BUSINESS COALITION FOR A GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY

21st September 2022

Our vision for an ambitious and effective global treaty to end plastic pollution

Announcement to launch a Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty

We are a group of businesses across the plastics value chain, financial institutions, and key non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with the intention to form a new Business Coalition calling for and supporting the development of an ambitious and effective global treaty to end plastic pollution.

This document lays out our shared vision, the key outcomes required to achieve this vision, key elements we believe a global treaty to end plastic pollution must include, and the Coalition's planned objectives. It concludes with a call for more organisations to join us.

Our vision

Our vision is a circular economy in which plastic never becomes waste or pollution, and the value of products and materials is retained in the economy.

A comprehensive circular economy approach can address the root causes of plastic pollution, and contribute to the global efforts to combat the climate[1] and biodiversity crisis[2], while delivering economic, environmental, and social benefits.

Currently, most plastics are not designed for a circular economy nor are they circulated in practice. Yet, the best available scientific analysis shows us that known circular economy solutions, if applied at scale, can reduce annual volumes of plastic pollution by at least 80% by 2040 compared to business-as-usual[3] and achieve near-zero plastic pollution by 2060 globally[4]. To end plastic pollution for good and increase the pace of change, we need a system-wide transformation that prevents plastic waste from being created in the first place, using a circular economy approach that tackles all steps of the value chain with a high level of ambition[5].

We welcome the UNEA Resolution, 'End Plastic Pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument', and the establishment of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). We see a legally binding treaty as the single most important opportunity to accelerate progress towards a circular economy for plastic, building on the lessons learned from existing initiatives. By working together we aim to bring a clear and amplified voice of forward-thinking businesses, financial institutions, and key NGOs to the treaty negotiations, supporting the development of an ambitious and effective treaty.

1 The Pew Charitable Trusts, Systemiq (2020), Breaking the Plastic Wave
2 Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2021), The Nature Imperative: How the Circular Economy tackles Biodiversity Loss
3 The Pew Charitable Trusts, Systemiq (2020), Breaking the Plastic Wave
4 OECD (2022), Global Plastics Outlook - Part 2: Policy Scenarios to 2060
5 OECD (2022), Global Plastics Outlook - Part 1: Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options

We believe this treaty has the potential to stimulate, coordinate, and align national policies and actions towards a common global strategic direction. We call for governments to develop an ambitious and effective treaty that provides the right international policy framework and creates the enabling conditions for the much needed investments in infrastructure, innovation, and skills worldwide. The treaty must set out comprehensive and coordinated measures to accelerate the transition to a circular economy for plastic globally and include supporting mechanisms for its effective implementation, allowing for the adaptation of solutions to local conditions. It must also adopt a broad scope, covering both macro-and microplastics and addressing all sources and pathways of plastic pollution into the natural environment.

The successful negotiation of an ambitious and effective treaty to end plastic pollution will bring a clear sense of urgency that the world needs to act on the plastic pollution challenge. We are committed to working with governments to raise the bar of ambition in the treaty negotiations and accelerate progress towards a circular economy for plastic globally.

Global outcomes necessary to achieve our vision

To achieve our vision of a circular economy for plastic, we believe that progress must be achieved in three critical areas:

1. **REDUCTION of plastic production and use through a circular economy approach**, focusing on those plastics that have high-leakage rates, are short-lived, and/or are made using fossil-based virgin resources. For example, by aiming to:
    - **Eliminate plastic materials, components or additives that hinder recyclability or compostability, or have a high risk of leaking into nature,** including intentionally-added microplastics
    - **Move away from single-use plastics in favour of reusable and more durable solutions** whenever possible, reducing overall material consumption and environmental impact
    - **Substitute with alternative materials if they can be effectively circulated** in practice and at scale, and demonstrate reduced environmental impacts
2. **CIRCULATION of all plastic items that cannot be eliminated**, keeping them in the economy at their highest value. For example, by aiming to:
    - **Design products and systems for all plastics to be reused, recycled, or composted** in practice and at scale
    - **Accelerate the uptake of new business and delivery models** at scale that reduce the need for single-use and short-lived applications
    - **Mobilise sufficient, ongoing, and dedicated public and private funding** for infrastructure and systems to collect, sort, and recycle plastics
    - **Increase the volume and quality of recycled plastics** that can be used in a broad range of uses
    - **Transition away from landfill, incineration, and waste-to-energy** towards implementing locally relevant circular solutions over time

