

SEA of Solutions 2021
16-18 November 2021

“Accelerating solutions to reduce plastic waste”

coordinated by

supported by

co-hosted by

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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

An underwater photograph showing marine pollution. In the upper right, there is a pile of debris including a blue rope, a white net, and some plastic. A small, striped fish is swimming in the lower right. The water is a deep teal color with some suspended particles.

At a glance

856
REGISTERED
PARTICIPANTS
FROM
70
COUNTRIES



70%
FROM
ASIA-PACIFIC
REGION

62 **SPEAKERS &**
MODERATORS
ACROSS **6** **THEMATIC**
SESSIONS AND **1** **HIGH-**
LEVEL PANEL DIALOGUE



PARTICIPATION
FROM ACROSS SECTORS
INCLUDING:

24%



REPRESENTING
THE **PRIVATE**
SECTOR



& **18.5%**

FROM THE

PUBLIC
SECTOR



SOFT LAUNCH OF MALAYSIA'S
NATIONAL MARINE
LITTER POLICY AND
ACTION PLAN
2021-2030



Introduction

SEA of Solutions is an annually occurring partnership event towards solving plastic pollution at source, convened by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA), through the SEA circular project supported by the Government of Sweden. SEA of Solutions serves as a platform for multisectoral dialogue, collaboration, uniting seekers and providers of market-transforming policy, business, and technology solutions, and enabling networking among stakeholders in the plastic value-chain. It was first launched in 2019 together with the Government of Thailand as Co-Host, gathering over 500 registered participants from more than 40 countries. The first annual SEA of Solutions event was successful in generating dialogue and promoting opportunities for future collaboration and partnerships under the uniting mantra of ‘Together, less plastic wasted’.

In 2020, about 750 participants from 50 countries explored and addressed priorities in the region to help combat a resurgence in the use of plastics in response to the impacts of the pandemic. Guided by the theme

“Wasting less plastic and keeping it out of the ocean – Has the needle moved?”, the discussions examined the impacts of COVID-19 and echoed a call for a sound response, more circularity, less single use and hard-to-recycle plastics, product re-design and innovation, better regulation that is enforceable, labelling rules, better waste segregation, and informal recycling services.

This year, SEA of Solutions aimed towards revisiting and showcasing actions and innovations to support countries, industries and communities to get back on track and build back better – with renewed commitments, solutions and clear directions on the way forward during and beyond the pandemic.

SEA of Solutions 2021 was held virtually on 16–18 November 2021, co-hosted by the Ministry of the Environment and Water of Malaysia, together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Coordinating Body for the East Asian Seas (COBSEA) through the SEA circular project. The project is supported by the Government of Sweden.



Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an immense impact on public, economic and environmental health.

As the world continues to battle against an invisible enemy, a more obvious and potentially longer-lasting threat emerges with the rise of single-use plastic, which not only burdens waste management systems but ultimately threatens life on land and below water.

In a bid to save lives and prevent contagion, immediate measures were introduced at the onset of the pandemic such as the use of personal protective equipment. Moreover, additional measures and new consumption patterns were observed including extensive use of food delivery and e-commerce, delays or reversals in single-use plastic bans and even the reintroduction of disposable products in business establishments.

The 2021 edition of the annual event aimed to take stock and share updates from the government, business, youth, consumers and communities on actions taken related to sustainable production

and consumption, enabling policies and market transformation, as well as financing and multi-stakeholder cooperation.

Specifically, the event served as a platform for multi-stakeholders to:

- Discuss challenges and opportunities in implementing regional, national and local strategies on plastic waste prevention and disposal;
- Explore innovative policies and financing mechanisms to accelerate a transition towards a less plastic waste future;
- Feature latest technologies to support evidence-based decision-making approaches to combat plastic pollution;
- Present tools and incentive models to support businesses and social enterprises to promote circularity; and
- Foster advocacy and wider outreach to beat plastic pollution.



Programme

This year's theme centered on **'Accelerating solutions to reduce plastic waste'** and featured six thematic sessions covering:

- Consumer awareness and outreach to combat plastic pollution;
- Innovations in sustainable packaging and its value chain;
- City-level actions through policymaking, partnerships and community engagement;
- Corporate commitments and leadership through extended producer responsibility;
- Transition towards circular economy; and
- Sustainable and innovative financing pathways.

Sessions and activities at the SEA of Solutions 2021 offered a space for dialogue among plastic value chain stakeholders. The three-day Programme featured immersive sessions, which have been designed to generate insights and identify solutions to prevent plastic pollution on land and the seas.

Session 1: A new wave of eco-friendly consumer society

Session 2: Innovations in sustainable packaging value chain

Session 3: Cities and urbanization towards less plastic leakage

Session 4: Plugging plastic leakage: Enabling extended producer responsibility through producer responsibility organizations

Session 5: Circular economy for less plastic wasted

Session 6: Sustainable financing for a waste-free future

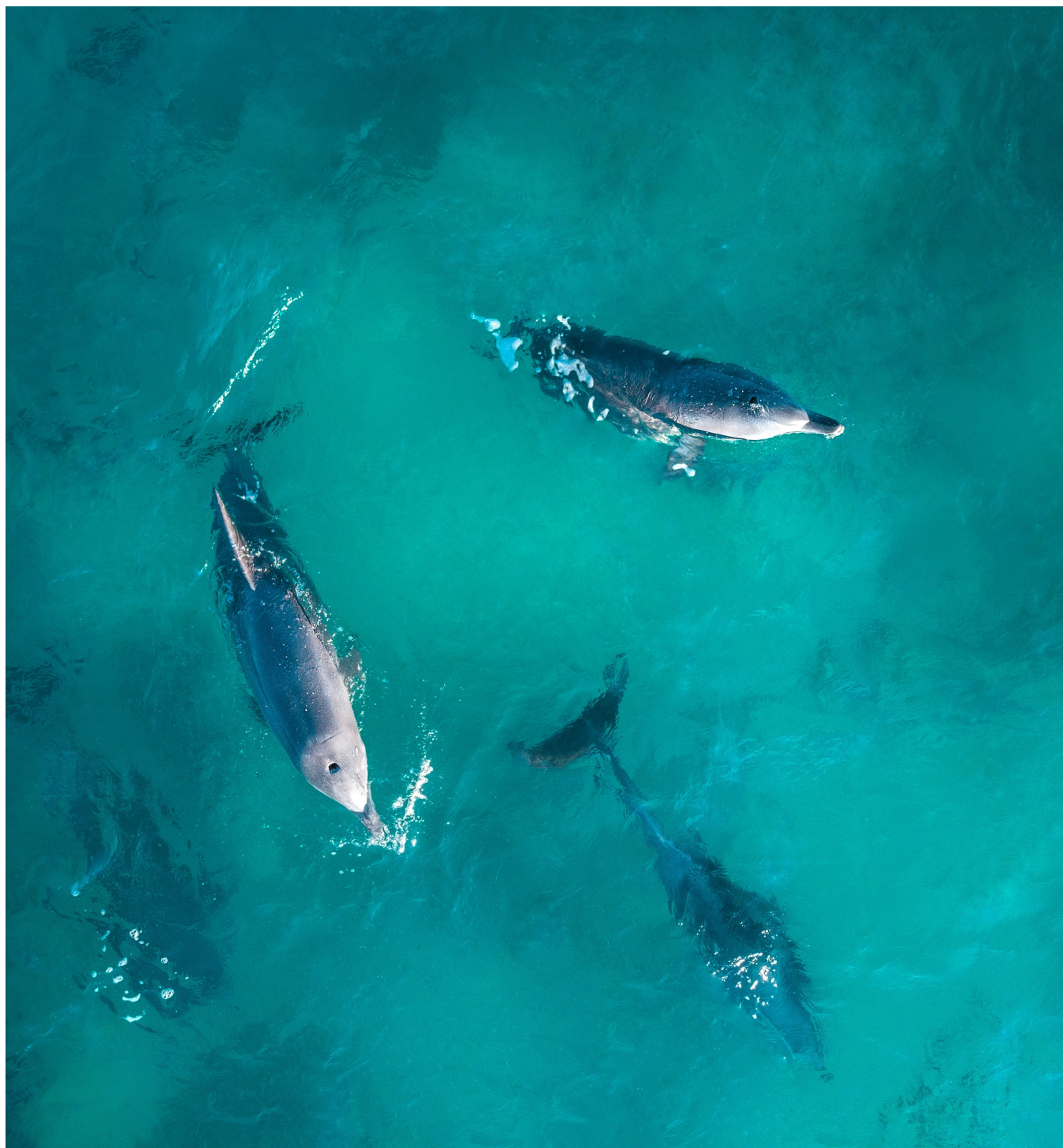
These sessions highlighted solutions for sustainable production and consumption, enabling policies and market transformation, as well as financing and multi-stakeholder actions. Collective and multi-stakeholder acceleration of key solutions were discussed on the last day during the Distinguished Panel Discussion. Session recordings, visual highlights and other resources are available at <https://sos2021.sea-circular.org>.

