



Plastic Pollution

Selected Online Resources

Every day, the equivalent of 2,000 garbage trucks full of plastic are dumped into the world's oceans, rivers, and lakes.

Plastic pollution is a global problem. Every year 19-23 million tonnes of plastic waste leaks into aquatic ecosystems, polluting lakes, rivers and seas.

Plastic pollution can alter habitats and natural processes, reducing ecosystems' ability to adapt to climate change, directly affecting millions of people's livelihoods, food production capabilities and social well-being.

Source: <https://www.unep.org/plastic-pollution>

Five things you need to know about ocean plastics (UN News, 6 June 2026):
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/06/1167637>

UN Entities

- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**
 - Plastic Pollution: <https://www.unep.org/plastic-pollution>
 - Everything you should know about microplastics (2 June 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/everything-you-should-know-about-microplastics>
 - Amid efforts to end plastic pollution, millions of waste pickers become a focus (26 May 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/amid-efforts-end-plastic-pollution-millions-waste-pickers-become-focus>
 - How data is helping cities counter plastic pollution (21 May 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/how-data-helping-cities-counter-plastic-pollution>
 - How training in green skills could help turn the tide against plastic pollution (14 May 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/how-training-green-skills-could-help-turn-tide-against-plastic-pollution>
 - Answering 10 pressing questions about plastic pollution (29 April 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/answering-10-pressing-questions-about-plastic-pollution>
 - What you need to know about the plastic pollution resolution (2 March 2022): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/what-you-need-know-about-plastic-pollution-resolution>
 - Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution: <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution>
 - Plastic pollution talks adjourn, but countries want to stay engaged: UNEP chief (UN News, 15 August 2025): <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165658>
 - The Global Plastics Hub: <https://globalplasticshub.org/>
The one-stop platform for data, knowledge, and collaboration to end plastic pollution.

- Law and Plastics Toolkit: <https://leap.unep.org/en/knowledge/toolkits/plastic>
A global resource to help countries take comprehensive action, including through legislation, to address plastic pollution.
- UNEP Plastics Initiative: <https://www.unep.org/topics/chemicals-and-pollution-action/plastic-pollution/one-plastics-initiative/about-unep-plastics>
- Beat Plastic Pollution Campaign: <https://www.unep.org/beatpollution/beat-plastic-pollution>
- Clean Seas Campaign: <https://www.cleanseas.org/>
- InforMEA - United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements: <https://www.informeas.org/>
- **Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal**
 - Plastic Waste Amendments: <https://www.basel.int/Implementation/Plasticwaste/Overview/tabid/8347/Default.aspx>
- **Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GPML)**
<https://digital.gpmarinelitter.org/>
The Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GPML) is a multi-stakeholder partnership that brings together all actors working to prevent plastic pollution and marine litter. By providing a unique global platform to share knowledge and experience, partners can collaborate to create and advance solutions to this pressing global issue.
 - Global Plastics Hub - The one-stop platform for data, knowledge, and collaboration to end plastic pollution: <https://globalplasticshub.org/>
- **UN Environment Management Group (EMG)**
 - Task Team on Marine Litter and Microplastics: <https://unemg.org/marine-litter-and-microplastics/>
- **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**
 - Sustainable use and management of plastics in agriculture: <https://www.fao.org/climate-change/areas-of-work/plastics-in-agriculture/en>
 - Beating plastic pollution in our food systems: FAO's global action for World Environment Day 2025 (4 June 2025): <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/fao-blog/detail/fao-blog/2025/06/04/beating-plastic-pollution-in-our-food-systems/en>
- **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**
 - NUTEC Plastics - IAEA's flagship initiative: <https://www.iaea.org/services/key-programmes/nutec-plastics>
 - Pollution - Coastal and Marine - Plastics: <https://www.iaea.org/topics/coastal-and-marine/plastics>
 - Revolutionizing plastic recycling through irradiation (28 March 2025): <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/revolutionizing-plastic-recycling-through-irradiation>
- **International Maritime Organization (IMO)**
 - Hot Topics - Marine Litter: <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/marinelitter-default.aspx>
 - FAQ - Plastic pellets: <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/FAQ-Plastic-pellets.aspx>
 - OceanLitter Programme: Preventing and reducing marine plastic litter from sea-based sources: <https://www.imo.org/en/ourwork/partnershipsprojects/pages/oceanlitter-programme.aspx>
 - African nations seek solutions to marine plastic litter from shipping and fisheries (2 July 2025): <https://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/Pages/WhatsNew.aspx>
- **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**
 - Africa: Rethinking plastics to unlock industrial potential (19 November 2025): <https://unctad.org/news/africa-rethinking-plastics-unlock-industrial-potential>
 - Ending plastic pollution: Why trade matters (31 July 2025): <https://unctad.org/news/ending-plastic-pollution-why-trade-matters>
 - Organic residues: A sustainable solution to plastic pollution and development (27 November 2024): <https://unctad.org/news/organic-residues-sustainable-solution-plastic-pollution-and-development>

- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**
 - Chemicals and Waste Hub – Plastic Pollution: <https://www.undp.org/chemicals-waste/plastic-pollution>
 - Plastics 101: A quick guide to the global plastics negotiations: <https://www.undp.org/plastics-101>
 - 5 women, 5 countries, 1 mission: Beating plastic pollution with breakthrough ideas (1 July 2025): <https://stories.undp.org/five-women-five-countries-one-mission>
 - Plastic pollution in Small Island Developing States: A crisis beyond borders (5 June 2025): <https://www.undp.org/blog/plastic-pollution-small-island-developing-states-crisis-beyond-borders>
 - Why UNDP is tackling the developmental dimensions of plastic pollution: The burdens disproportionately affect the vulnerable (20 June 2024): <https://www.undp.org/blog/why-undp-tackling-developmental-dimensions-plastic-pollution>
 - Why aren't we recycling more plastic? (28 November 2023): <https://stories.undp.org/why-arent-we-recycling-more-plastic>
 - What do plastics have to do with climate change? (15 November 2022): <https://stories.undp.org/what-do-plastics-have-to-do-with-climate-change>
- **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**
 - Plastic pollution and disasters: <https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/sendai-framework-action/plastic-pollution-and-disasters>
- **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**
 - Research confirms importance of mosses for detection of pollutants, including microplastics, and ozone impacts on forests in a changing Climate (18 February 2026): <https://unece.org/media/press/411558>
- **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**
 - Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC): <https://www.ioc.unesco.org/>
 - Microplastic: <https://www.ioc.unesco.org/en/microplastics>
 - Ocean Literacy Portal: Ocean plastic pollution an overview: data and statistics (9 May 2022): <https://oceanliteracy.unesco.org/>
- **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**
 - Children's Environmental Health Collaborative - Spotlight Risk – Plastic: <https://ceh.unicef.org/spotlight-risk/plastics>
- **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**
 - Addressing the challenge of Plastic Pollution with Circular Economy practices: <https://www.unido.org/plastic-circular-economy>
- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**
 - Unwaste - Tackling waste trafficking to support a circular economy: <https://www.unodc.org/unwaste>
 - UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme (CCP)- Plastic & Hazardous Waste: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/ccp/activities/plastic-and-hazardous-waste.html>
- **UN Tourism (UNWTO)**
 - Global Tourism Plastics Initiative: <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/global-tourism-plastics-initiative>
- **World Health Organization**
 - Plastics and health initiative: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/plastics-and-health-initiative>
- **World Trade Organization (WTO)**
 - Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade (DPP): https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/ppesp_e/ppesp_e.htm
 - Plastics Dialogue discusses MC14 drafts, highlights development-focused matchmaking event (10 October 2025): https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news25_e/ppesp_10oct25_165_e.htm
 - Plastics Dialogue sharpens focus on transparency and standards (19 May 2025): https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news25_e/ppesp_19may25_e.htm

