

# **GLOBAL TREATY ON PLASTIC POLLUTION**

Currently, more than 11 million metric tons of plastic are flowing into the ocean each year.<sup>1</sup> Despite the exponential growth in voluntary initiatives, national and regional regulations to tackle plastic pollution, there is no sign that leakage rates are slowing. A coordinated global response in the form of a UN Treaty is required to help governments and businesses level the playing field and drive change at scale.



## THE CHALLENGE

Plastic pollution is a global transboundary problem. The plastic life cycle is largely global in nature, with varying levels of regulations and standards across jurisdictions, resulting in unsustainable production, consumption and waste management practices around the world.

Marine litter and microplastics travel through the oceans, its currents and columns without regard for national boundaries. Plastic particles can also spread through the air.

It is creating a crisis with adverse ecological, social and economic impacts. The equivalent of one entire garbage truck of plastic is dumped into the ocean every minute.<sup>6</sup> Plastic pollution accumulates in the ocean, where it can persist for centuries. It gradually breaks into smaller pieces, but might never dissolve completely. Only 1% of plastics in the ocean floats, 5% washes up on beaches whilst the remaining 94% stays out of sight.7

450 million tons of plastics are produced each year,<sup>2</sup> and this is projected to triple by 2050<sup>3</sup>. 36% is single use, plastic packaging.<sup>4</sup> 79% of the plastic waste produced now sits in landfills, dumps or in the environment while about 12% has been incinerated and only 9% has been recycled.5

Marine plastic pollution could cost the world economy up to \$2.5 tn a year.<sup>8</sup> It poses a significant risk to wildlife, as entanglement and ingestion causes digestive blockages and death.9 Human ingestion of an average of 5 grams of plastics per week.<sup>10</sup> Incineration and open burning of plastic waste releases polluting gases into the air and soil. Plastic litter can block waterways and drains, causing flooding and increasing risk of disease.



# THE COMMITMENT

While voluntary initiatives are good, the current global governance structure is fragmented and ineffective.

- No clearly articulated global ambition or target
- No common obligation for States to develop national action plans
- No agreed standards for monitoring and reporting of plastics discharge
- No review of effectiveness of different pollution reduction measures
- No specialized scientific body in place mandated to assess the status of the problem and to provide policy guidance and direction to the diplomatic effort



- Actively participate and constructively contribute at relevant global events



Holistic approach to address plastic pollution

> Harmonizes standards and definitions

Lays down clear targets and action plans

**Common reporting metrics** and methodologies

Creates a level playing field

Stable policy framework to plan and invest

Access to finance and technological resources

## THE CALL TO ACTION

- Articulate the support for a legally binding global
- agreement and for the establishment of an
- Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) with
- the mandate to start negotiations as soon as possible Build alliances among supportive countries
- Begin to develop the scope, parameters and possible elements of such a new global agreement
- Contribute towards making the treaty both ambitious, effective, and legally binding







At the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2017 member states committed to the long-term elimination of discharge of litter and microplastics to the oceans and avoiding detriment to marine ecosystems and the human activities dependent on them from marine litter and microplastics.

Target 14.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals is to prevent and significantly reduce, by 2025, marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

Stopping plastic pollution is also important for the achievement of several other SDGs such as good health, clean water and sanitation, decent work, innovation and infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumptions and production, climate action, life below water and life on land.

Agenda 21, adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992, recognized "plastics" as a particular threat to the marine environment and noted that, at the time, there was no "global scheme" in place to address land-based sources of marine pollution.



A legally binding global treaty is needed to holistically and comprehensively address marine plastic pollution. The treaty should:

- Include both sea and land-based sources
- Consider a full life cycle approach including both upstream and downstream measures
- Shift from a linear towards a resource-efficient and circular management of plastics, avoiding leakage
- Take into account the ecological, social, economic and potential health impacts
- Adopt a multi-layered governance approach, mutually reinforcing simultaneous individual, sub-national, national and regional actions
- · Provide measures for equitable technology transfer and access to financial support
- Be based on the following key principles: precautionary approach, common but differentiated responsibility, producer pays principle, equitability

## **STEPS TOWARD** THE TREATY

**Broad support** among governments Formal decision to start negotiations

**Adoption of** final treaty text

## Ratification

# **GLOBAL TREATY ON PLASTIC POLLUTION**

Overarching objective: Eliminate plastic leakage into the ocean



## **DEFINITIONS, POLICIES & GENERAL OBLIGATIONS**

Articulation of definitions, scope and general obligations of states parties, including:

- Obligation to develop and periodically update national action plans, to serve as tools for achieving benchmark targets
- Commitment to develop and implement a set of control measures applicable to all state parties, as detailed in issue-specific protocols tailored to the different subcategories of the problem
- Procedures for the development and adoption of Protocols

### **ISSUE SPECIFIC PROTOCOLS**

- With tailored control measures for key subcategories of the problem, and
- · Specified amendment and rules to ensure gradual strengthening over time.

## **MONITORING, EVALUATION** & REVIEW

Annual reports by all parties with information on inventories (leakage data) and status of implementation of national action plans

 Comprehensive stocktaking, at 4-5 years intervals, of actions and activities undertaken by States, with a view to assessing effectiveness of response measures on all levels, and to ensuring progress along the roadmap towards the long-term goal (based on input from TOCs)

COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Verifying national reports

Review compliance

• Propose measures

# & ASSISTANCE

response options

### SCIENTIFIC BODY

- Monitoring
- Assessing effects
- Evaluating trajectories

### **TECHNICAL OPTIONS COMMITTEE**

- · Assessing and reviewing effectiveness of policy measures and propose strengthened control measures
- Promote innovation in new policy interventions and regulations

#### POLICY TOOL-KIT Sharing knowledge,

innovation and bestpractices.

### FINANCIAL MECHANISM



# IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

Including a policy toolkit, to facilitate sharing of know-how, innovations and best practices, and to promote cost-effective

- A dedicated financial mechanism to support
  - implementation of treaty obligations
- A programme for training of technical experts
- A support system for research, development and innovation

### **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

Provide technical and operational assistance to states parties with limited capacity.

• Mobilize and channel financial resources to states parties in need of assistance to meet their obligations Streamlining and harmonizing financial flows aimed at achieving long-term objectives



## THE MOMENTUM IS GROWING

INTRO 😂 EXPLOR

www.plasticnavigator.wwf.de



https://www.plasticpollutiontreaty.org/



The calls for a treaty on plastic pollution are growing louder.

Governments and regional governmental bodies have made public statements about the need for a UN treaty. www.plasticnavigator.wwf.de

Scientists and academics are increasingly calling for a UN treaty.

Many of the world's leading companies have signed a manifesto in support of a UN treaty. https://www.plasticpollutiontreaty.org/

Civil society organizations have publicly supported the call for a new global agreement to address the issue of plastic pollution.

Over **2 million signatories** to the WWF Plastics Petition for a global legally binding agreement clearly highlights the concern from citizens around the world to address this issue. www.go.panda.org/plastics

It is time to start negotiations on an ambitious and effective treaty to address the crisis of plastic pollution.

THERE IS NO TIME TO WASTE.

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**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES** 





Working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and wildlife.

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## FIND OUT MORE, PLEASE CONTACT: