

Introduction

Dear ministers, excellencies, delegates, participants,

On behalf of WWF and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation I would like to thank the organisers of this conference for the opportunity to highlight the wide spectrum of support from both the industry, the finance sector and civil society, for a new UN plastics treaty, supporting the transition to a circular economy.

Over the last couple of years our organisations worked with many of the world's leading consumer goods companies who are placing plastic packaging on the market to align on a comprehensive circular economy approach. To support these efforts, we developed together with the Boston Consulting Group the business case for a new UN treaty on plastic pollution, a report which was published in October 2020.

Based on this report, an ever-growing number of organisations and companies are now calling on UN member states to commit to the development of a global treaty on plastic pollution. For today's conference, we have gathered four testimonials from this group of supporters.

[Pre-recorded video](#) starts here:

Andrew Morlet, CEO, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

To solve the plastics waste and pollution challenge, a circular economy approach is key.

We need to eliminate the plastics in the economy that we don't need. For the plastics we need, we need to ensure that they can be reused, recycled or composted. And we need to collect and circulate the plastics that we use to keep them in the economy and out of the natural environment.

Today, through voluntary agreements like the Global Commitment and the Plastics Pact Network, we have already seen more than 1,000 leading organisations from across the plastics value chain come together and make significant strides towards the creation of a circular economy for plastics.

But voluntary agreements alone are not enough. We need an international, binding approach to amplify the efforts of these leading organisations who are committed to delivering better solutions, and to level the playing field for all companies to ensure that they are doing their part.

A comprehensive, global framework will strengthen policy coordination and collaboration, going well beyond the exchange of information and best practices we have today.

By setting out global goals and legally binding instruments, together with national action plans and consistent measurement, a UN Treaty will significantly accelerate existing initiatives, and also stimulate new ones.

Recognising the urgency of this situation, a group of 78 companies from across the plastics value chain and the financial services sector, with civil society, have signed a business manifesto calling on governments to commence international negotiations.

Let's now hear from two of these signatories on why they support a new UN treaty to address plastics pollution.

Alan Jope, CEO, Unilever

Around the world, governments, civil society, businesses, academia and individual citizens, are mobilising to try and shift to a much more circular economy.

Unilever has made a range of commitments, including halving our use of virgin plastic and that we will collect and process as much plastic as we use. There is a lot that we can do.

But collective action is key to delivering our commitments. Only collaboration across sectors, across national boundaries and across time can generate the impact that's needed. A shared roadmap will accelerate this action.

That is exactly why Unilever is a strong supporter of a UN Plastics Treaty.

A meaningful, well designed – and binding - treaty that tackles virgin plastic production, transforms the reuse of plastic, creates certainty for investment in infrastructure and drives transparency.

A UN Plastics Treaty can help transform our relationship with this important material.

Anne Richards, CEO, Fidelity International

Fidelity International supports the call for a UN Treaty based on circular economy principles, including both upstream and downstream measures to tackle plastic pollution.

A treaty is the obvious next step from the successful voluntary agreements already in place.

It will raise greater awareness of the issue and the need to act, in turn harmonising policy efforts, enhancing investment planning, stimulating innovation, and coordinating infrastructure development.

The environmental impacts of single use plastics can be significant, especially for ocean life. As a global asset manager, we actively engage with companies to reduce their environmental impact.

We believe sustainable companies will be better placed to keep pace with a changing regulatory and consumer landscape and deliver attractive returns to investors over the long-term.

Through collaboration we can all make a difference.

Marco Lambertini, Director General, WWF International

Tragically, the plastic pollution crisis is showing no signs of slowing down. But a commitment to tackle it has reached an unprecedented level.

We need a UN Treaty on plastic pollution, that unites governments, companies, consumers, around clear targets and binding measures, for reduction, collection, recycling, and sustainable alternatives.

Consumers around the world, in developed and developing economies, are signalling their readiness for a step change in behaviours, and are calling on their leaders to create the enabling conditions and urgently take action.

More than 100 governments have officially endorsed the establishment of the treaty, including many governments who are gathered here today. To all of you goes our deep appreciation and support. This conference provides a unique opportunity for you, leaders, to pave the way to success at the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly, when the negotiations of the treaty must begin.

We call on all governments to urgently establish an international negotiating committee for a UN treaty on plastic pollution. The momentum is there; the time is now; the time to turn off the tap of plastic pollution once and for all. Thank you.