Time: (ICT)	Time: (ICT)	16 Nov (Tue)	17 Nov (Wed)	18 Nov (Thu)
09:30-10:10	10:30-11:10	Opening Session Welcome Opening Remarks	10:00-11:30 ICT 11:00-12:30 MYT	
10:10-10:30	11:10-11:30	Keynote Address	Session 3: Cities and urbanization towards less plastic leakage	Session 6: Sustainable financing for a waste-free future
10:30-11:30	11:30-12:30	Soft Launch Malaysia's National Marine Litter Policy and Action Plan 2021-2030		
11:30-13:00	12:30-14:00	Brand/transition to next session		
13:00-14:30	14:00-15:30	Session 1: A new wave of eco-friendly consumer society	Session 4: Plugging plastic leakage: Enabling extended producer responsibility through producer responsibility organizations	Distinguished Panel Dialogue: Accelerating solutions to reduce plastic waste
14:30-15:00	15:30-16:00	Brand/transition to next session		
15:00-16:30	16:00-17:30	Session 2: Innovations in sustainable packaging value chain	Session 5: Circular economy for less plastic wasted	Closing Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voices for Acceleration• Summary SoS2021• Key Message• Closing Remarks

Participation

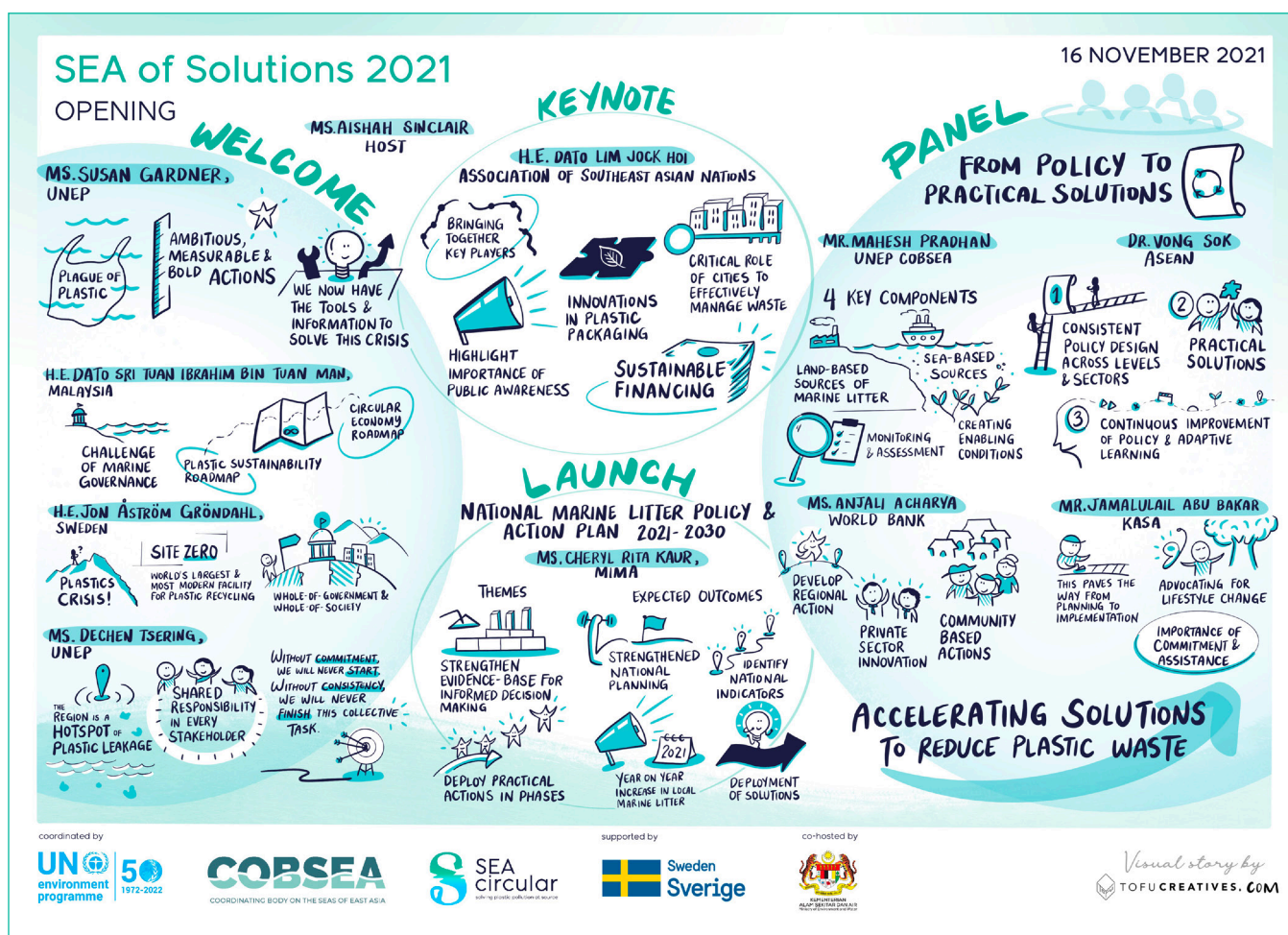
SEA of Solutions 2021 had over 800 registered practitioners, scientists, government officials, representatives from civil society organizations, private sector, investors, entrepreneurs as well as development partners, and individuals connecting from seventy countries. Delegates gathered virtually to explore partnerships and share learnings from cutting edge science, innovation, and practical solutions, to reduce and prevent plastic pollution and leakage.

Collaboration and partnerships were unifying themes throughout the SEA of Solutions 2021. Voices from the Sessions, including delegates who contributed to the online Chat and Polls, not only highlighted the urgency for collective actions to get back on track and address marine litter and plastic pollution but shared rich, practical and day to day realities of inspiring initiatives that are already happening across Southeast Asia and around the world.



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Opening Session



The Opening Session highlighted global, regional and national perspectives, strategies and successes in addressing the plastic crisis.

“Concerted and urgent efforts are needed globally to alter the situation and build a bluer and greener economy. Our ambition must be toward system-wide change and solutions across the entire plastic value chains, which are best addressed by rethinking how we make, use and dispose plastics taking into account their full life cycle”, Ms Susan Gardner, Director, Ecosystems Division, United Nations Environment Programme

“Our region – a place, which many of us here today call home, is also home to half of the world's global plastics production and subsequently contribute to the largest pile up of marine plastic waste. Solutions to address plastic are available in the region. I would therefore like to commend the ASEAN for its leadership in addressing this challenge. I would also like to commend Malaysia, our host this year, and each and every ASEAN Member State for their commitment to this issue”, Dechen Tsering, Regional Director, United Nations Environment Programme in Asia and the Pacific



“Despite the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the region has demonstrated remarkable strength and resilience. The adoption of the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework (ACRF) and Implementation Plan last year reaffirms the region’s commitment towards a more sustainable and resilient future as part of our green recovery process. The ASEAN Leader’s Declaration on the Blue Economy that was recently endorsed at the 38th ASEAN Summit in October 2021, acknowledges oceans and seas as key drivers of economic growth and innovation”, H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, Secretary General, Association of Southeast Asian Nations



“Sweden firmly believes that a global agreement on plastics is the most effective and comprehensive global response to combat marine plastic litter and microplastics. It is therefore imperative that a decision is taken at the second part of the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly in February 2022 to establish an intergovernmental negotiation committee for such an agreement”, H.E. Jon Aström Gröndahl, Swedish Ambassador to Thailand



“In Malaysia, we are implementing the Roadmap Towards Zero Single Use Plastic 2018-2030. This roadmap will be implemented alongside the Plastic Sustainability Roadmap 2021-2030, which will focus on the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility and the circular economy concept. We are optimistic that the application of circular economy approach will be a game-changer and will boost the sustainable management of plastic and generation of new economic resource for the country”, Dato’ Sri Tuan Man, Minister of Environment and Water, Malaysia

