



END THE AGE OF PLASTIC

May 20, 2023

Dear Director Andersen and Executive Secretary Mathur-Filipp,

We are writing to you as 174 civil society groups and scientists ahead of the upcoming UN Global Plastics Treaty talks in Paris, INC-2, with a shared concern about a major threat to an impactful Treaty outcome – the role that the fossil fuel and petrochemical industries and their lobbyists are having on the negotiations. To ensure this landmark opportunity to curb the global plastic pollution crisis is not undermined, we are calling on you to take the following urgent measures:

- **Recognise that the public interest in addressing plastic pollution is not compatible with the private interests of the fossil fuel and petrochemical companies that produce plastic.**

Plastic pollution has flooded our planet, harming people's health, accelerating social injustice, destroying biodiversity and fuelling the climate crisis. Indeed scientists at the Stockholm Institute recently alerted the public that plastic pollution had already ['exceeded safe planetary boundaries.'](#) threatening the very stability of the earth's system.

Despite this, the production of virgin plastics - 99% of which are made from oil and gas - is increasing year on year. And with giant fossil fuel and petrochemical companies like ExxonMobil, Dow, Shell and others reportedly investing heavily in [building yet more production capacity and petrochemical facilities](#), this growth is set to continue. Indeed, according to industry estimates, plastic production could [double within the next 10-15* years, and triple by 2050.](#)

Scientists and civil society groups from around the world agree that it is essential that the UN Plastics Treaty agrees a roadmap for dramatically reducing plastic production, a view already supported by several governments.

It is clear that the fossil fuel lobby is [actively working](#) to prevent the Plastics Treaty from containing essential controls on plastic production. It is not just the signatories of this letter who hold this view. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [recently said](#) "There is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the interests of the plastics industry and businesses deeply implicated

throughout its supply chain and the human rights and policy interests of people affected by the plastics crisis. The plastic industry has disproportionate power and influence over policy relative to the general public.”

Given the industry's power and influence - both within the UN and over national and regional governments - there is a strong risk that, unless measures to inhibit their influence are put in place, it will be impossible to negotiate the Global Plastics Treaty that people and the planet need.

To avoid their vested, private economic interests being placed before those of the planet and human health, the power of fossil fuel and petrochemical companies needs to be openly acknowledged and addressed.

- **Support the adoption of a strong conflict of interest policy to ensure that fossil fuel and petrochemical companies are not allowed to undermine the global response to plastic pollution.**

We urge UNEP to urgently establish an Accountability Framework, including a regime-wide conflict-of-interest policy. Limiting the influence of vested private interests has proven to have a positive impact on treaty outcomes. This was demonstrated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) when agreeing to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (UNFCTC). To prevent and address a conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health, the WHO instituted a firewall between the tobacco lobby and public health officials. Known as Article 5.3, it also comes with clear guiding principles on [how to apply it](#).

- **Protect official spaces at and around INCs from fossil fuel and petrochemical industry influence.**

In 2021 the UK government took measures to ensure no Oil and Gas major sponsored COP26 or took [part in the Green Zone](#). The INC process should build on this example and protect all official spaces by revoking fossil fuel and petrochemical industry sponsorship and participation.

- **Polluters out, People and Independent Science in.**

To succeed, the Global Plastics Treaty must be firmly rooted in a human rights-based approach; one that reduces inequality, prioritizes human health, and centres justice in both its creation and implementation.

As such, as well as acting to control the powerful petrochemical industry lobby, we call on you to prioritise giving seats at the table to Indigenous Peoples and impacted communities who live on the frontlines of plastic pollution - such as production sites,

plastic choked rivers and seas and toxic waste dumps - and to the independent scientists studying the impacts plastic pollution is having on our planet and our health.

This would be in line with the UN General Assembly's Resolution 76/300 that says it is a human right to have a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and that there is an inextricable link between human rights and the environment. It would also uphold rights enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to ensure the participation of Indigenous Peoples in decision-making matters.

Controlling polluting industries' infiltration of negotiation spaces and ensuring the voices of independent scientists are heard would also help to ensure our [right to science](#) and support the Treaty mandate summarised in [Resolution 5/14](#) that negotiations must rely on the best available science.

Currently too many of the scientific studies that inform Member States and decision-makers are funded by industries with vested interests - making it extremely difficult to ensure facts and data are free from industry influence. This conflict of interest effectively challenges the meaning of best available science and therefore cannot guarantee negotiations in good faith.

In summary: The Global Plastics Treaty offers an historic opportunity to end plastic pollution for all. Its success depends on Member States being able to negotiate in good faith, prioritizing input from those most affected and based on the best available, independent science. To achieve these shared goals, UNEP must implement the measures above to prevent the undue influence of the fossil fuel and petrochemical companies, which have a vested interest in perpetuating the plastic pollution crisis.

