



24 May 2020

National Productivity Council under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized an online high-level Policy Dialogue session, with the chief guest Sh. C K Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change from 4 to 5.30 PM on 22 May 2020 with about 400 participants on-line. The panel deliberated on priority policy areas for reducing marine litter, need for sound scientific research and innovations to combat plastic litter, plastic litter parameters that need to be monitored, concerns due to increased plastic waste generation from COVID-19 pandemic, and supportive policies and need for international technical support.

Mr C. K. Mishra, Secretary, MoEF&CC emphasized on two-pronged approach focusing on technology and resource provision to tackle plastic litter problem and stated that marine litter problem could be resolved by collective efforts through national strategy. Dr Dechen Tsering, Regional Director, UNEP, Bangkok indicated that the pilot assessment on countermeasures in Agra, Prayagraj, Haridwar and Mumbai was just a start and detailed assessment in other cities had to be undertaken. Scientific Secretary to GoI Dr Arbinda Mitra emphasized on having a robust database, R&D roadmap, and a holistic approach to address marine litter. Dr Abas Basir, DG, South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, Colombo highlighted that there was a lack of resources, data, research, manpower, a dedicated legal framework, and poor institutional mechanism and a dedicated marine litter cell could encourage scientific interventions and public-private partnerships.

Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, DG, National Mission Clean Ganga (NMCG) asked for sensitizing and educating people to reduce plastic litter along the rivers. Making a call for joining voices, hearts, networks to ensure that cities and oceans are clean and thriving, Ms Shoko Noda, Resident Representative in India, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said marine life affected the nature of the planet and that UNDP was deeply committed to strengthening plastic waste management through adequate infrastructure in partnership with the private sector, government and civil society. AIIMS Director Prof Randeep Guleria stressed management strategies to tackle plastic waste in COVID era and awareness generation on proper disposal. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Representative, Rene Van Berkel said marine plastic litter required a sharp focus on circular economy solutions with a consistent policy framework crossing environment, industry, technology and consumer policies. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) Chairman Shiv Das Meena informed that CPCB had developed Guideline towards handling biomedical waste which included plastics generated from COVID-19 situation. Mr V.K.Jindal, JS, MoHUA said that efficient solid waste management in the cities was most crucial and ban on specified items of single use plastic, implementation of Extended Producers Responsibility and synchronization of industrial policy on the use of plastic in cement plants/ road construction was prerequisite for the reduction in marine litter in India. Niti Aayog adviser Sudhir Kumar Sirohi stated that marine litter was a result of the linear economy and there was a need to work on reverse logistics systems.

UNEP-Bangkok Coordinator for Chemicals, Waste and Air quality Ms Kakuko Nagatani-Yoshida shared valuable policy insights on the sector and product-specific policies and data sharing. She

also spoke of plastic waste management challenges due to COVID-19. Royal Norwegian Embassy Counsellor Camilla Dannevig said that the Indo-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative could foster fruitful discussion between stakeholders, and relevant projects could be initiated. Dr Atul Bagai, Head, UNEP India stated that UNEP's project on Counter MEASURES against Marine Plastic Litter in South East Asia was a unique project that brought together technical and outreach components to develop a ground-level understanding of the plastic waste generation and leakage into water bodies like rivers and drains, which finally reach oceans. The project developed a comprehensive methodology for future studies and reached out to a wide spectrum of stakeholders to enhance action. He hoped that findings of this project would be integrated into the National Roadmap on Marine Plastic Litter. Sh. Arun Kumar Jha, DG, NPC vouched that NPC would continue to disseminate the project findings and work towards developing future strategies.

This session was part of the UNEP lead project "Promotion of countermeasures against marine plastic litter in Southeast Asia and India" funded by the Govt. of Japan. The policy recommendations that emerged from the session will be circulated to all stakeholders in due course of time.

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