

# IPEN PLASTICS TREATY PLATFORM

## PROTECTING HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT FROM TOXIC CHEMICALS

Plastics are materials made of complex mixtures of chemicals, often including chemicals that are known to be hazardous to human health and to ecosystems at the global level.

Babies are born already pre-polluted with toxic chemicals stemming from plastics. Highly persistent chemical pollutants associated with plastics production and use contaminate human bodies and the terrestrial and marine wildlife and food chains on which humans depend. In addition, plastic production and the decomposition of plastic materials in the environment both contribute to climate change.

The global threat of plastic and chemical production is extremely concerning, with plastic production set to increase by 400% by 2050 while the plastic additives market will expand in a similar way in the same period. Also, by 2050, petrochemical production, including plastics, is expected to drive a 50% increase in oil demand globally.

We need a global agreement to end plastic pollution that protects human health and future generations.

**We welcome the 2022 UN Environment Assembly's resolution**, which committed to the negotiation of a legally binding global treaty addressing the full life cycle of plastics. The goals of this treaty include the prevention, reduction, and elimination of plastic pollution, including marine plastic pollution among other sources and pathways of plastic pollution.

In order to successfully develop a meaningful treaty, the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee (INC) process must ensure participation is open, inclusive, and transparent. While the INC should guarantee virtual access to all negotiating committees, it should recognize the importance of in-person participation of public interest organizations from all regions of the world, and ensure financial support to organizations from low- and middle-income countries.

IPEN's global network of organizations **reaffirms its commitment** to continue working jointly toward eliminating the toxic impacts of plastics on the health of citizens, workers, vulnerable populations and Indigenous Peoples, and the environment associated with hazardous chemicals in plastics. Removing the toxic impacts of toxic chemicals in plastics will require addressing all aspects of plastic production, use, transport, and disposal.

The health impacts of plastics are well documented. Most of the chemicals in the plastics production are known to cause a wide range of adverse health impacts. Some of the chemicals found in plastics are endocrine-disrupting chemicals, which can harm the hormonal system, resulting in infertility, cancers, and neurodevelopmental disorders. Existing international controls for plastic and plastic waste under the Stockholm and Basel Conventions are important but not sufficient. Unfortunately, many of these plastics release hazardous chemicals that can be transferred from mother to child during pregnancy, threatening the health of future generations.

We therefore urge governments and stakeholders to seize the opportunity of the Plastics Treaty negotiation process to achieve — by the year 2030 — **a full detoxification of plastic materials** so that toxic chemicals in plastics do not contaminate our food, bodies, water, soil, and air.

We call on governments to make the Plastics Treaty a tool for removing the adverse effects of plastics on the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to clean air, water, soil, and food, and the right to bear children, threatened by some plastics' ingredients' impacts on fertility. Vulnerable population workers, both in the formal and informal sectors, require special attention and should no longer suffer from the toxic impacts of plastic production, use, transport and disposal, in particular, due to their chemical content.

### TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, THE PLASTIC TREATY MUST:

1. Have an overall objective to protect human health and the environment from all adverse impacts of plastics, including curbing toxic and climate pollutants, based on the precautionary principle, similarly to Article 1 of the Stockholm Convention.
2. Address all types of plastics, including thermoplastics, thermoset plastics, and thermoelastomers and the associated chemicals used or generated throughout their life cycle, as well as all forms of plastic pollution, including from micro- and nanoplastics.

3. Eliminate non-essential uses of plastics and promote innovation to safer, sustainable materials for a toxics-free circular economy.
  4. Lead to sustainable production and consumption of plastics with a focus on reduction and minimization.
  5. Require reporting and transparency on the types and amounts of plastics produced, imported, and exported (including the strengthening of the use of international trading HS codes for all transboundary movements of plastics and their associated chemicals), as well as plastic waste generation, collection, and end-of-life management.
  6. Require transparency for the chemicals used in plastics production and as plastics ingredients to be publicly available and communicated in the supply chain and to citizens through labelling and databases.
  7. Lead to identification and phasing out the use of groups of hazardous chemicals. Priority groups for phasing out that could be named in the Treaty include bisphenols, brominated flame retardants, chlorinated paraffins, phthalates, benzotriazole UV stabilizers, and PFAS.
  8. Lead to the phase-out of commodity plastics that are toxic, are rarely recycled, and are hazardous when disposed of, including but not limited to polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyurethanes, polystyrene, and fluorinated polymers.
  9. Ensure an end to the toxic recycling of existing plastics that contain hazardous chemicals, to ensure a smooth transition to a non-toxic circular economy.
  10. Require that plastics are assessed for their health impacts throughout their life cycle, in line with the precautionary principle. Similar to the Stockholm Convention, lack of full scientific certainty shall not prevent action. National action plans should specifically aim at the minimization of the adverse health impacts of plastics throughout their life cycle.
  11. Promote the objectives of existing environmental agreements, including the Stockholm, Basel, Rotterdam Conventions, and SAICM
  12. Prioritize environmentally sound end-of-waste policies with a focus on best available techniques such as zero-waste strategies and non-combustion technologies.
- To prevent the production and releases of toxic emissions from plastics waste management, policies should prevent the following dangerous practices: open burning, incineration, co-firing in coal-fired power plants and waste-to-energy processes, co-processing in cement kilns, and chemical recycling.
13. Provide new, additional, sustainable and adequate funding for the implementation of the Treaty and require the chemical and petrochemical industry to contribute to financing the prevention and remediation of the pollution their materials cause.
  14. Apply the “**polluter pays**” principle, which requires that the costs of all impacts on human health, society, and the environment caused by the production, use, dumping, import and export of plastics are recovered through policies such as extended producers’ responsibility.
  15. Ensure open, transparent, and inclusive participation for civil society, as well as provide resources to ensure broad, gender and regionally balanced **public participation**, particularly from low- and middle-income countries, allowing public interest organizations to work together with governments to ensure a cooperative multi-stakeholder approach in the implementation and further development of the Treaty.
  16. Provide resources for capacity building and technology transfer to low- and middle-income governments and civil society.
  17. **Include a compliance mechanism** to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of the Treaty, including provisions on access to justice.



*IPEN's views on global controls on plastics:*

<https://ipen.org/documents/global-controls-plastic>

IPEN is a global network forging a healthier world where people and the environment are no longer harmed by the production, use, and disposal of toxic chemicals. Over 600 public interest NGOs in over 120 countries, largely low- and middle-income nations, comprise IPEN and work to strengthen global and national chemicals and waste policies, contribute to groundbreaking research, and build a global movement for a toxics-free future.

