



2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Putting theory into practice: systems change as a tool for tackling ocean plastic pollution at source

Thursday 30th June, 08:00 – 10:00 at #SeatheFuture restaurant at Oceanario Lisboa

Organized by: Zoological Society of London, Surfers Against Sewage, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK branch), Patagonia, The International Programme on the State of the Ocean (IPSO)

Background on the event

While plastic pollution is one of the most significant and growing threats to ocean health, there is increasing recognition that no single solution will solve this issue. The latest science shows that systems change is the route to fundamentally address plastic pollution, yet there is low awareness of what is required to turn this theory into practice. This is particularly important in the context of giving confidence on how to achieve the Global Plastics Treaty.

Taking a conversation-style panel format, interspersed with engaging messages from partners around the world, this event showcased and explored real-life approaches, innovations and interventions that have been working to reduce plastic pollution at different levels across the system. Together we illustrated the importance of trialing and adopting approaches that seek to change entire systems, which will in turn help us achieve more sustainable, ocean-friendly cities, and deliver on the critical targets and commitments of the SDGs.

Panelists:

Gabe Davies, Ocean Marketing Manager (EMEA), [Patagonia](#)

Hugo Tagholm, Co-Founder and Chief Executive, [Surfers Against Sewage](#) (SAS)

Louisa Hooper, Interim Director, [Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation](#) UK (CGF)

Prof. Heather Koldewey, Lead of Bertarelli Foundation's Marine Science Programme, [Zoological Society of London](#) (ZSL)

With video messages from:

#OneLess London - stopping plastic pollution at source in an urban setting

Coast4C, Philippines - social enterprise initiatives to save the ocean

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- The case for taking a systems change approach to tackling plastic pollution at source and how to do it in practice.
- The role of philanthropy in convening organisations from different sectors in order to enable collaboration for systemic change.
- The power of local communities in enabling change by advocating for new solutions to tackle plastic pollution at source and cleaning up pollution from local beaches.
- The role of business in innovating and creating sustainable products, the need to evaluate materials used and reevaluate existing ones.
- The need for increased collaboration and partnership to share learnings, maintain momentum and drive legislative change.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Use systems change approaches to tackle plastic pollution at source and collaborate with local stakeholders.
- Resource collaboration for systemic change appropriately, including resourcing expert facilitation, recognising that it takes time to build effective collaboration.
- Policy leaders must lead by example in eliminating the use of single-use plastic in their offices.
- Implement and scale up simple and effective solutions, informed by science, to reduce plastic pollution.
- Connect the voice of the community during campaigns and key decision making.

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

NA