Using International Law to Face the Global Plastics Crisis

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GLOBAL SOLUTION FOR A GLOBAL CRISIS

Plastics are a global supply chain with global impacts

...and virgin plastics production is set to rise by more than 40% in just the next 5 years.

It requires a global solution addressing the full life cycle of plastics
PLASTICS & HUMAN RIGHTS

• The plastic lifecycle threatens these rights, especially those of children and youth throughout their lives:
  – right to life and development
  – right to the highest attainable standard of health
  – right to an adequate standard of living
  – right to a healthy environment
  – right to non-discrimination
  – right to information
  – right to an effective remedy
POLICY SPACES

BASEL

• **Scope:** Limits the trade of hazardous waste between countries (specifically from Global North to Global South)

STOCKHOLM

• **Limitations:** Focused on waste. False solutions not excluded. Includes objective to reduce, but not been very effective so far.

IMO

• **Opportunities:** Functional and vibrant convention, lots of good elements and great momentum after adoption of Basel Plastic amendment and entry into force of the Basel Ban.
• **Scope:** Persistent Organic Chemicals (POPs)

• **Limitations:** Only covers a very specific type of chemicals. Works chemical by chemical. Slow addition process.

• **Opportunities:** Achieves real global bans of certain substances, robust scientific body, vibrant Convention. Already coordinates with other other Conventions (Joint BRS secretariat)
• **Scope:** Ports and maritime sources of plastics (i.e. dumping from ships, fishing gear, etc.)

• **Limitations:** Not well equipped to address land-based sources of marine litter.

• **Opportunities:** Fishing gear, port reception facilities and on board consumption are all very relevant to address plastic pollution. Different political dynamics in IMO open possibilities.
POLICY SPACES

**Relevance:** Governing Body of UNEP. UNEA will be the primary space where we thread all the pieces together to achieve a mandate to begin negotiation on a global instrument.

**Opportunities:** Plastics (termed “marine litter” and including microplastics) have been a significant part of the agenda since UNEA-1 (June 2014). Creation of an Open-Ended Expert Group (OEEG) at UNEA-3 (Dec. 2017). 3 meetings held so far (2018-19); 2 more planned in 2020 before UNEA-5 (Feb. 2021), schedule now TBD.
TIMELINE

May (delayed): OEEG-4
Nov 9-13 (tbc): OEEG-5
Feb: UNEA-5

Goal: Mandate to begin developing a global & legally binding treaty on plastics
YOUR ENGAGEMENT

• **Attend** and/or contribute to upcoming meetings (UNEA-5, Expert Group, Basel, etc.)
  – Educate country delegates, garner support, counter industry influence into these spaces, recruit progressive businesses

• **Align** local / national / regional policy objectives
  – With the global treaty objectives & elements

• **Influence** key people in your country
  – ministers of the environment & foreign affairs, other NGOs

• **Share** with your networks
  – newsletter issues, talking points, support for positions, upcoming events
RESOURCES

Follow-up for participation:
• On Basel, Stockholm, SAICM: David (dazoulay@ciel.org)
• On IMO: Tim (timgrabel@eia-international.org)
• On UNEA or general global policy: Jane (jpatton@ciel.org)

Key links:
• Progress on Plastics newsletters on policy developments
• Plastics & Health report
• Plastics & Climate report
• Ocean Pollutants Guide report
• Discarded: Communities on the Frontline report