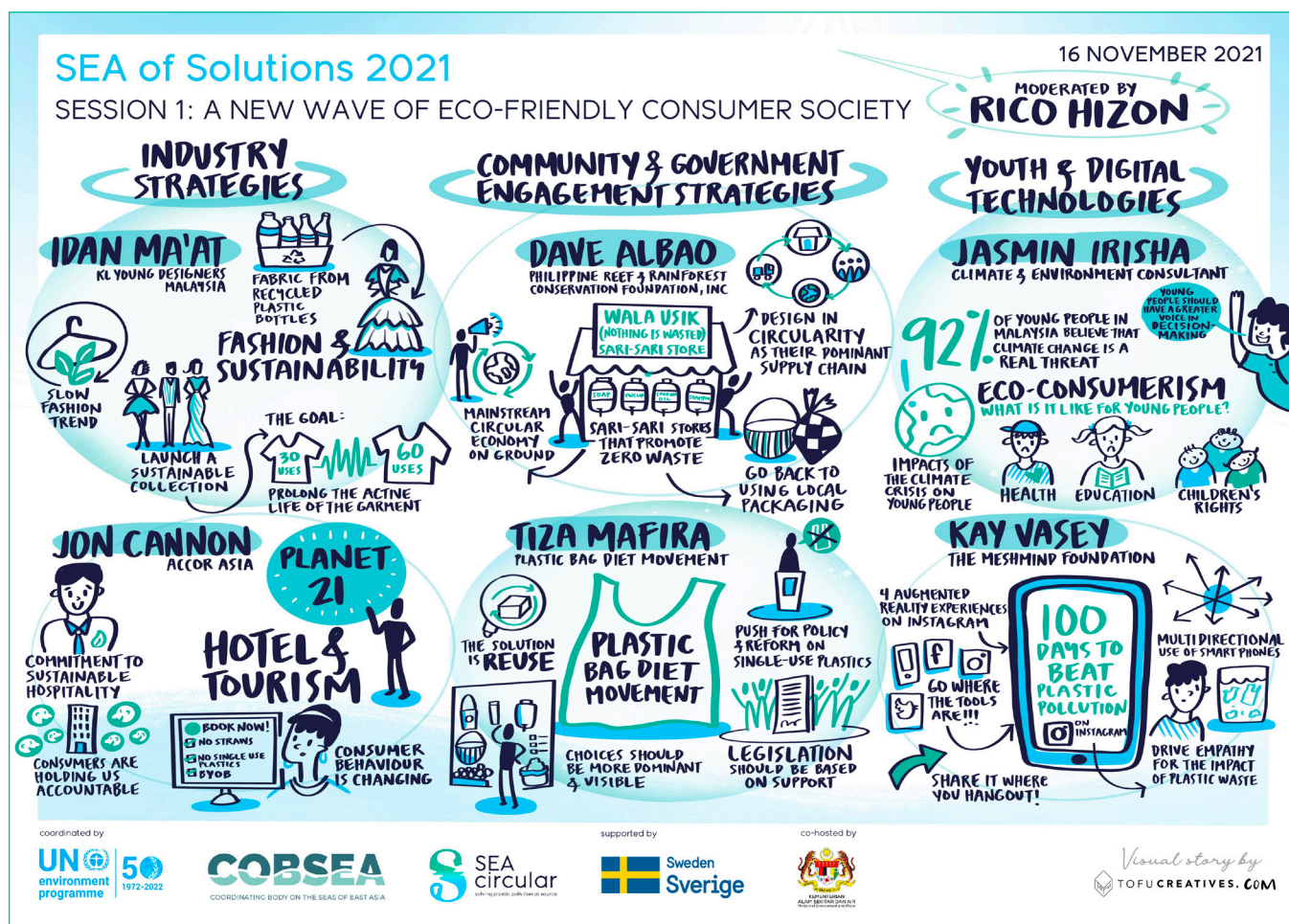
This year’s SEA of Solutions marked the soft launch of Malaysia’s National Marine Litter Policy and Action Plan 2021-2030, strengthening the country’s commitment to address the significant issue of marine plastic litter. The Policy was devised through the support of UNEP’s SEA circular Project and the Government of Sweden. It is guided by five pillars, which provide clear direction on specific actions and activities. These are:

1. Policy development and implementation;
2. Deployment of technologies, innovation and capacity building;
3. Monitoring and data collection on marine litter;
4. Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA), outreach and engagement; and
5. Adopting a whole-of-nation and multi-stakeholders’ approach in harmonizing cross-cutting objectives.

The Government of Malaysia, through its timely and effective implementation, aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Strengthened national planning and enhanced regional coherence in national marine litter plan as a key building block in further policy reforms;
- Deployment of solutions including latest technology and standards to tackle marine plastic pollution, through a phased approach;
- Identify national indicators that illustrates the increased access to information in support of decision-making relevant to marine litter monitoring data and reporting, which shows effectiveness of technical facilitation, advice and capacity building efforts;
- Demonstrate effectiveness of the national action plan in applying a people-centric approach in delivering information to end users and implementation of actions;
- Year-on-year increase in local marine litter knowledge hub online content;
- Broadened engagement in addressing marine litter across all relevant stakeholder groups.

Session 1: A new wave of eco-friendly consumer society



Sessions on Day 1 centered on sustainable consumption and production practices. The first session aimed at identifying effective strategies, including industry initiatives that help shape and address consumer demand, as well as advocacy initiatives that catalyze consumer awareness and action for more eco-friendly behaviour and lifestyles beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Consumers in Southeast Asia — a region home to the world's biggest plastic polluting nations — are worried about the plastic crisis, but lack action in changing behavior, according to a study by United Nations Environment Programme and Food Industry Association in 2019–2020. Although consumer desire to pursue greener lifestyles, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, is starting to create ripples of change, even in a region where there are few affordable alternatives to disposable plastic products.

Companies are responding to the challenge of inspiring consumer action across different industries. To ensure behavioral change, language used to communicate with consumers must fit the local context. Sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic need to be more visible and accessible to consumers, particularly in cities built around convenience, and in online stores. That means finding and funding solutions that can be scaled to commercial level. Legislation, such as charges or bans on plastic bags, can significantly reduce plastic consumption. However, policies must ensure that solutions do not replace one disposable material with another. Policies should enable a shift to a genuinely circular model that enables an equitable transition, minimizing impact to industries and people who rely on plastic.

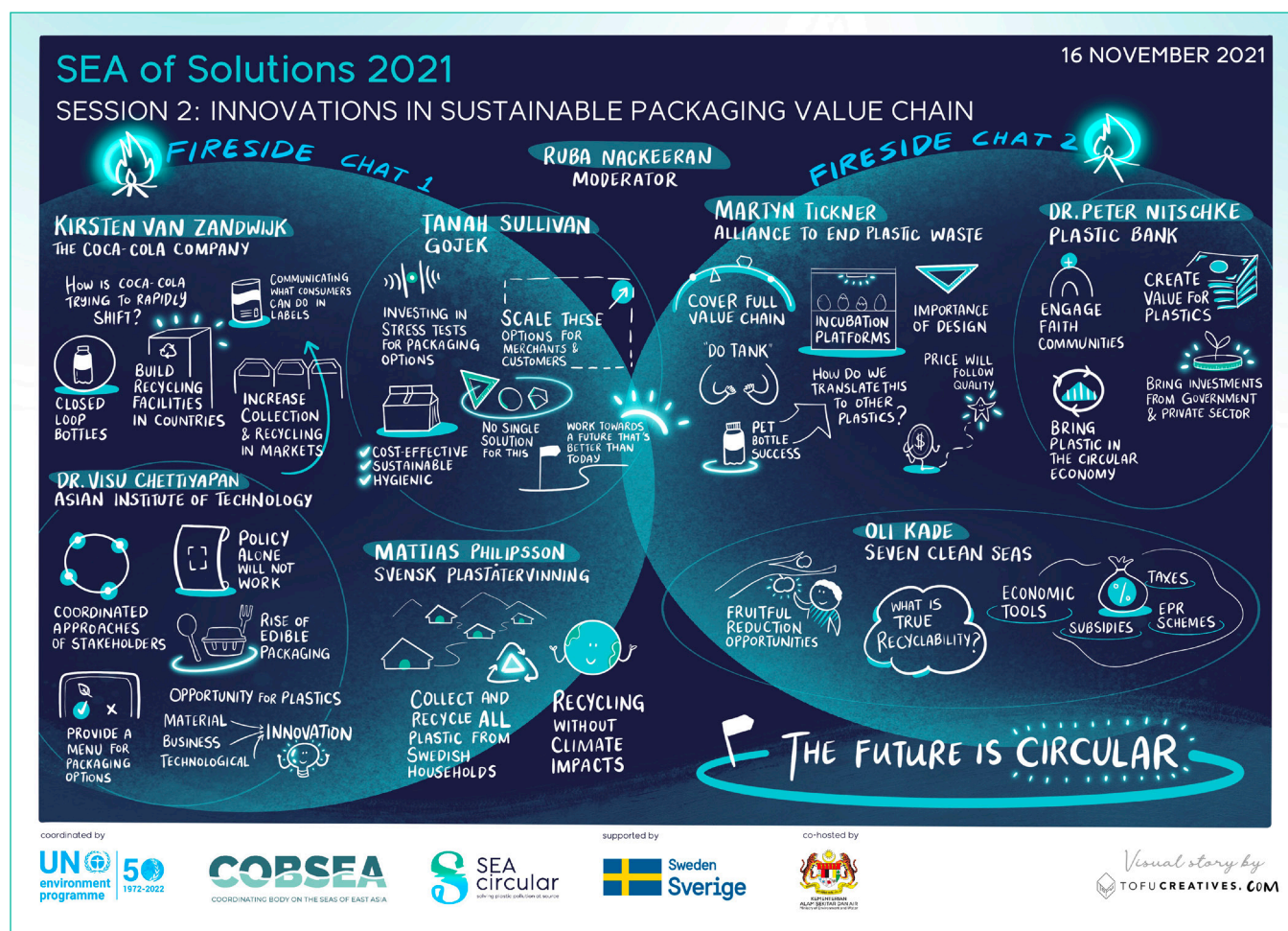
Plastic pollution has an outsized effect on young people, impacting health and education outcomes, according to a study by UNICEF. Young people, especially, should have a greater voice in decision-making around environmental management and pollution control as their future will be the most vulnerable against

polluted lands and oceans. To engage young people in environmental issues, policymakers and businesses could use creative ways to get messages across to tackle climate apathy, and instead drive empathy for the impact of plastic waste.

Key recommendations arising from the session include promoting sustainable choices for consumers through awareness-raising, sustainable alternatives, legislations and leveraging online campaigns for higher engagement.



Session 2: Innovations in sustainable packaging value chain



Session 2 on innovations in sustainable packaging value chain aimed to underscore the scale of the risks and challenges of single-use plastic production and consumption; as well as challenges and opportunities for innovations in the plastic value chain to enable advances in rethinking packaging and material recyclability.

The first part of the session discussed the challenges in creating packaging that is cost-effective, sustainable to produce, and friendlier to the environment. The COVID-19 pandemic arguably countered progress made in sustainable practices as hygiene became a priority, driving up packaging needs.

Firms that provide food delivery are challenged with finding solutions that will not hurt the bottom line of small-to-medium enterprises, which cannot afford the same flexibility as larger brands to experiment with new packaging options.

Innovations in the packaging value chain also require greater partnership between the government, private sector, and start-ups who need financial backing to test products and bring them to scale. A supportive waste management infrastructure, which developing Southeast Asia lacks often, needs to back government policies. One solution is ensuring that there is an enabling policy that will allow for recycled packaging to be used for consumables.

The end-of-life must be a key consideration for any innovation. This might require bringing in recyclers and waste management firms to consult on the design of packaging to ensure that a potential plastic 'solution' does not eventually become a problem to recycle. Big brands could consider joint ventures with recycling facilities, for instance.

The second part of the discussion focused on what is technically recyclable and what is feasible, particularly in parts of Southeast Asia where the corresponding infrastructure to recycle plastic is minimal. Taxes and subsidies that reward brands using standardized, easily

recyclable plastic, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes that ensure strong representation of the informal sector, and plastic credits are some of the potential financial solutions that may help to drive down plastic waste and the cost of processing plastic.

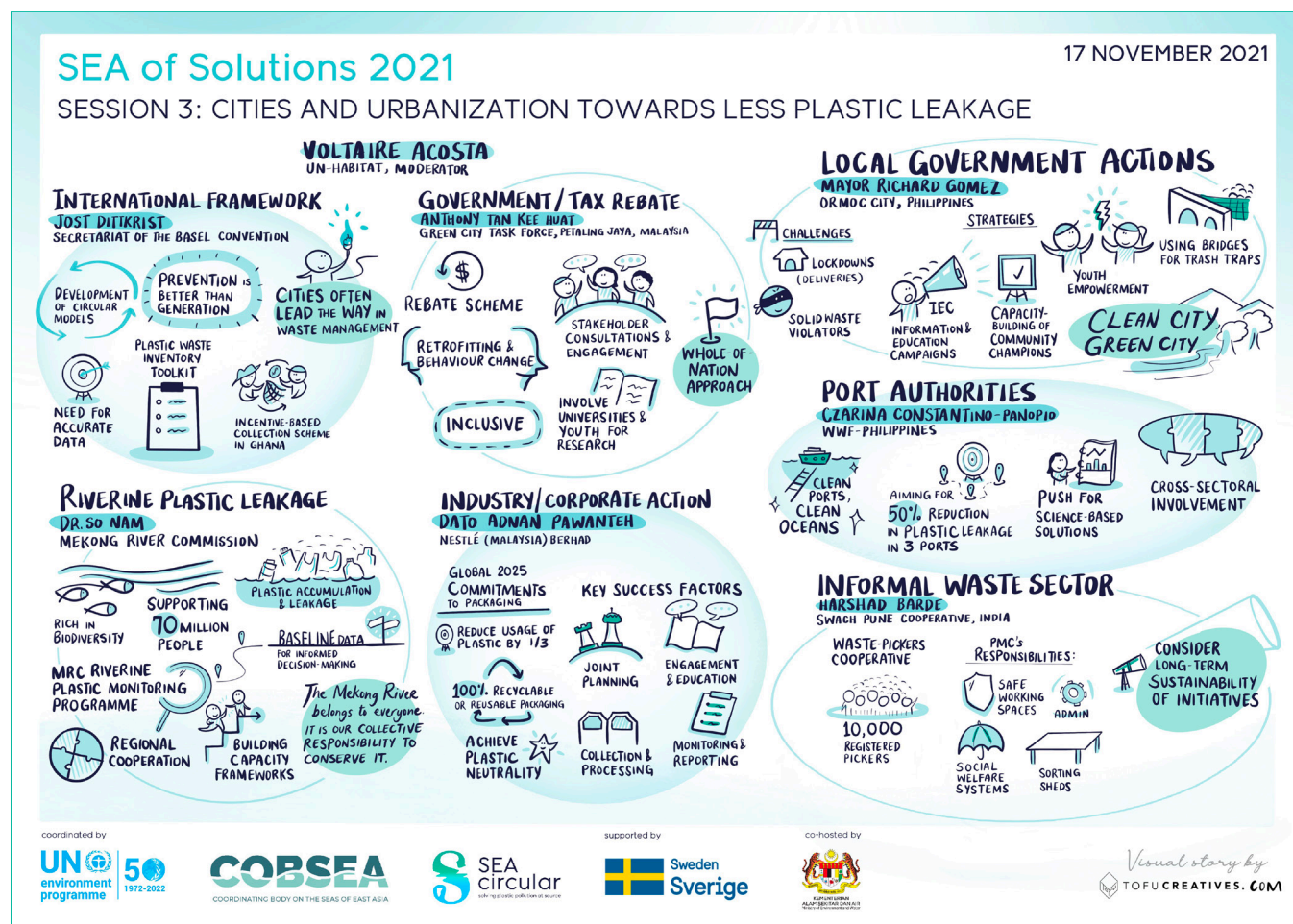
Another solution is the simplification of packaging design replacing the complex one such as multi-material laminates, which require complex, highly engineered solutions. The role of sorting technology is also crucial

as it is a fundamental component of future waste management. Mandatory reporting on packaging, much like that required of carbon emissions reporting, could also bring a layer of transparency to company usage and how they are tackling reducing waste.

Finally, countries must be disincentivized from exporting their waste to developing countries that do not have the capability to process the plastic, which contributes to pollution and leakage into waterways and the ocean.



Session 3: Cities and urbanization towards less plastic leakage



On Day 2, sessions were focused on enabling policies and market transformation. From the purview of different local actors, this session aimed to feature city-led initiatives to prevent plastic pollution, identify challenges and success factors for implementation and replication, and explore new opportunities to share lessons learned, leverage resources and create partnerships for local action.

Cities, and the rivers that run through them, account for 60% of marine debris globally. As the populations grow, municipal authorities in Asia are becoming overburdened by waste – a problem exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the uptick in personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves. Cities are also where solutions to plastic waste are created and scaled, and where policies such as the Basel Convention, the only international law for controlling transboundary movement of plastic waste, succeed or fail, as their ports are hubs for the global trade in waste.

