

# Towards a Global Treaty on Plastic Pollution

## Common Seas' Position Paper

Common Seas is in strong and urgent support of a legally-binding United Nations Global Treaty on Plastic Pollution.

Along with over 750 organisations from more than 120 countries, Common Seas is signatory to the CIEL-coordinated Call to Action, which calls on UN Member States to negotiate a new legally-binding Global Treaty on plastic pollution as a matter of urgency, published<sup>[1]</sup> last December.

The Global Treaty must ensure effective upstream action to tackle ocean plastic pollution, through including the following priorities:

### Timing

- 1.A Global Treaty is urgent, since plastic pollution is forecast to quadruple within the next 19 years:
- The Treaty should be negotiated in time for UNEA 6 in 2024.

### Legal

2.Governments must agree a mandate at UNEA 5.2 to negotiate and adopt an international legally-binding global treaty on plastics pollution. No environmental issue of magnitude has ever been properly addressed without an international legally-binding treaty, so this would be a significant step forward.

3. The Global Treaty must commit Governments to:

- A coordinated set of actions and policies that will prevent and reduce plastic pollution, eliminating it by a specific date.
- Clear National Action Plans (NAPs) that:
  - Prioritise upstream actions (e.g. elimination of SUPs, switching to reuse and refill models) over downstream ones (e.g. recycling, beach cleans).
  - Are tailored to each country's specific needs and circumstances, to reflect the realities on the ground.
  - Encourage governments to put the polluter pays principle into legislation, in order to promote the introduction of policies such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and national plastic reduction targets.
  - Can be aggregated to deliver on the Global Treaty's overarching objective to eliminate plastic leakage into the ocean by a specific date.
- Common monitoring and reporting requirements at national and corporate levels, to ensure that National Action Plans are implemented in practice.

### Approach

4. The Global Treaty should:
- Prevent and reduce plastic pollution 'by promoting a circular economy and addressing the full lifecycle of plastics', in order 'to achieve sustainable production and consumption of plastics'.
  - Include significant reduction of microplastics.
  - Increase knowledge through awareness-raising and information exchange on best practices to prevent plastic pollution and promote behavioural change.

### Financial

5.The Global Treaty should include a financial mechanism to support implementation.

6.More generally, the Global Treaty should encourage coordinated investment approaches that:

- Prevents plastic pollution through upstream elimination, the expansion of consumer reuse, and new delivery models.
- Ensure poorer countries can provide every household with access to effective collection and recycling for the plastic that remains, including through the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility regimes, to ensure that plastic producers have to cover waste management costs.
- Deliver the research needed to fully understand the link between plastic use and human health risks.
- Mainstream education on plastic, to equip young people with the knowledge, experience and courage to address plastic pollution – in their schools, their community and their future.

7.Common Seas also thinks it is important for the Global Treaty to promote a just transition, by ensuring that the voices of countries with limited resources and those countries most at risk from the impacts of plastic pollution are properly represented during the negotiation of the Global Treaty, and by providing them with the financial and other support they will need to implement the Global Treaty.

### What Common Seas will do:

8.Common Seas is committed to ensuring a legally-binding Global Treaty, and aims to support ten countries to build the knowledge and evidence required to agree actions and policies that will prevent and reduce plastic pollution, to position them to become exemplar members of the Global Treaty.

9.We propose Plastic Drawdown<sup>[1]</sup> as one way to support countries (particularly those with high leakage, high ambition, but limited resources) on the start of their journey towards being able to develop an NAP and monitor and report on their progress.

10.Common Seas has delivered Plastic Drawdown in the Maldives, Greece, Indonesia and the UK, and has supported 20 Commonwealth countries to take action against plastic pollution.

**Common Seas  
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<sup>[1]</sup> At [www.plasticstreaty.org](http://www.plasticstreaty.org).

<sup>[2]</sup> Plastic Drawdown is Common Seas' rapid assessment tool enabling countries to develop a baseline and BAU assessment of their plastic pollution problem, and aligning stakeholders around policy priorities to tackle it.