Respectfully,
Greenpeace International

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International Organisations

Asia Wild
Avaaz
Break Free From Plastic (BFFP)
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
Common Seas
Community Action Against Plastic Waste (CAPws)
Economy for the Common Good
Ekō

Environmental Investigation Agency
Friends of the Earth International
GAIA (Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives)
International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN)
One Earth
Population and Development Initiative
Tearfund

African Organisations

Appui aux Initiatives Communautaire de Conservation de l'Environnement et de Développement Durable (AICED), *Democratic Republic of the Congo*
Centre for Alternative Development, *Uganda*
Centre for Citizens Conserving Environment & Management (CECIC), *Uganda*
Centre For Earth Works (CFEW), *Nigeria*
Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD), *Kenya*
Front Commun pour la Protection de l'Environnement et des Espaces Protégés (FCPEEP), *Democratic Republic of the Congo*
Greenish, *Egypt*
groundWork, *South Africa*
Nipe Fagio, *Tanzania*
Sierra Leone School Green Club (SLSGC)
South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, *South Africa*
Sustainable Environment Development Initiative, *Nigeria*
Zero Waste Durban, *South Africa*

Asia-Pacific Organisations

Association For Promotion Sustainable Development, *India*
Bye Bye Plastic bags, Bali, *Indonesia*
Citizens' Climate Lobby Japan
Centre for Environmental Justice / Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka
Center for Renewable Energy and Sustainable Technology, *Philippines*
Consumers' Association of Penang, *Malaysia*
Ecosoum, *Mongolia*
Ecowaste Coalition, *Philippines*
Mother Earth Foundation, *Philippines*
National Fisheries Solidarity Movement, *Sri Lanka*
National Toxics Network, *Australia*
Nexus3 Foundation, *Indonesia*
Plastic Free Seas, *China*
Sahabat Alam Malaysia / Friends of the Earth Malaysia
Taiwan Watch Institute
Thant Myanmar, *Myanmar*

European Organisations

Arnika, *Czech Republic*

ClientEarth, *UK*

Društvo Ekologi brez meja, *Slovenia*

Economy for the Common Good Switzerland

Everyday Plastic, *UK*

Exit Plastik. *Germany*

Friends of the Earth Scotland

Gallifrey Foundation, *Geneva*

Gemeinwohl-Ökonomie, *Luxembourg*

Health and Environment Justice Support (HEJSupport), *Germany*

Humusz Szövetség, *Hungary*

Jane Goodall Institute France

KYMA sea conservation & research

La Fresque du Plastique, *France*

Let's Do It Foundation, *Estonia*

NoOPS.ch - No obsolescence programmée suisse, *Switzerland*

No Plastic In My Sea, *France*

Objectif Zéro Plastique, *France*

Ocean. Now!, *Germany*

Plastic Change, *Denmark*

Plastic Soup Foundation, *Netherlands*

Plastic Soup Surfer / Plastic Free Sea Foundation, *Netherlands*

Plastics Rebellion, *UK*

Pro Natura / Friends of the Earth Switzerland

Recycling Network Benelux, *Netherlands*

Sciaena, *Portugal*

Seas at Risk, *Belgium*

She Changes Climate, *England*

Strandliners CIC, *England*

The Scarab Trust, *UK*

Trash Free Trails, *UK*

Trash Hero World, *Switzerland*

Vivir sin plástico, *Spain*

VOICE Ireland

Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), *Netherlands*

ZERO - Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System, *Portugal*

Zero Waste Alliance Ukraine

Zero Waste Austria

Zero Waste Kiel e.V., *Germany*

Zero Waste Switzerland

North American Organisations

Alaska Community Action on Toxics, *USA*
Ascenred, *Mexico*
Azul, *USA*
Cafeteria Culture, *USA*
Center for Coalfield Justice, *USA*
CESTA Friends of the Earth, *El Salvador*
Conservation Law Foundation, *USA*
DION (NGO Network of Small Island Developing States), *USA*
Don't Waste Durham, *USA*
Fenceline Watch, *USA*
FoCo Trash Mob, *USA*
Fridays for Future USA
Friends of the Earth Canada
Fronteras Comunes, *Mexico*
Micah Six Eight Mission, *USA*
Observatorio Ciudadano de la Calidad del Aire, *Mexico*
Pesticide Action Network in Mexico (RAPAM)
Plastic Free Delaware, *USA*
Plastic Free Future, *USA*
PlasticFreeRestaurants.org, *USA*
Plastic Pollution Coalition, *USA*
PloggingMx, *Mexico*
Recycle Hawaii, *USA*
Red de Mujeres Periodistas del Sur de Tamaulipas, *Mexico*
Red Mexicana de Acción Ecológica, *Mexico*
Red Mexicana de Periodistas Ambientales, *Mexico*
Reloop, *USA*
Surfrider Foundation, *USA*
Surfrider Foundation Canada
Tearfund Canada
The Last Plastic Straw, *USA*
The Story of Stuff Project, *USA*
The Vessel Project of Louisiana, *USA*
Turtle Island Restoration Network, *USA*
Turtle Love, *Costa Rica*
Whale and Dolphin Conservation, *USA*

South American Organisations

Alianza Basura Cero Chile
Antu kai Mawen, *Chile*
Asociación movimiento nacional de recicladores de Chile

Cipoleños unidos por el ambiente, *Argentina*

Fundación Aguaclara, *Venezuela*

Fundación El Árbol, *Chile*

Fundación Lengua, *Chile*

Fundación PlastiCo. Project, *Ecuador*

Instituto SUSTENTAR Interdisciplinar de Estudos e Pesquisas em Sustentabilidade,
Brazil

ONG Colectivo VientoSur, *Chile*

Reacción Climática, *Bolivia*

Red de Acción por los Derechos Ambientales (RADA), *Chile*

Taller de Comunicación Ambiental (Rosario), *Argentina*

Taller Ecologista, *Argentina*