Asia is home to eight of the 10 most plastic-polluted rivers, including the biodiverse Mekong, which supports 70 million people's livelihoods. Collecting accurate data at scale to measure the impact of plastic pollution is needed to address knowledge gaps and find the right solutions, but regional cooperation and capacity shortfalls are key challenges.

Public-private partnerships can be a powerful solution to stop waste at source with several initiatives showcased during the session. In Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, a successful pilot project was showcased during the session. In this pilot project a novel approach was introduced, households participating in the separation of recyclables at source were incentivized by a lower property assessment tax. The private sector led by firms supporting the formation of producer responsibility organization called MAREA (Malaysian Recycling Alliance) led the way in this successful public-private partnership effort.

Integrating informal workers into the waste management system helps keep the Indian city of Pune clean. Door-to-door waste pickers are registered, equipped and

trained to collect, sort, transport, and process waste. The community that is traditionally known as vulnerable, unorganized is now provided with access to social security support and other incentives. Pune at present has one of the highest recycling rates in India.

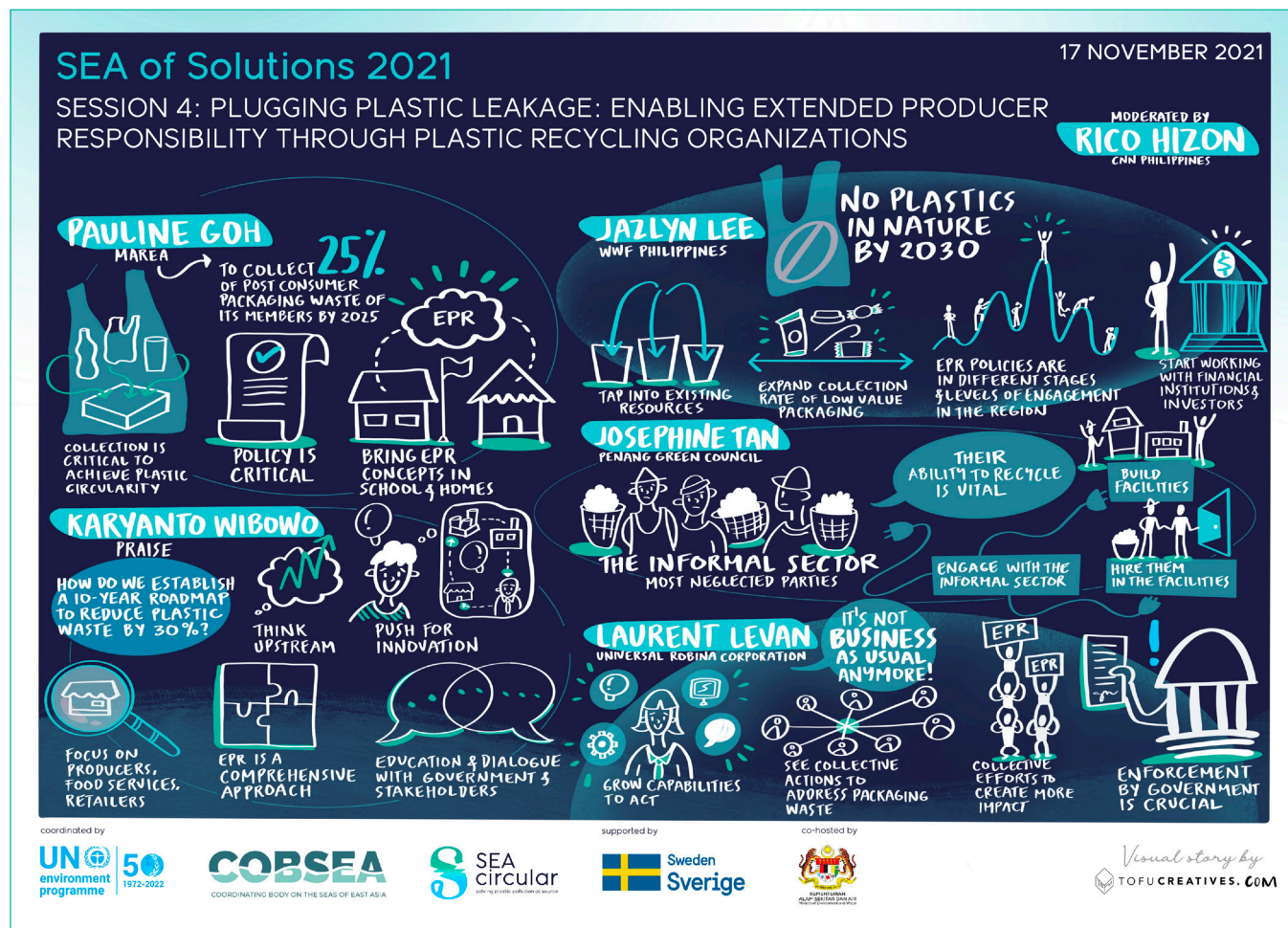
In Ormoc, a port city in the Philippine province of Leyte, the municipal government uses trash traps on bridges to collect river debris and litter is upcycled into eco-bricks or sent to Taiwan for recycling. The city involves community 'champions' to enforce a ban on single use

plastic and littering, with enforcers gaining a share of public funds from littering fines. The city engages and empowers young people to be 'future eco-warriors' with social media campaigns.

In summary, key solutions featured include the effective implementation of policies and legal frameworks, adequate financing and incentivizing systems, increased technical capacity and comprehensive data-gathering, stakeholder awareness and public-private partnerships.



Session 4: Plugging plastic leakage: Enabling extended producer responsibility through producer responsibility organizations



This session addressed effective strategies for implementing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks that include Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) to scale-up and engage more actors in the plastic value chain in ending plastic leakage into the environment.

The efforts of PROs led by companies were a key focus in the first part of the session. Multinational corporations (MNCs) such as Unilever and Tetrapak are collaborating to improve the post-consumer packaging waste landscape by working with government agencies to formulate comprehensive EPR policies. Malaysian Recycling Alliance Berhad (MAREA) aims to support the Malaysian government's target to implement a mandatory EPR system by 2026 and collect 25% of their members' recycled waste by 2025.

While cross-industry collaboration is important to advance EPR schemes, panelists acknowledged that a key challenge lies in integrating small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the EPR ecosystem. One solution is for MNCs to mentor SMEs on best practices of PROs and guide them to implement feasible targets that limit plastic leakage. Another challenge is that EPR participation is currently voluntary, and would become mandatory in Southeast Asia in the coming years as panelists suggested. Singapore and Vietnam are spearheading such efforts.

Education is key as the concept of EPR is still in its infancy. Awareness must be raised among SMEs by creating the right value proposition to achieve buy-in. Secondly, households must be informed how to segregate their recyclable waste properly to boost collection and recycling rates. Lastly, schools must educate students on the role they can play in driving circularity in the

plastic value chain. It also vital to empower and protect the informal sector to achieve higher recycling rates in Southeast Asia.

Panelists agreed that a comprehensive EPR scheme is one that includes the informal sector, local

manufacturers and importers. Also, to ensure that the scheme is effective, it must move beyond collection and recycling to including upstream solutions for sustainable packaging. Policies, education and dialogue with stakeholders will be necessary to drive progress on this front.



Session 5: Circular economy for less plastic wasted

SEA of Solutions 2021

SESSION 5: CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR LESS PLASTIC WASTED

KEYNOTE

AMBROGIO MISEROCCHI
ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

KEY LEARNINGS

- 1 VIRGIN PLASTIC USE APPEARS TO HAVE PEAKED (SET TO FALL FASTER BY 2025)
- 2 RECYCLING IS NOT ENOUGH
FOCUS ON URGENTLY ELIMINATING SINGLE-USE PACKAGING
- 3 VOLUNTARY INITIATIVES ALONE WILL NOT BE ENOUGH
EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY IS NECESSARY

COMPREHENSIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK

ELISA TONDA
UNEP
MODERATOR

A CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS LESS NO PLASTIC WASTED

MINDSET SHIFT BEYOND RECYCLING

ELIMINATE INNOVATE (REUSE MODELS) CIRCULATE

BUSINESSES & COUNTRIES ARE SUPPORTIVE OF A GLOBAL AGREEMENT ON PLASTIC POLLUTION

PANEL

ESTHER AN
CITY DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED

WORLD'S FIRST PLASTIC NEUTRAL BUILDING

R&D INVESTMENT FOR A LOW-CARBON BUILT ENVIRONMENT

MINDSET → ACTION → IMPACT

BARAK EKSHEIN
TONTOTON

TACKLING NON-RECYCLABLE PLASTIC WASTES

COLLECTION OF NON-RECYCLABLES

CERTIFIED SOLUTION

VALORIZE PLASTIC WASTE COLLECTED

COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

SEAH KIAN HOE
HENG HIAP (HHL)