3. **PREVENTION and REMEDIATION of remaining, hard-to-abate micro- and macro-plastic leakage into the environment**, including robust waste management practices and tackling legacy pollution. For example, by aiming to:
    - **Strengthen waste management governance and infrastructure** to improve practices for safe disposal of all plastic that cannot be eliminated or circulated
    - **Establish and improve collection systems** to reach high collection rates
    - **Prevent the release of microplastics into the environment** from, for example, abrasion, fibre shedding or pellet loss
    - **Coordinate global efforts to address the damage caused by ongoing and legacy plastic pollution**, protecting the most affected and vulnerable communities and ecosystems

Objectives of the planned Coalition

To support our vision and desired outcomes in the treaty negotiations, the intention is to form a Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty with organisations aligned to our vision that will pursue four main objectives:

1. **Develop clear and consistent policy insights and recommendations for an ambitious and effective treaty**, and inform the negotiations on key elements and priority policy considerations to be taken into account.

    We define success for our work as raising the bar of ambition in the treaty negotiations. Therefore, we intend to develop policy recommendations for each INC meeting. We aim to bring a level of ambition into our policy insights and recommendations that is aligned with our vision and desired outcomes, building on the latest available science and evidence from existing initiatives.

2. **Convene an inclusive group of businesses, financial institutions, key NGOs and business organisations** with a shared ambition towards a circular economy for plastic and a strong commitment to support an effective, legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution.

    We define success as having a diverse representation with members and supporting organisations coming from different geographies, sizes and sectors from across the plastics value chain, including financial institutions.

3. **Coordinate advocacy efforts to deliver joint key messages and inputs** from aligned businesses, NGOs, and financial institutions to governments.

    We define success as our policy recommendations being incorporated into the treaty as a result of the advocacy and communications efforts of the planned Coalition and its individual members. We will actively engage with governments, collaborate with other stakeholders and organisations, and develop insights to strengthen our call.

4. **Build confidence in the business community around an ambitious and effective treaty being an enabler of progress towards a system change to end plastic pollution.**

    We define success as our future member organisations understanding the developments of the treaty, recognising its benefits and being well-prepared for its outcomes, as well as collaborating with business associations to promote our vision to the broader business community.

Key elements we support in the treaty

To support our vision and associated outcomes, a legally binding treaty must set the right enabling conditions to successfully scale a circular economy for plastic and end plastic pollution. For businesses and investors, this means creating a level playing field and preventing a patchwork of disconnected solutions. To achieve this, we believe the treaty should include the following key elements:

1. **The treaty must set clear goals, targets, and obligations, with a sense of urgency**, that all Parties to the treaty will be required to implement in their national jurisdictions to align the actions of governments, businesses and civil society. These provisions must be based on common definitions as well as harmonised standards and metrics, and include a review mechanism to gradually strengthen them over time.

2. **The treaty must define a comprehensive and coordinated set of upstream and downstream policy measures** that help achieve our desired global outcomes and are adaptable to local conditions, including:
   - **A timeline for the phasing-out of problematic plastics** that hinder progress towards a circular economy, pose critical health risks, or have a high risk of ending up in nature
   - **Harmonised regulatory and financial incentives** to scale circular economy solutions by stimulating the necessary innovation, investment and consumer choices
   - **Mechanisms to ensure dedicated, ongoing and sufficient funding for the after-use collection and treatment of plastic**, for example through well-designed mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility schemes
   - **Provisions to protect and respect the livelihoods, health, labour and human rights of all people involved in the value chain**, for example through the recognition of and engagement with workers in informal and cooperative settings as important stakeholders to achieve a safe and socially-just circular economy

3. **The treaty must include instruments to support implementation and monitoring of progress at national, regional and global levels,** including by:
   - **Supporting policy impact assessment,** for example through the establishment of a scientific advisory body, to better understand environmental, social, and economic impacts over the whole life cycle of plastics
   - **Strengthening accountability of governments and businesses,** for example through globally harmonised disclosure obligations and reporting standards
   - **Ensuring countries' effective participation** through a dedicated financial mechanism and capacity building to develop and implement national legislation and action plans
   - **Improving transparency on plastic flows through harmonised monitoring,** to track progress towards the implementation of circular economy solutions, for example using common rules on data and information sharing across the value chain

Call to Action

We call on businesses, business associations and financial institutions, as well as key non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are aligned with our vision as outlined in this document to engage with us on the development of the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty, convened by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WWF.

Together, we will provide a clear voice in the negotiations to amplify our call for an ambitious and effective treaty to end plastic pollution. The Coalition will remain active until the multilateral negotiations on the treaty conclude, which is expected by the end of 2024. After the treaty text has been adopted and is open for ratification, the Coalition will assess further opportunities for impact.

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