Submission by African Marine Waste Network of SST for a special session at the WIOMSA Symposium on plastics. June 30th 2022

Title
Actions to combat plastic pollution in the Western Indian Ocean countries.

Brief background
WIOMSA, the Nairobi Convention, UNEA and UNEP and many institutions and organizations within the WIO region have published concerns about the current realities and growing threats of plastic pollution on land and its leakage into the seas. The consequences for human and environmental health, for local, national and regional economies, and the need for evolving appropriate policies and legislation are all part of both a burgeoning set of publications and ever increasing calls for action. The questions to be answered are what actions should be taken when faced with calls that are dominated by the developed world; what is relevant to the special circumstances and cultures of the different countries of the WIO region? Can the actions be the same for small island states and big coastal countries, and if not how should they collaborate? What progress have the countries of the WO region made and how are they coping with the issues and planning to meet the challenge of growing populations and anticipated economic development that will inevitably grow the challenges that all countries are already struggling to meet? In which fields are the countries of the WIO taking a lead and where should they invest effort and resources to get the best returns? How does one set priorities and measure success of activities In essence, the countries of the WIOMSA region are faced with a real growing plastics pollution crisis on the one hand and such a broad set of calls for action on the other, that this special session will focus on finding wise recommendations for planning the future and prioritising actions that are crafted to the economies of scale and the special circumstances of each country.

Session objectives and expected outputs
The session will be in two parts over four hours.

1. The first part will encompass the successful WOMSA Marine Litter Monitoring Project run across and by seven WIOMSA countries. After a brief overview of the Monitoring programme and its successes, the focus will be on how to use the techniques, tools and experience of the first programme to not only monitor change, but also measure the positive impact of interventions and make them sustainable. As a framework for discussion the audience will be provided with an outline of some recommendations of what the next phases might be and invited to improve it.

There are two primary objectives to the first part of the session:
   a) promote an appreciation of the successes of and need for the monitoring programme with a view to encouraging more monitoring and a greater appreciation of the need for measurable data and
   b) seek improvement on plans to take the programme and its actions into the future.

The primary output would be a report on the success of this component and an evaluation of its outcomes and its immediate and potential future impacts. Ideally, useful concrete ideas will come from the audience that can be adopted going forward.
2. The second part of the programme will focus on the national and regional action plans that could be adopted by the different states. The part of the session will be based around the book on National and Regional Action plans that is to be launched at a plenary session.

The objective is to encourage attendees to recognize the need for national and regional action plans to, promote them in their own countries and to understand how the Decision-making framework might affect decisions in their own countries. Another objective is to demonstrate how the Global Treaty that is being promoted by UNEA sets high-level goals, whereas the Guide to Action Plans provides the steps that need to be taken to comply with the commitments to the incipient Global Treaty.

The outputs will be an adoption of the need to take action and subsequently to measure the impacts of the actions taken.

**Targeted audience**

Plastics impact the daily lives of everyone so all delegates are welcome, but targeted attendees will be researchers, educators, plastic waste executives, NGOs, and importantly local and national decision-makers, including those developing policy and legislation.

**Tentative session programme**

**Part 1:** A summary of the recently completed WIOMSA litter monitoring programme with speakers drawn from every participating country, followed by a discussion of the plans going forward. Speakers will be invited once the special session is confirmed.

The speaking part will be restricted to 50 minutes and the discussion and planning will be for just over one hour.

**Part 2.** The Guide to National and Regional Action plans will be introduced and then its operational attributes will be explained. This will be followed by a discussion of how the plans may apply to each WIO country ideally with individuals from each country playing a leading role. The speakers (e.g. Prof Linda Godfrey) and other participants (e.g. Those who are able to comment on the situations in their own countries) will be invited once the application for the special session is approved.

This part of the session will be 30 minutes on description of the Guidebook and how it works and the remainder will be spent on testing its applicability to each country (i.e. 90 minutes).

**The organisers**

The organizers will be Dr A Ribbink. Mrs J Osbourn, Dr D Marlin and Ms T Barnardo of the African Marine Waste Network a Programme of Sustainable Seas Trust.

Yours sincerely

Dr A J Ribbink

CEO