

UNEA3 Progress on Plastics Update

Issue 1 (28 Nov 2017)

PLASTICS AT UNEA3

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and several global environmental agreements have taken an interest in plastic pollution, recognising it as a serious and rapidly growing issue of global concern that needs an urgent global response. Norway has submitted a draft [resolution to UNEA3](#) calling for the establishment of an Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group to make recommendations to strengthen international governance structures for combating marine plastic litter and microplastics that could lead to the proposition of global convention.

Several member representatives of the [#BreakFreeFromPlastic](#) movement are attending UNEA3 in support of a joint call for [an international legally binding agreement on plastics and plastic pollution](#). Any such convention should include certain features: a binding global reduction target, caps on production and consumption of plastics, and requirements for loss prevention, collection, and recycling of all plastics. Global quality standards and market restrictions should accompany a set of strong enforcement mechanisms to ensure governments and industries comply with global targets for reduction.

This *UNEA3 Progress on Plastics Update* will serve as the regular communique in pursuit of these goals during the Assembly and its surrounding events.

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27 - 28 Nov: GLOBAL MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS FORUM

The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) has been structured around the most significant categories and themes of pollution: impacts on communities; land and soil pollution; marine pollution; air pollution; freshwater pollution; chemicals and waste; militarism, noise, and other pollution.



Marine Pollution Panel Dialogue

During the Marine Pollution panel, representatives from the [#BreakFreeFromPlastic](#) member groups spoke on the development of the movement and its articulated vision, as the entire panel discussed solutions for marine pollution, including and especially plastic pollution.

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The panel included:

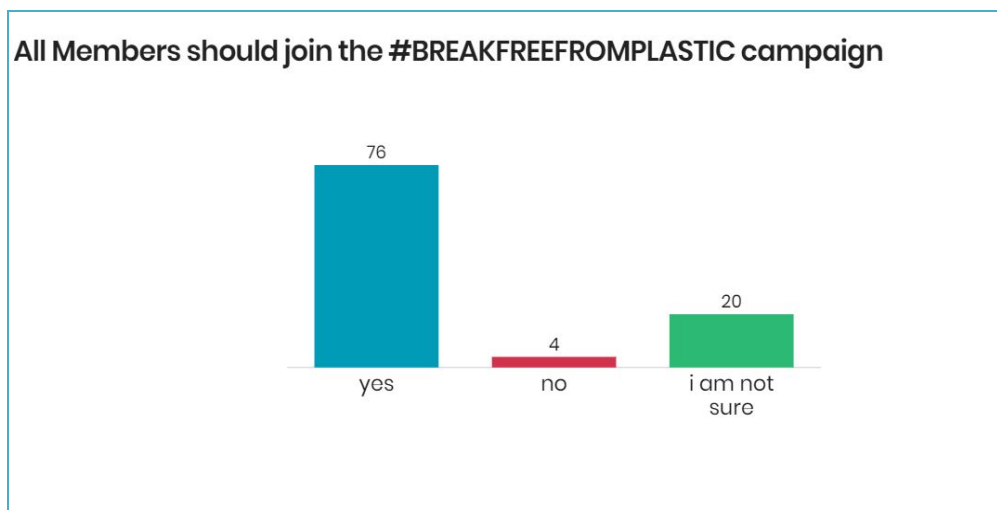
- Semia Gharbi, Association for Environmental Education of Future Generations
- Delphine Lévi Alvarès, Zero Waste Europe / Break Free From Plastic
- David Azoulay, Center for International Environmental Law
- Gary Mills, Artisanal Fishers Association, South Africa
- Sascha Gabizon, Women Engage for a Common Future (moderator)

A representative of the government of Norway, Guri Sandborg, also participated to explain the objectives and action areas in Norway's draft Resolution on marine litter and microplastic.

The GMGSF participants discussed the key issues surrounding plastic pollution within the wider marine pollution issue, calling for clear outcomes:

- Embrace a zero-waste vision for source reduction of plastic pollution
- Ensure requirements and wording on "extended producer responsibility" remains in the resolution adopted by UNEA3 following Norway's draft
- Stop the use of incineration and open burning as methods of dealing with marine pollution or land-based plastic waste, and reduce the reliance on landfills
- Support both extended producer responsibility *and* community-based solutions to reduce the production of plastics and prevent marine and land pollution

The following day, members of the GMGSF were encouraged to participate in an interactive declaration of the outcomes of the two-day meeting by voting via an app their agreement/disagreement with some outcomes statements. As you can see, there was overwhelming support from 100 participants in the meeting to join the [#BreakFreeFromPlastic](#) movement against plastic and plastic pollution!



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Solheim Dialogue: #NoDirtyBusiness



UN Environment Executive Secretary Erik Solheim participated in a dialogue with the GMGSF on 28 Nov 2017, and a few fiery points were discussed.

