



HIGH AMBITION COALITION TO END PLASTIC POLLUTION

CONCEPT NOTE

Plastic pollution constitutes a planetary crisis with impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity, the climate and human health. Without new and effective control measures, plastic production is set to double in 20 years and plastic waste leaking into the ocean is projected to triple by 2040¹. This is an unacceptable burden to place on future generations. We urge countries to come together to address the sources of plastic pollution and safeguard our planet.

A group of like-minded countries has taken the initiative to form a coalition of ambitious countries following the adoption of the resolution 5/14 *End Plastic Pollution: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument*.

The High Ambition Coalition to **End Plastic Pollution** is committed to develop an ambitious international legally binding instrument based on a comprehensive and circular approach that ensures urgent action and effective interventions along the full lifecycle of plastics.

Our common ambition is to **End plastic pollution by 2040**. At the outset of the plastic treaty negotiations, we have outlined three strategic goals and seven key deliverables for success in this regard.

Global Strategic Goals

1. Restrain plastic consumption and production to sustainable levels

Plastic consumption and production have reached unsustainable levels²³. Plastic consumption has quadrupled over the past 30 years. Global plastic production has doubled from 2000 to 2019 reaching 460 million tonnes. Much of this growth is driven by massive increase in production of single-use plastics for packaging and consumer goods which accounts for half of plastic waste generation⁴. Current projections stipulate that plastic production will double in the next 20 years⁵. The world will not be able to manage the volume of plastic waste and avoid leakage. The plastic treaty should include control measures that will minimize demand of plastics and increase the supply of recycled plastics for use in new plastic products.

¹ SystemIQ & Pew Charitable Trust (2020): Breaking the plastic wave.

² Persson, Carney et.al (2022): Outside the Safe Operating Space of the Planetary Boundary for Novel Entities. *Environmental Science & Technology* 2022 56 (3), 1510-1521

³ W.W.Y. Lau et al (2020): Evaluating scenarios toward zero plastic pollution. *Science* 369 (6510).

⁴ OECD (2022): *Global Plastics Outlook*

⁵ Simon et al (2021): A binding global agreement to address the life cycle of plastics. *Science* 2021 Vol 373 Issue 6550.

2. Enable a circular economy for plastics that protects the environment and human health

Plastics is often designed so that it becomes waste, and too much plastics have adverse effects on the environment and pose a risk to human health through the life cycle⁶. Plastic products need to be more sustainable. This includes addressing the problems related to hazardous chemicals which are both intentionally added to give plastic material specific properties, as well as inherent in certain materials, and a vector for other substances. Such hazardous chemicals may hinder the reuse and recycling of plastic materials. The plastics treaty must generally ensure criteria and standards for design of plastics to ensure durability, recyclability and safety enabling a circular economy for plastics that protects the environment and human health. It must also ensure transparency and availability of information on such sustainability aspects through the value chain of plastics.

3. Achieve environmentally sound management and recycling of plastic waste

Roughly 9.2 billion tons of plastic waste have been generated, out of which less than 10% has been recycled, 14% has been incinerated and 76% has been disposed of in landfills or released into the environment since 1950⁷. The development of necessary waste management capacity is outpaced by plastic waste consumption. Current projections stipulate that plastic waste leaking into the ocean will triple by 2040. The plastic treaty must establish provisions for plastic waste minimization and environmentally sound collection, sorting and preparation for reuse and recycling of plastic waste to reenter recycled plastics into the economy and avoid leakage to the environment.

Key deliverables for success

1. Eliminate problematic plastics, including by bans and restrictions.
2. Develop global sustainability criteria and standards for plastics
3. Set global baselines and targets for sustainability throughout the lifecycle of plastics.
4. Ensure transparency in the value chain of plastics, including for material and chemical composition.
5. Establish mechanisms for strengthening commitments, targets and controls over time.
6. Implement monitoring and reporting at each stage through the lifecycle of plastics.
7. Facilitate effective technical and financial assistance, scientific and socio-economic assessments.

The High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution will issue statements and arrange events to raise awareness and identify priorities for the negotiation sessions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC). The coalition will also undertake intersessional work on essential elements and issues to inform the negotiations.

⁶ Wiesinger, H et al (2021): Deep dive into plastic monomers, additives, and processing aids. Environmental Science & Technology 2021 55 (13), 9339-9351

⁷ UNEP (2021): Drowning in plastics – Marine litter and plastic waste vital graphs; UNEP (2021): From pollution to solution: A global assessment of marine litter and plastics pollution.