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FML statement to UNOC 3 Nice, France on Ship accidents and Pollution problems in Kerala

Friends of Marine Life (FML) represents coastal Indigenous communities in Kerala, South India. We are actively involved in seabed studies, ocean conservation activities like removing marine debris, plastics, and ghost nets from our waters to safeguard marine ecosystems and support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water.

We wish to bring attention to a serious environmental disaster that recently happened in our region, one that has global implications for all who are committed to marine conservation.

In May and June 2025, two cargo vessels sank off our coast within the span of two weeks. These ships were carrying hazardous materials, including calcium carbide and plastic pellets etc. As a result, our seas and coastlines are now contaminated with chemical pollutants and plastic pellets, endangering marine life and the livelihoods of coastal communities.

One of the vessels involved was the 28-year-old MSC Elsa 3, which was clearly unfit for transporting such dangerous cargo. Shockingly, there was no legal action has been taken against the shipping companies. These incidents highlights a serious gap in international maritime laws and their enforcement.

Current maritime regulations are inadequate to prevent such disasters. Responsibility must lie either with the producers of these hazardous materials or with the shipping companies that transport. Accountability must be enforced under strengthened maritime laws, with clear legal consequences for violations.

We also demand that mandatory tracking technologies such as GPS sensors to locate hazardous cargo in the event of an accident be legally required for all such cargo caonatiner shipments.

On behalf of traditional fisherfolk whose lives depend on the ocean's health, we call on the United Nations to urgently establish and enforce international regulations governing the maritime transport of chemical and plastic pollutants. Only through strong, enforceable laws and corporate accountability can prevent further environmental disasters.

Friends of Marine Life, as an indigenous fisher lead orgnaisation, we are equally concerned about Life under water and also the life of community above the water. We appeal for immediate international action to protect marine ecosystems and the coastal communities whose survival depends on them.