



## **KIMO RESOLUTION 1/09**

**Presented by the Secretariat**

### **Marine Litter**

Marine litter is one of the most pervasive pollution problems affecting the marine environment. It has been defined as 'any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment. Marine litter consists of items that have been made or used by people and deliberately discarded into the sea or rivers or on beaches; brought indirectly to the sea with rivers, sewage, storm water or winds; or accidentally lost, including material lost at sea in bad weather'<sup>1</sup>

Marine litter has a range of impacts including visual, ecological and economic and from the data that has been collected in recent years it is clear that, despite year on year variability, the overall amount of marine litter is consistently high and is not reducing despite recent efforts. Monitoring, both at the coastline and at sea, has confirmed that the predominant type of marine litter is plastic although the values at sea and on the coastline differ making up 80-62% of litter found on beaches and 55-38% on the seabed.

Marine litter enters the ocean from both land-based sources and sea-based sources. Marine litter can be brought indirectly to the sea or coast by rivers, drains, sewage and storm water outflows or winds. Land-based sources include tourism or recreational visitors to the coast, fly tipping, local businesses and unprotected waste disposal sites. Recognised sea-based sources for marine litter are shipping (commercial, recreational and other), the fishing industry and offshore oil/gas installations.

Identifying sources of marine litter is difficult as many types of items can come from multiple sources. This is demonstrated in the Beachwatch survey, in the UK, where the largest source is non-sourced items at 42% of the total with recreation beach users at 35% and fishing at 14%.

Marine litter can have a severe impact on marine life and incidents involving litter are very common in the North Sea. It can effect wildlife such as seals,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unep.org/regionalseas/marinelitter/about/default.asp>

whales and turtles as well as seabirds either through entanglement by ropes and fishing gears or by ingestion of different types of marine litter. An estimated 100,000 mammals and 1 million seabirds per year are killed worldwide as a result<sup>2</sup>.

The cost of cleaning marine litter from beaches can be significant with the cost usually falling to local authorities rather than national governments. For example, in 2004 UK local authorities, industry and coastal communities spent approximately £14 million (about €18 million) cleaning up marine litter. In tourist areas these figures are even higher with Den Haag Municipality in the Netherlands, which receives 15 million visitors a year, spending €626,709 (about £496,127) per year on coastal cleaning. However, the costs are far more significant if the financial impacts other than just cleaning are considered. In a worst-case scenario the cost to the Shetland community (population 22,000) could be as much as £5.6 million<sup>3</sup> (about €7.1 million) per year. This figure includes the cost of beach cleaning (local authority and voluntary), and costs incurred by aquaculture, power generation, farming, fishing, harbours and lifeboat launches.

Therefore KIMO in the recognition that there is an urgent need to reduce the amount of marine litter and taking into consideration Resolution 2/94,

### **Urges**

**All European Governments to implement the following measures to reduce the impact of marine litter.**

- 1) Appoint a single central government agency responsible for marine litter issues**
- 2) Introduce mandatory marine beach litter monitoring in the monitoring and assessment programmes of both OSPAR and HELCOM**
- 3) Improve enforcement of the EU Port Waste Reception Directive and implement compulsory waste disposal and a “no special fee” system for Europe**
- 4) Work together at the IMO to implement zero waste policy as part of the MARPOL Annex V review to ensure dumping of any waste overboard is banned**
- 5) Work together at the IMO to ensure marine awareness training, including marine litter issues, is compulsory for all professional mariners under the STCW Convention**

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<sup>2</sup> Marine Litter – Trash that kills, UNEP, 2001

<sup>3</sup> Hall, K. 2000. Impacts of Marine Debris and Oil Economic & Social Costs to Coastal Communities Kommunenes Internasjonale Miljøorganisasjon (KIMO)

- 6) Implement national marine awareness training, including marine litter issues, for all professional fishermen**
- 7) Cooperate within the Bonn Agreement and the North Sea Network of Prosecutors to improve surveillance and prosecution of marine litter offences**

**KIMO members:**

**Agree to submit this Resolution to all National Governments, the European Commission and other relevant organisations.**