



COMBATING

PLASTIC WASTE IN THE CARIBBEAN

Can you imagine that by 2050, it is estimated that there will be more pieces of plastic present in the world's oceans, than actual fish?

Seems unbelievable? Take a look at the photograph above. It shows part of a 5-mile long garbage patch located off the coast of Honduras in the Caribbean Sea, and is similar to another patch located in the Pacific Ocean.

In light of these occurrences, and the environmental and health risks posed by plastic pollution, representatives from around the world including Barbados, attended the Second Session of the

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, which was convened in Paris, France, from May 29 to June 2, 2023, to develop an international legally binding agreement on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

During this second session, participants discussed various components that an agreement to end plastic pollution should contain. The discussions touched on the phases of the plastic lifecycle where action should be taken, and the form and content of a legally binding instrument to address plastic pollution such as the following areas:

01

Reduction and Prevention

Reducing plastic production and use at the source should be a key component of the proposed instrument including:

- Setting aggressive but achievable reduction goals,
- advocating for sustainable alternatives,
- designing products to be recyclable and reusable, and
- prohibiting the use of single-use plastics.

02

EPR Scheme

An Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme or EPR holds producers and importers accountable for managing plastics and plastic wastes throughout their products' life cycle. EPR has been gaining global traction as a useful tool for the management of plastic wastes.

03

Waste Management and Infrastructure

Strong waste management and recycling systems are vital to fight plastic pollution including prioritizing investment in efficient collection, sorting, and recycling technologies, especially in countries with limited infrastructure. Legal instruments at the national level will also be critical to success in this area.

04

Monitoring, Reporting, and Accountability

For the instrument to be effective, there must be strong monitoring, reporting, and accountability measures. Regular assessments of progress and impacts will help identify what adjustments are needed, and which strategies are successful.

In addition to the areas highlighted above, the agreement on plastic pollution needs to foster collaboration among all countries: through national and regional sharing of information amongst critical stakeholders, learning from each other's successes, conducting joint research, and creating partnerships with businesses, non-profit organizations, and universities,

among other things, to arrive at effective solutions. Once the agreement is concluded in 2024, it will serve as the main tool in the fight against plastic pollution to ensure that current and future generations inherit an environment that is healthy, productive, and enjoyable.



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