PROBLEM OF FRAGMENTED PROCESSES

WE INTEGRATED THE RECYCLING PROCESSES

COLLECT CONVERT CREATE COMMUNICATE

DESIGNING A USER-FRIENDLY SYSTEM

DR. CHINDARAT TAYLOR
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF THAILAND

SOLUTIONS MUST BE MARKET-LED & FINANCIALLY VIABLE

PRIVATE SECTOR - KEY ROLE IN PLASTIC TRANSFORMATION

WE NEED TO ADDRESS THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

SALISA TRAIPIPITSIRIWAT
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOUNDATION

BUY WASTE FISHING GEAR FROM THE COMMUNITIES

TRANSFORM ABANDONED FISHING GEAR INTO LIFESTYLE PRODUCTS

RAISED \$6,000 FOR COMMUNITIES

coordinated by

UN environment programme

50 1972-2022

COBSEA

COORDINATING BODY ON THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA

SEA circular

SEA CIRCULAR ECONOMY

supported by

Sweden Sverige

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ASEAN

Visual story by

TOFUCREATIVES.COM

Recycling is not enough to solve plastic pollution; more focus is needed on eliminating single-use pollution. In six out of 10 countries in Southeast Asia, over half of plastic waste is not collected, which contributes to illegal dumpsites and soil and water pollution.

This session showcased innovative business models for plastic circularity and removing ocean-bound waste, repurposing it to let plastic products remain in the economy at the highest economic value for as long as possible.

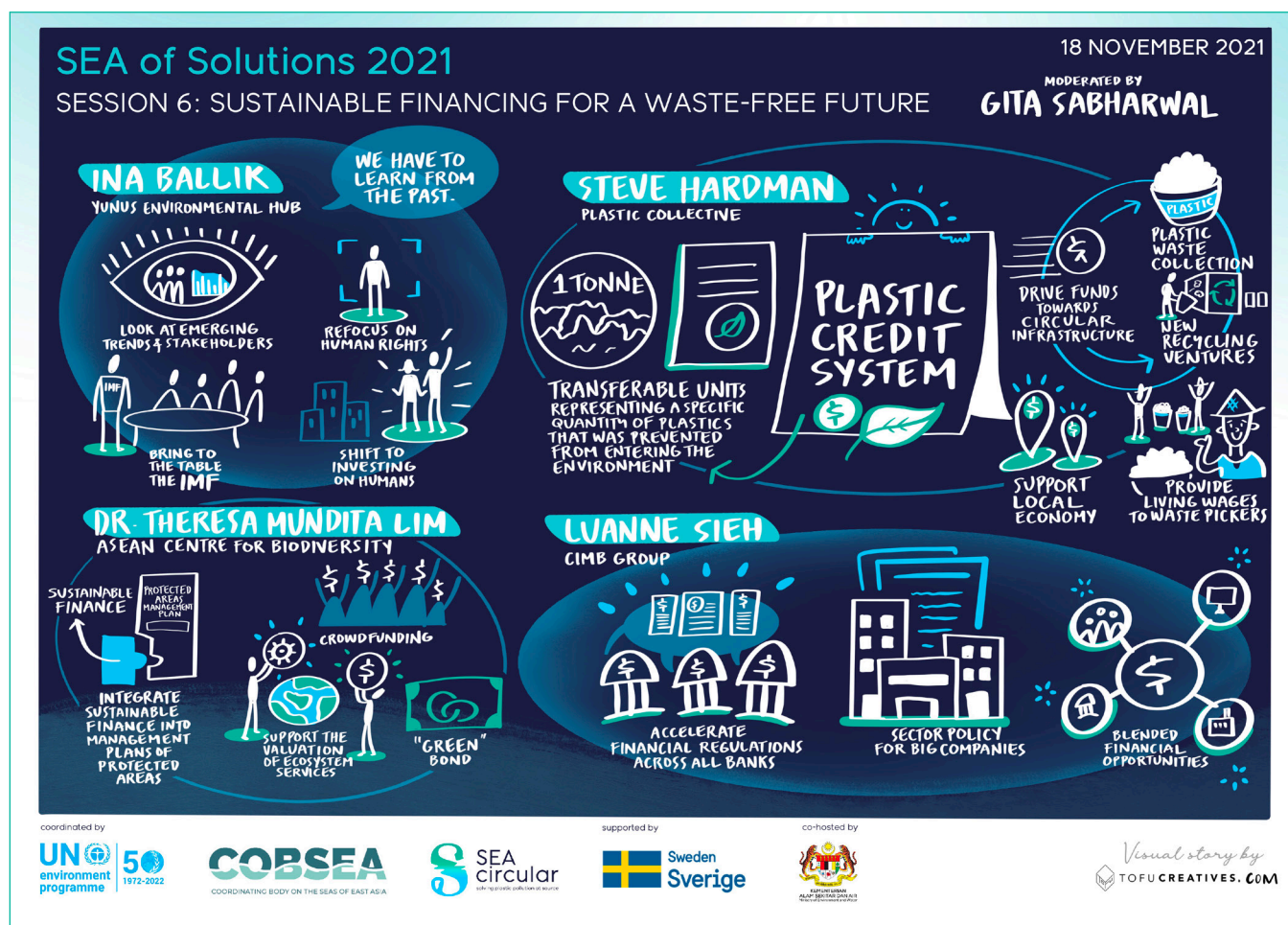
Singapore is facing a trash crisis as its sole landfill is slated to run-out of space by 2035. In a bid to tackle its largest waste stream - plastic - a building developer is incorporating waste management solutions to encourage behavioral change among its tenants. One example is twin chutes to motivate tenants to sort waste. Other waste solutions include using eco-digesters to create compost from food waste. A blend of plastic waste has been repurposed to create building material for non-structural applications. Plastic credits are also being used to create plastic neutral buildings.

Other solutions tackle marine plastic pollution by collecting ghost fishing gear, which represents roughly 10% of the total debris found in the ocean. Discarded nets are paid for and repurposed into lifestyle products.

Not all plastic can be recycled. Other business models focus on the collection of orphan ocean-bound post-consumer plastic waste, which have been abandoned, mismanaged and with low-value, clinging to coastlines and harming marine life. Communities, informal waste-pickers are incentivized to collect this seemingly useless plastic through payment, the provision of protective equipment and basic health insurance. 'Plastic neutralization' programmes in Vietnam use difficult to recycle plastic waste to produce an alternative fuel for the cement kilns, replacing part of the fossil fuel required for the process.

In order to further drive plastic circularity, collaboration between government and private sector will be necessary. Companies with innovative business models can help close the loop of plastic pollution, and policy frameworks will be vital in facilitating wider transition from linear to circular economy models.

Session 6: Sustainable financing for a waste-free future



This session showcased different funding sources and mechanisms available to different stakeholders in South-East Asia with a focus on sustainable, inclusive, and transformative finance mechanisms. The session brought together perspectives from a range of organizations working with businesses, governments, and communities.

Mobilizing investments is key in transforming markets and societies towards a waste-free future by boosting the economic value of waste materials and de-risking investment in circular innovation. Innovative financing calls for a combination of public and private mechanisms, from large-scale grants and loans by multilateral development banks, private sector incubators for innovative business models, plastic credit schemes to catalyze change, to microfinancing for community-based action. Plastic accounting for neutrality and credit schemes are evolving and taking shape very quickly, getting this right for all relevant stakeholders, achieving a harmonized approach will further support efforts to achieve circularity.

The concept of credits is now moving beyond emissions

to one of the most pressing forms of pollution: plastic. While the idea of buying and selling plastic pollution credits is gaining traction, no harmonized standards, as instituted for carbon credits in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, currently exist for these schemes.

During this session, experts agreed on increasing need to review and introduce financial mechanisms that will underpin the plastic credit market. Public-private partnerships and blended finance could help back circular economy innovation and reduce the risk for investors. Private backing of projects will increase viability and facilitate the adoption of plastic waste collection and recycling initiatives.

Banks and multilaterals must be part of the solution. Financial institutions in the region are starting to look at environmental sources of risks while deciding which loans to approve. They are scrutinizing what clients are doing to ensure a higher level of accountability. Sustainability-linked bonds, a relatively new kind of instrument that carry no restrictions on how proceeds are used, are seen as useful for galvanizing green finance.