- Plastics Dialogue explores cooperation, standards and harmonization of trade measures (13 February 2025): https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news25_e/ppesp_14feb25_e.htm
- **World Bank**
 - How the World Bank Group is addressing marine plastic pollution: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/how-the-world-bank-group-is-addressing-marine-plastic-pollution>

UN Conferences & Observances

- Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution - Fifth Session (INC-5)
 - Second Part (INC-5.2), 5 - 14 August 2025, Geneva, Switzerland
<https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-5.2>
 - Talks on global plastic pollution treaty adjourn without consensus (15 August 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/talks-global-plastic-pollution-treaty-adjourn-without-consensus>
 - Resumed fifth session of negotiations on a global plastic pollution treaty opens in Geneva (5 August 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/resumed-fifth-session-negotiations-global-plastic-pollution-treaty>
 - The final straw? Plastic pollution talks get underway in Geneva (UN News, 4 August 2025): <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165563>
 - First Part (INC-5.1), 25 November - 1 December 2024, Busan, Republic of Korea:
<https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-5>
 - Plastic pollution negotiations adjourn with new text and a follow-up session planned (Busan, 2 December 2024): <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/media#PressRelease2Dec>
- 2025 UN Ocean Conference, Nice, France (9 June - 13 June 2025) :
<https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025>
 - Global push to end plastic pollution gains ground in Nice (12 June 2025):
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/06/1164301>
- International Day of Zero Waste, 30 March: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/zero-waste-day>
- World Environment Day, 5 June: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/environment-day>
 - 2025 - "Ending plastic pollution":
<https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/2025-updates>
 - 2023 - "Solutions to plastic pollution":
<https://www.worldenvironmentday.global/about/history/2023>
- World Cleanup Day, 20 September: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/cleanup-day>

Selected Statements and Speeches by UN Officials

- Secretary-General deeply regrets plastic pollution treaty talks ended without consensus, welcomes member states' determination to continue engagement (SG/SM/22763, 15 August 2025): <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sgsm22763.doc.htm>
- More time needed for plastic pollution treaty / Speech delivered by Inger Andersen (15 August 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/more-time-needed-plastic-pollution-treaty>
- Securing a treaty to beat plastic pollution / Speech delivered Inger Andersen (5 August 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/securing-treaty-beat-plastic-pollution>
- A global village coming together for a plastic pollution treaty / Speech delivered Inger Andersen (4 August 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/global-village-coming-together-plastic-pollution-treaty>
- Beating plastic pollution on World Environment Day / Speech delivered by Inger Andersen (5 June 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/beating-plastic-pollution-world-environment-day>

- Lasting solutions to plastic pollution / Speech delivered by Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (4 June 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/lasting-solutions-plastic-pollution>
- A final push to end plastic pollution / Speech delivered by Inger Andersen (1 June 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/final-push-end-plastic-pollution>
- 'We need ambitious, credible, just agreement' to end plastic pollution now, says Secretary-General, in Message for World Environment Day (SG/SM/22662, 28 May 2025): <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sqsm22662.doc.htm>
- Closing in on an end to plastic pollution / Speech delivered by Inger Andersen for the 2025 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (23 January 2025): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/closing-end-plastic-pollution>
- One step closer to a meaningful plastic pollution treaty / Speech delivered by Inger Andersen for The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (1 December 2024): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/one-step-closer-meaningful-plastic-pollution-treaty>
- Secretary-General urges countries to agree on Global Treaty to End Plastic Pollution at Busan Summit (SG/SM/22475, 25 November 2024): <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sqsm22475.doc.htm>
- A thousand days of negotiation, a thousand plastic pollution-free years / Speech delivered by Inger Andersen for the INC-5 Opening Plenary (25 November 2024): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/thousand-days-negotiation-thousand-plastic-pollution-free-years>
- 'We are choking on plastic', Secretary-General tells Intergovernmental Committee, calling for ambitious agreement to end plastic pollution (SG/SM/22433, 30 October 2024): <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sqsm22433.doc.htm>
- History beckons as plastic pollution deal draws closer / Speech delivered by Inger Andersen for the Galvanizing momentum for the Global Plastic Pollution Instrument (26 September 2024): <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/history-beckons-plastic-pollution-deal-draws-closer>
- Global community must stand as one, work towards legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution, Secretary-General stresses, in Message for Zero Waste Day (SG/SM/22171, 20 March 2024): <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sqsm22171.doc.htm>
- Consequences from plastic pollution catastrophic, but solutions possible 'if we act now', Secretary-General stresses in Message on World Environment Day (SG/SM/21818, 31 May 2023): <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sqsm21818.doc.htm>

