.6 for waste management;
- 12.4 for sound management of chemicals and waste;
- 13.2 and 13.3 for climate change;
- and naturally, target 14.1 for the reduction of marine pollution.

Oceans are intimately and inextricably linked to climate change, and to life on land itself. Protecting the ocean and its resources helps protect the world as a whole.

Thank you for your attention.