A lack of capital is a significant barrier to creating a profitable plastics recycling market in emerging

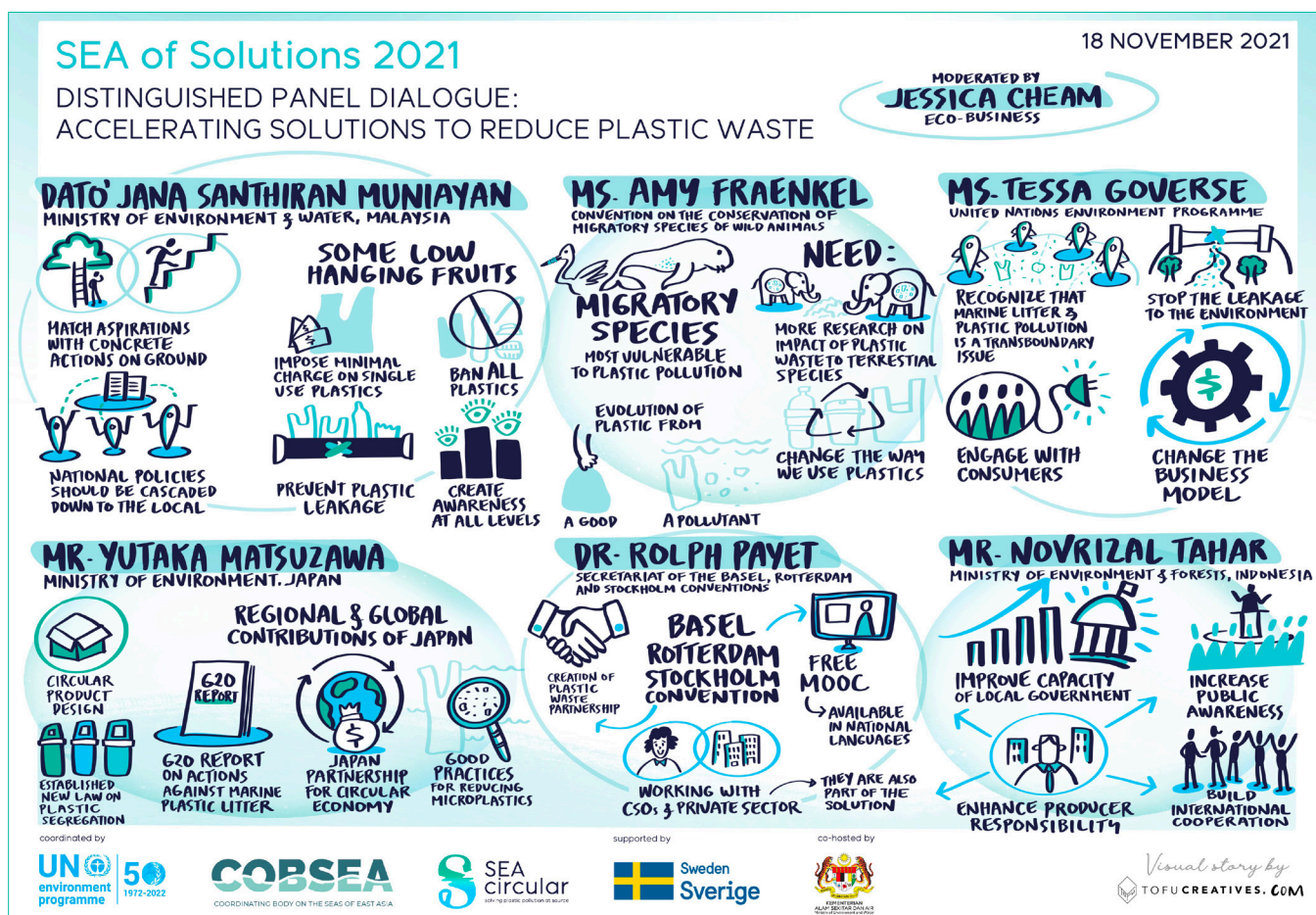
economies. Projects that are smaller in scale, in remote locations such as smaller islands, further suffer from inadequate financing which prevents them from overcoming the 'tyranny of distance'. These projects are often carried out in remote locations, and the logistics and transport costs involved in getting plastic waste to central recycling facilities in urban markets are proving too costly. Companies and brands interested in purchasing credit offsets should consider providing upfront capital to better support rural and peri-urban waste management initiatives.

Initiatives to come up with new standards and guidelines for plastic credit schemes should also build on the lessons learnt from carbon offsets. It is crucial to prevent greenwashing. Companies should credibly and transparently quantify and report on their plastic

footprints. Panelists at this session sounded a note of caution on solely relying on having new plastic credit schemes arguing that this method could undermine national policies to come up with other complementary strong mitigation efforts. The speakers also cautioned that simply 'piggyback' on existing carbon trading mechanisms may not be wise, the plastic credit schemes need to be closely looked at to ensure lessons learned from the experience gained from carbon credit schemes are taken on board to arrive at a plastic credit scheme that will benefit all stakeholders, including the informal sector. Having a social component on the scheme is crucial. Waste collectors and local communities should be paid and treated fairly. There is a need to reframe the narrative around plastic credits and make sure that people are at the centre of the conversation.



Distinguished Panel Dialogue: Accelerating solutions to reduce plastic waste



Reducing global plastic pollution is one of the greatest challenges facing the planet. Solutions exist; however, actions must be accelerated. Government, business, consumers and communities are stepping up. Collective efforts can address the million tonnes of plastic wastes that end up in our oceans and waterways each, which negative impact on natural ecosystems, economies, people's livelihoods and health.

Panelists agreed on urgent action to tackle the plastic crisis in order to avoid grave consequences in the future. Plastic pollution is not only an environmental issue. It is a health and economic burden that is disproportionately affecting underprivileged communities, not only in coastal areas but in landlocked countries too. The issue is so complex and broad in scope that it requires multi-

stakeholder efforts and solutions, experts said.

A global agreement on plastic, to be delivered by the United Nations and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation next year, and amendments to the Basel Convention to include the transboundary movement of plastic debris, have not come soon enough to address an issue that requires more research into the impacts of plastic waste. Awareness of plastic pollution is high, but efforts to combat it have largely focused on the ocean, not on land. The impact on migratory sea species such as sharks, dolphins, turtles and whales are well documented, but more work is needed to understand the effects of plastic on land-based animals — including people.

Southeast Asian governments are taking measures to tackle plastic pollution, such as Malaysia's National Marine Debris Policy and Action Plan 2021-2030, and Indonesia's plan to be plastic-pollution free by 2040, with new ways to engage the private sector. Extended

Producer Schemes will soon be enacted, but more data is needed to understand what works in different contexts to help businesses adopt circular processes, sustainable materials, and products that are reusable or recyclable.

