

Statement

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Press Contact

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Pre-INC-3 Plastics Europe Statement

According to Virginia Janssens, Managing Director, Plastics Europe,

“We believe that discarded plastic waste is unacceptable in any environment and support the objective of ending plastic pollution by 2040 globally. We welcome the UNEP “zero draft” as a first step. Now the real negotiations can begin and we must seize the opportunity to develop an ambitious agreement.

The Global Agreement on Plastics Pollution should contain mandatory and voluntary measures, obligations and criteria, and hold all stakeholders involved accountable. It must also strike the right balance between global obligations and national measures. A one-size fits all global approach to policy and regulation will not work.

We believe that transitioning from a linear to a circular plastic system, in which all plastic applications are reused, recycled, and responsibly managed during and after use, is key to tackling the problem of plastic waste. It will also reduce GHG emissions, and enhance economic development and job creation, especially in the global South.

To accelerate the circularity transition we need to create market pull for circular plastics, the rapid global expansion of collection, sorting and recycling (both mechanical and chemical), and create a sustainable financing system to support the massive investments required.

Unfortunately, the “zero draft” was a missed opportunity because it does not place enough emphasis on circularity. Therefore, negotiators will need to shift their focus towards circularity, including measures to promote sustainable production and consumption as well as recycling, in Nairobi.

The current “zero draft” also relies on negative lists or bans focused on specific polymers or substances considered problematic, without considering the application and potential alternatives. This approach risks unintentionally increasing environmental damage, with potential alternatives proving problematic when considering all socio-economic factors and life cycle assessments. It also ignores the pivotal role of innovation in increasing circularity and reducing plastic waste.

An application and science-based approach would however allow us to define and avoid problematic and avoidable plastics applications, and these unintended environmental and socio-economic consequences.

Financing the transition to a circular economy is a major challenge, particularly for emerging economies, and is why we support the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms to scale-up the necessary private and public funding.

Europe's plastics manufacturers recently launched a '[Plastics Transition](#)' roadmap which sets-out how we intend to transition to a circular plastics system and tackle the problem of plastics waste. It demonstrates that the transition is possible, and we believe it will be helpful in informing the negotiations and the ways in which different countries and regions subsequently implement the agreement.

Delivering a global agreement will not be easy. Although it is essential that the negotiations are pursued with urgency and ambition, we must avoid headline grabbing and superficially attractive decisions which will not necessarily help to end plastic pollution by 2040. It also requires a common vision and much deeper collaboration between multiple stakeholders, including the plastics value chain, national and international policymakers and civil society.

We are committed to contributing to the negotiations and look forward to constructively engaging with the other participants in Nairobi and beyond.”

Notes for Editors

Plastics Europe is the pan-European association of plastics manufacturers with offices across Europe. For over 100 years, science and innovation has been the DNA that cuts across our industry. With close to 100 members producing over 90% of all polymers across Europe, we are the catalyst for the industry with a responsibility to openly engage with stakeholders and deliver solutions which are safe, circular and sustainable. We are committed to implementing long-lasting positive change.