Initially, Secretary Solheim showed strong support for long-term work toward a binding convention on plastics. However, he encouraged the voluntary actions of individual businesses and corporations as a core path forward in that work. NGO Major Group chair Leida Rijnhout then cited the overwhelming plastic in the cafeteria in this very facility, and asked Solheim to take the initial stand by making the UNEA itself plastic free. In response, Solheim blamed the UN "bureaucracy" as inhibiting his ability to reduce plastic at the UNEA headquarters.

In further dialogue, Secretary Solheim stated his unequivocal support for the role of business in solving pollution issues. NGO Major Group chair Leida Rijnhout and others challenged this position, citing the dirty practice of some corporations (including ones he named, like Walmart and Nestle. In response, Solheim insinuated that some NGOs themselves are dirty, and that we should end our positioning against business.

This prompted a silent protest as many members of the GMGSF stood holding signs or laptop screens with the message

"#NoDirtyBusiness @ UNEA3". Solheim said he was "not impressed" with this display from civil society, scoffing at our rejection of his pro-business position and kicking off a [Twitter storm of opposition](#).



Upcoming Events of Interest

4 DEC

12.00 - 14.00 in the Green Tent
The reality of plastic pollution and solutions to address it
([#BreakFreeFromPlastic](#) & CIEL event)

18.30 - 20.00 in TBC
[Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on "People and Pollution"](#)

5 DEC

7.30 - 9:30 in TBC
Breakfast Dialogue: Beat #marinelitter - does international governance get it? (hosted by Norway)

12.00 - 14.00 in the Green Tent
Pollution and Gender: Why it matters (WECF, WEP, BaliFokus, IPEN / Women's Major Group event)

13.15 - 14.45 in Conference Room 14
[Together against Marine litter and micro-plastics](#)

Full UNEA3 schedule can be found [here](#)

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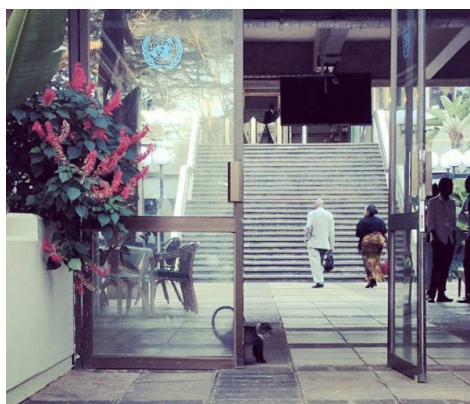
Key Statements on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter

Throughout the two-day sessions, Major Groups produced position statements on different forms of pollution. [#BreakFreeFromPlastic](#) members participated in the development of two such statements specifically on plastics, plastic pollution, and marine litter from the NGO and Women's Major Groups.

NGO Major Group

Plastic pollution is a problem that starts when plastic is produced, not simply when it enters the marine environment, as the entire supply and use system of plastic harms wildlife, land, water, and community health and safety. The global solutions to this problem must encompass proactive regulation from government, industry behavior change, and grassroots people-powered movements on a scale as unprecedented as the problem itself.

We are calling for the creation of an open-ended working group with a prominent presence of non-governmental organizations and a strong mandate to establish the basis of an agreement to end plastic pollution including binding production reduction targets, governmental accountability, and support for community-based innovations.



Getting up to a little monkey business...

Women's Major Group

Marine pollution is an issue that starts with the land-based production of toxic petrochemicals, plastics, and other forms of pollution, forming a problem long before it enters the marine environment (SDG 14). Women and children are often most adversely affected by the negative health and safety consequences of the air, water, and soil pollution resulting from the production of petrochemicals and unsustainable consumption, contaminating land and freshwater that eventually pollutes the marine environment (SDG 3, 12). The land-based production of marine pollution threatens the health, rights, and safety of women, men, and children around the world as workers, community members, consumers, and citizens.

The Women's Major Group is calling for holistic systemic change to enforce binding resolutions toward extended producer responsibility for marine litter and plastic pollution, adopting a polluter pays principle in a truly circular economy, boosting and supporting community-driven models for global action. We implore UN and government leaders to adopt strong targets for sustainable consumption, including production reduction targets, the improvement of industry practice, and the principles of producer responsibility for products throughout their entire life cycles.

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Partners in the UNEA3 Progress on Plastics Update



BALIFOKUS

#BreakFreeFromPlastic is a global movement envisioning a future free from plastic pollution. Since its launch in September 2016, over 1,000 non-governmental organisations from across the world have joined the movement to demand massive reductions in single-use plastics and to push for lasting solutions to the plastic pollution crisis. These organisations share the common values of environmental protection and social justice, which guide their work at the community level and represent a global, unified vision. Sign up at www.breakfreefromplastic.org.

Editor & Contact: Jane Patton, Plastic Pollution Coalition (jane@plasticpollutioncoalition.org)

Remember to Share!

Get the word out about the work being done on plastics and plastic pollution at UNEA3 by the [#BreakFreeFromPlastic](#) partners and supporters, by sharing any content from this newsletter or resharing some of the below posts.

Short link to this PDF: goo.gl/S2wi9m

[#NoDirtyBusiness tweets](#)

[#UNEPCivSoc tweets](#)

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