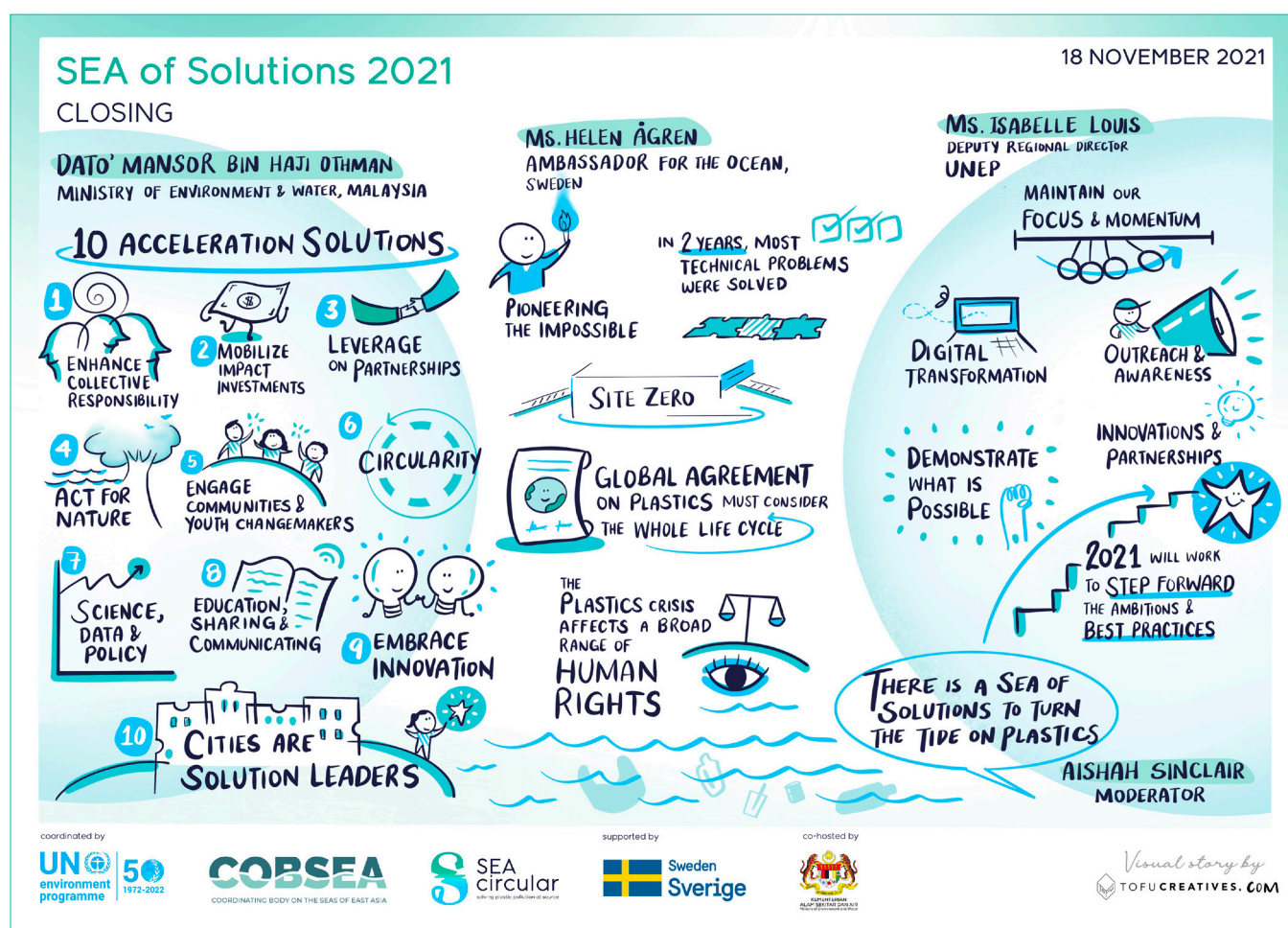
While momentum is growing, more needs to be done. Educating consumers to help them make better choices

through responsible labelling systems, will give them the opportunity to choose more sustainable packaging options.

The discussion echoed multi-stakeholder cooperation and collective action at all levels from global, regional and national to tackle the plastic challenge.



Summary and Closing Session



In summary, 10 Acceleration Solutions were identified during the SEA of Solutions 2021, which set the benchmark for stepping up collective actions. These solutions were identified through in-depth and constructive dialogues during the three-day programme, echoing the urgent call of the UN Environment Assembly for “more action, more cooperation, more finance and more ambition and more sustained commitment”.

1

Enhancing collective responsibility. To overcome the plastic crisis we are in, experts across private and public sectors appealed for stepping-up in ambition and moving to circular culture from a linear and disposable

2

one. Clear road maps for commitments are reflected in actions plans developed by countries in order to guide management measures in tackling plastic issues. We heard testimonies from across the region that success can be achieved when communities, governments and the informal economy are engaged to work together.

Mobilizing impact investments. Mobilizing investment is key to addressing the huge financial gap for the solutions required to help solve the plastic crisis amid the COVID-19 recovery and beyond. Public-private partnerships and blended finance can help boost and de-risk investment in circular innovation. Moreover, the engagement of the private sector and multilaterals need to go beyond direct funding and encompass a broader range of interventions to mobilize investments, particularly in small-to-medium enterprises.

3

Leveraging partnerships. Partnerships, transboundary cooperation, best practice examples and knowledge exchange are enabling and supporting collective actions to test, innovate and demonstrate effective solutions. Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) play a part in connecting actors along the value chain and filling up gaps in waste management infrastructure. New solutions led by partnerships are overcoming barriers to enable technical, operational, financial and business model solutions. Partnerships and collaborations can lead to scaling up and acceleration of solutions.

4

Acting for nature. Nature-based solutions play an important role in addressing climate change and building resilient societies and communities. Investments for nature-based solutions should also integrate plastic waste reduction and community-based solutions, which eventually will be the key in meeting global biodiversity, climate, food security, and COVID-19 recovery challenges. There is also an increasing need to review financial practices to bring security to the plastic credit market and simultaneously, de-risk circular economy investments to make them more viable and accessible for local projects, regardless of scale, to take off.

5

Engaging with communities and youth. To fight plastic pollution, inclusive partnership of youths and members of society along with informal sectors and vulnerable members of the community is necessary. Young people, especially, should have greater voice in decision-making on environmental management and pollution control, as their future will be the most vulnerable by polluted lands and oceans. To engage young people in environmental issues, policymakers and businesses could use creative ways to get messages across to tackle climate apathy, and instead drive empathy for the impact of plastic waste. Greater visibility of the Youth Heroes in the Asia-Pacific region is needed.

6

Functional circular solutions. Sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic should be more visible, accessible and affordable; and policymakers need to be mindful that solutions are genuinely circular which do not replace one disposable material with another. Repurposing plastic destined for landfill is being deployed across a range of industries.

7

Enabling policy. Government policies can both incentivize behavioral change and also penalize harmful environmental actions to drive down plastic consumption. Extended Producer Responsibility schemes, although still in the early stages in Southeast Asia, are considered crucial and necessary part of the solution to packaging waste and pollution. Regulation is critical as enforcement will be difficult while schemes remain voluntary. It was echoed across the sessions that recycling is not enough to solve plastic pollution, focus is needed on eliminating single-use packaging.

8

Education, sharing and clear communication. Policy is important but education is key. To catalyze behavioral change, language used to communicate to consumers must resonate with the local context. Greater efforts should also be made to communicate messages about the risks of plastic waste and the potential solutions at local level to ensure greater success.

9

Embracing innovation. Greater collaboration is needed between the public and private sector to bring innovative plastic packaging solutions to scale so that they are affordable and can be responsibly repurposed in developing countries that are still in the nascent stages of recycling plastic. Private sector incubators are key to supporting start-ups that are developing circular solutions, but do not have the expertise to scale them.

10

Cities are solution leaders. Asian cities are buckling under the pressure of managing waste associated with rapid urbanization and population growth. Cities are also where solutions to plastic waste are created and scaled, succeed or fail, as their ports are hubs for the global trade in waste. Progress happens when all levels of the community are engaged - from children in schools to informal waste-pickers who have proven to be instrumental in the sorting of waste.

PLEDGES

The background of the entire page is a teal-colored image featuring numerous water bubbles of various sizes, creating a textured, aquatic effect. The bubbles are most concentrated on the left side and bottom, with some larger, more distinct bubbles visible on the right side.



I will continue to raise awareness of the plastic pollution crisis in Southeast Asia and share everyday habits to avoid single-use plastic that we can all make to #beatplasticpollution.

Join the movement to #BeatPlasticPollution by clicking on the links below to explore the AR experiences on your smartphone.

- Drowning in Plastic: <https://l.ead.me/bpp-dip>
- Say No To Single-Use: <https://l.ead.me/bpp-sntsu>
- Clean Our Oceans: <https://l.ead.me/bpp-coo>

Meet The Reusables: <https://l.ead.me/bpp-mtr>

Full details of 100 Days to #BeatPlasticPollution here: <https://www.unep.org/events/campaign/100-days-beatplasticpollution>

-Kay Vasey



Myself and the entire team at Community Action Against Plastic Waste (CAPWs) in 21 countries across Africa, Asia and South America pledge to continue to intensify our effort to advocate and advance circular plastic economy globally.

-Ahmed Tihamiyu



I pledge to be part of the solution in eliminating plastic out the environment.

-Perine King



I pledge to lead a team of my classmates in [reducing] plastic waste!

-Xu Wei



I pledge to support the #cleanseas campaign by fulfilling the Circular Economy Institute's mission together with my other peer leaders who are promoting #circularity in all sectors and promoting the highest standards of practice in the #circulareconomy field.

-Jacqueline Chang



I vow to use only recycled plastic and to completely stop using regular plastic.

-Sangeeta Desarda



Terra Phoenix pledges to collect back at least 100 tons of plastic per year!

-Terra Phoenix



PET Croc Sdn Bhd pledges to remove marine litter especially plastic from our Malaysian beach and river. We organize beach clean-up activities as well as partnerships with local community, NGOs and beach clean-up groups to collect, monitor and educate as well as empowering local community especially the coastal area to reduce and improve management of marine litter, while collaborating with relative stakeholders to assist in recovering as much mismanaged plastic waste and turn it into circularity.

-Sudy Yeo

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Solutions

partnership week for marine plastic pollution prevention
16-18 november 2021