Selected UN Documents & Publications

- Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, 1 December 2024 - CHAIR'S TEXT: https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/46710/Chairs_Text.pdf
- **A/HRC/DEC/56/117**: Plastic pollution implications for the full enjoyment of human rights: decision / adopted by the Human Rights Council on 11 July 2024: <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/DEC/56/117>
- **A/76/207** (22 July 2021): Implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes : note / by the Secretary-General: <https://docs.un.org/A/76/207>
User-friendly version: <https://sway.office.com/rOv56UKP8BlkCHu1?ref=Link>
Transmits report of the Special Rapporteur, Marcos Orellana, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 45/17. Examines the current and future negative implications of the various stages of the plastics cycle for the enjoyment of human rights.
- Further UN documents on "Plastics": <https://tinyurl.com/3tb7x4hb>
- Global Trade Update (August 2025): Mobilising trade to curb plastic pollution (UNCTAD): <https://unctad.org/publication/global-trade-update-august-2025-mobilising-trade-curb-plastic-pollution>

- World Bank Group and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution Process (Brief, July 2025): <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/environment/brief/world-bank-group-and-the-intergovernmental-negotiating-committee-on-plastic-pollution-process>
- Farewell to Single-use Plastics in the Pacific: Regional Summary Report (World Bank, May 2025): <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/43240>
- Marine Pollution: Blue Economy for Resilient Africa Program (World Bank, March 2025): <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/42986>
- Generation plastic: Unpacking the impact of plastic on children (UNICEF, November 2024): <https://www.unicef.org/reports/generation-plastic>
- Navigating Plastic Management: Tools for Government Action Planning (World Bank, November 2024): <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/42450>
- Combatting plastic pollution for sustainable development: A snapshot of UNDP's work in 12 countries (UNDP, November 2024): <https://www.undp.org/chemicals-waste/publications/combating-plastic-pollution-sustainable-development-snapshot-undps-work-12-countries>
- Plastic pollution and disaster risk reduction (UNDRR Issues Paper, March 2024): <https://www.undrr.org/publication/plastic-pollution-and-disaster-risk-reduction>
- Plastic Tobacco Filters: A problematic and unnecessary plastic impacting the environment and human health (UNEP Perspective series Issue No. 45, 1 February 2024): <https://www.unep.org/resources/perspective-series/issue-no-45-plastic-tobacco-filters-problematic-and-unnecessary>
- An Opportunity to End Plastic Pollution: A Global International Legally Binding Instrument (UNEP Perspective series, Issue No. 44, 12 September 2023): <https://www.unep.org/resources/perspective-series/issue-no-44-opportunity-end-plastic-pollution-global-international>
- Hazardous exposures to plastics in the world of work (ILO, September 2023): <https://www.ilo.org/publications/hazardous-exposures-plastics-world-work>
- Chemicals in Plastics - A Technical Report (UNEP, May 2023): <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/chemicals-plastics-technical-report>
- Turning off the Tap : how the world can end plastic pollution and create a circular economy (UNEP, May 2023): <https://www.unep.org/resources/turning-off-tap-end-plastic-pollution-create-circular-economy>
- Plastic Pollution: The pressing case for natural and environmentally friendly substitutes to plastics (UNCTAD, April 2023): <https://unctad.org/publication/plastic-pollution-pressing-case-natural-and-environmentally-friendly-substitutes>
- People and Plastics: The Profile, Vulnerabilities, and Role of Informal Waste Workers in Addressing Marine Plastics Pollution (World Bank, March 2023): <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/41193>
- Leaving no one behind: How a global instrument to end plastic pollution can enable a just transition for the people informally collecting and recovering waste (UN-Habitat / NIVA, 2022): <https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/11/un-habitat-niva-report-leaving-no-one-behind.pdf>
- Dietary and inhalation exposure to nano- and microplastic particles and potential implications for human health (WHO, August 2022): <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240054608>
- Plastics in agriculture – an environmental challenge (UNEP's Foresight Brief, August 2022): <https://www.unep.org/resources/emerging-issues/plastics-agriculture-environmental-challenge>
- Where Is the Value in the Chain? Pathways out of Plastic Pollution (World Bank, 2022): <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/37285>
- Enabling concerted multilateral action on plastic pollution and plastics substitutes (UNCTAD, December 2021): <https://unctad.org/publication/enabling-concerted-multilateral-action-plastic-pollution-and-plastics-substitutes>
- Plastics Toolbox: Business, Human Rights, and the Environment (UNEP, August/November 2021): https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39576/plastics_Toolbox.pdf
- From Pollution to Solution: A global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution (UNEP, October 2021): <https://www.unep.org/resources/pollution-solution-global-assessment-marine-litter-and-plastic-pollution>
- Drowning in Plastics: Marine Litter and Plastic Waste Vital Graphics (UNEP, October 2021): <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/drowning-plastics-marine-litter-and-plastic-waste-vital-graphics>

