



ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF
CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

The Minister

Ingrid Giskes
Director, Global Ghost Gear Initiative
Ocean Conservancy
1300 19th St NW
Washington, DC 20036,
United States

Your ref

Our ref

Date

19/3583-

18. October 2019

Dear Ms. Giskes,

The Norwegian Government hereby states our support to the Global Ghost Gear Initiative.

Plastic litter, including from lost fishing gear, is one of the largest threats to the marine environment, sustainable use of the oceans and the welfare of marine animals. Loss of fishing gear can also lead to large economical losses for fishermen when it can not be recovered.

Combating marine plastic litter including lost fishing gear is a high priority for Norway.

In 2017, the United Nations Environment Assembly agreed to the long-term vision on eliminating all discharges of litter and microplastics to the oceans and to avoid detriment to marine ecosystems from marine litter and microplastics, following a proposal from Norway.

An important step on the way is the SDG 14.1 target on preventing and significantly reducing marine debris by 2025. This demands strengthened measures at all levels to prevent, and where effective, to clean-up marine litter, including lost fishing gear.

To combat marine litter and ghost gear, action on the local, national and international level is needed. All actors and sectors have to do their part. On a global level, Norway believes there is a need for a strengthened global agreement on marine litter and microplastics, and invite other countries and stakeholders to join our call.

On a national level, Norway has a long range of measures to prevent littering in place, and new measures are under development. Any person that loses gear or cuts it adrift has a duty to search for the gear. If it is not possible to retrieve lost gear, it must be reported. Since 1983, the fisheries authorities have conducted yearly recovery actions of lost, abandoned or otherwise discarded fishing gear in Norwegian waters, and there have been collected around 1000 tons of different type of fishing gears, included 22.000 gillnets. This effort has been increased in recent years, along with development work to reduce ghost fishing. Norway have also initiated and led the nordic project on prevention and recovery of lost fishing gear "Clean Nordic Oceans".

We promote the use of the guidelines for marking of fishing gear developed by FAO which can contribute to prevention and recovery of lost fishing gear. We will also contribute to an ambitious implementation of the action plan under IMO against marine plastic litter from ships, which, as you know, also has a high focus on fishing gear. We believe it is important that the activities run by the Global Ghost Gear Initiative feed into these processes where relevant, including on information and data sharing.

Norway has established a development aid program to combat marine litter and microplastics, amounting to some 400 million USD by 2022. The funds will be targeted towards regions that are most affected by marine plastic litter, to reduce waste and improve waste management systems. One of the projects that will be financed by this development programme is "Glo-Litter", which is under establishment by Norway, IMO and FAO, to reduce marine plastic litter from ships including fisheries.

No single state, sector or group of actors can solve this challenge alone. Norway joins the Global Ghost Gear Initiative to share our experiences and underline the need for international and cross-sectorial cooperation to combat marine plastic litter and ghost fishing. Major contributions are needed from all actors. The Global Ghost Gear Initiative reflects this by bringing together governments, private sector and non-governmental organizations. Norway aims to contribute to making the Global Ghost Gear Initiative a success.

Yours sincerely



Ola Elvestuen