

Reducing Plastic Pollution in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean

The Representatives,

Noting the increasing level of both macro-plastic (>5 mm) and micro-plastic (<5 mm) found in the Antarctic Treaty area;

Aware of the current lack of plastics monitoring data to inform decision-making;

Conscious of their responsibility to protect the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems;

Acknowledging that the majority of plastic found in Antarctica originates from outside of Antarctica;

Nevertheless wishing to minimise plastic pollution in Antarctica;

Recalling Articles 1 and 6 of Annex III and Article 5 of Annex IV to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty;

Recommend that their Governments:

1. encourage all persons under their jurisdiction organising or conducting tourist or other non-governmental activities in the Antarctic Treaty area and National Antarctic Programmes to eliminate personal care products containing micro-plastic beads in the Antarctic Treaty area;
2. identify and exchange information with other Parties on methods that should be implemented to reduce micro-plastic release from wastewater systems;
3. support greater monitoring of plastic pollution in Antarctica using developing standards and comparative methodologies, particularly near areas of human activity;
4. invite the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research ("SCAR") to report as new information emerges that quantifies plastic pollution and details the risks to Antarctic species and communities; and
5. consider the issue of micro-plastic release in connection with any possible future revisions of Annexes III and IV to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.