Committee : UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM UNEP

Topic : PREVENTING PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THE OCEANS

Nigeria is located in the West African region. To the south, it borders the Gulf of Guinea, which makes the country advantageous in terms of maritime trade and international connections. With an area of ​​​​approximately 923,768 square kilometers, Nigeria is notable for its diverse climatic zones; dry savannas in the north and tropical forests in the south. Nigeria has the largest economy in Africa and plays an important role in the economic development of the continent. Its oil and natural gas wealth are among the factors that strengthen the country's leading position in West Africa. Nigeria has a rich cultural heritage with more than 250 ethnic groups and languages. The largest ethnic groups include Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo.

In the early 20th century, plastic production and use increased rapidly. However, the environmental effects were not yet known. During this period, no regulation was made regarding plastic pollution in the oceans. Starting in the 1970s, scientists determined that plastic waste accumulating in the oceans negatively affected marine life. In 1988, the United States, Canada, and some European countries adopted Annex V of the MARPOL Convention, one of the first international treaties to combat marine litter. This section banned the disposal of plastic waste from ships into the sea. In 2022, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) passed a resolution aiming to create a binding global agreement to combat plastic pollution by 2024. The UN’s “Clean Seas” campaign has encouraged more than 60 countries to reduce plastic pollution. So what have countries done: The United States and the European Union have made serious arrangements to ban single-use plastics and increase recycling policies. Kenya and Rwanda were among the first countries to completely ban the use of plastic bags. China and India have launched large-scale projects to increase the recycling rate of plastic waste. The UN Ocean Conference and the Global Conference on Marine Litter have encouraged governments and civil society organizations to cooperate in combating plastic pollution.

The country has developed policies specifically for the management and recycling of plastic waste. For example, Nigeria has joined the World Economic Forum’s Global Plastic Action Partnership to combat plastic pollution under the Plastic Action Partnership. This initiative aims to bring together government, business and civil society organisations to develop national action plans. These plans focus on reducing plastic leakage, increasing recycling rates and developing alternative business models. Nigeria is also a founding member of the African Circular Economy Alliance and promotes sustainable economic models through partnerships with local platforms such as the Nigeria Circular Economy Working Group. These efforts aim to reduce the environmental impact of plastic production and poor waste management and are supported by international funding and technical support. More generally, the Nigerian government is taking steps, such as establishing marine protected areas in coastal areas, in line with the United Nations’ ocean health and sustainability goals. In this context, it is promoting scientific partnerships and technology transfer to reduce plastic pollution.

Reference:

Reports published by the Nigerian Ministry of Geography.

Data from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics.

Cultural diversity and language maps provided by UNESCO.