



## 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Plastic pollution:– What is holding us back from solutions; what key science and innovation is needed to tackle this global environmental challenge?

28/7/2022, 16:00 – 17:30, Virtual – on-line

Organized by: [University of Plymouth Marine Institute](#), UK; [Gallifrey Foundation](#), [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Marine Debris Program](#), |USA; SYSTEMIQ, First Institute of Oceanography, MNR, China, [Institut Teknologi Bandung](#), Indonesia; [PlanetCare](#), Slovenia; [University of Vienna](#), Austria

### Background on the event

The topic of plastic pollution has received considerable global attention and as a consequence, was the focus of a recent UNEA 5.2 resolution entitled ‘End Plastic Pollution: Towards an internationally legally binding instrument.’

Most of the evidence around plastic pollution originates from the marine environment, yet most of the causes and hence the interventions to reduce plastic pollution, are grounded in supply chains and actions that lie on land. Do we have sufficient evidence to inform the recent UNEA resolution and if not, where are the evidence gaps? More broadly, are there lessons that can be learned from our current understanding of plastic pollution and our progress towards interventions that can help guide the way toward prioritisation of actions in relation to other environmental contaminants?

### Key Issues discussed

- Do we need more evidence on the problem at sea or more on the trade-offs between solutions on land?
- What are the differences in applicability of solutions between nations?
- What is the relative importance of interventions at the design stage vs waste management to achieve circularity?
- What types of legal framework are needed to achieve success?
- What are the necessary national/international standards and enforcement?

## **Key recommendations for action**

To move forward, we need robust granular independent evidence on which interventions are most effective and feasible in which contexts. For example evidence to indicate:

- Where will reduction, for example by restricting production, work, and where might this increase usage of other problematic materials?
- Where will deposit return be most appropriate?
- Which products should be designed for circularity?
- Can recyclability be increased by re-design?
- How do we engage consumers to embrace such change?
- What polices, legal frameworks and enforcement are needed?
- How do outcomes vary between nations?
- What are the costs of different interventions, and who will carry the burden?
- What are the social impacts, particularly on employment and health?
- What are the trade offs between these various interventions?

Visit <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/whats-on/plastic-pollution-2022-un-ocean-conference-official-virtual-side-event>

## **Voluntary Commitments**

University of Plymouth hereby makes the following commitments in support of SDG 14

14.3.1 Support or organise events aimed to promote conservation and sustainable utilisation of the oceans, seas, lakes, rivers and marine resources

14.3.3 Work directly (research and/or engagement with industries) to maintain and extend existing ecosystems and their biodiversity, of both plants and animals, especially ecosystems under threat

14.3.4 Work directly (research and/or engagement with industries) on technologies or practices that enable marine industry to minimise or prevent damage to aquatic ecosystems

14.5.2 Monitor the health of aquatic ecosystems

14.5.3 Develop and support programmes and incentives that encourage and maintain good aquatic stewardship practices

14.5.4 Collaborate with the local community in efforts to maintain shared aquatic ecosystems