- Addressing Single-Use Plastic Products Pollution using a Life Cycle Approach (UNEP, June 2021): <https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/addressing-single-use-plastic-products-pollution-using-life-cycle-approach>
- Tackling Plastic Pollution: Legislative Guide for the Regulation of Single-Use Plastic Products (April 2021): <https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/tackling-plastic-pollution-legislative-guide-regulation>
- Microplastics in drinking-water (WHO, August 2019): <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241516198>
- Microplastics (UNEP, May 2019): <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/microplastics>
- Single-use plastics: A roadmap for sustainability (UNEP, March 2018): <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/single-use-plastics-roadmap-sustainability>
- Biodegradable Plastics and Marine Litter: Misconceptions, concerns and impacts on marine environments (December 2015): <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/biodegradable-plastics-and-marine-litter-misconceptions-concerns-and-impacts>

Further information

- UN Climate Action - What is the UN doing to end plastic pollution? What can you do? <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/plastics>
- Waste without borders (UNRIC, 16 September 2024): <https://unric.org/en/waste-without-borders/>
- Celebrity videos call for action on plastic waste pollution (1 July 2022): <https://www.un.org/en/delegate/celebrity-videos-call-action-plastic-waste-pollution>
- Exhibit - In Images: Plastic is Forever (2021): <https://www.un.org/en/exhibits/exhibit/in-images-plastic-forever>
- **UNCTAD Database: Trade in non-plastic substitutes:**
<https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.NonPlasticSubstsTradeByPartner>
This database is tracking international trade in non-plastic substitutes. Such materials can be minerals, wood pulp, or natural fibres like cotton, bamboo and seaweed. They can be used to make more environmentally friendly versions of the shopping bags, utensils, wrappers and other plastic products we consume daily. The database allows users to track evolving patterns of global trade in non-plastic substitutes based on export values reported by member states.

Non-UN sources

- #EUBeachCleanup - Global campaign for clean, plastic-free oceans https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/eu-beach-cleanup_en
- River Cleanup <https://www.river-cleanup.org/en>