



Resource Guide

WFUNA International Model United Nations New York City 2024

30 January 2024 - 2 February 2024

Intercontinental Times Square and The Westin Times Square

UN Environment Assembly

Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics





Welcome to WFUNA International Model United Nations New York 2024.

We are very pleased to introduce you to the most authentic simulation of the United Nations in the world; and hope to contribute to your understanding of the Organisation, its mandate, and its critical role in global affairs.

Through a series of pre-conference webinars that will be offered and documents – like this resource guide – we aim to educate you not only about the global issues on the UN agenda, but also about the ways and means through which those topics are discussed, debated and negotiated by real UN diplomats.

This resource guide will provide you with a head start in doing research to gain a deeper understanding of the global issue that you will be discussing and the actions that the government you have been assigned recommends that the international community should take to address this issue. To make the research process a bit easier, the resource guide has been divided into sections and subsections to assist you in researching these two components. We strongly recommend you to give a careful look through the sources listed below so that the interaction with your peers is as exciting as possible.

We wish you all the very best in this journey of learning!





Topic Description

As the level of production and consumption of plastic rises, the negative impacts on the environment grow. Every year the world produces approximately 430 million tons of plastic, with an expected growth rate of 4% per annum. The production and consumption of plastics have poisoned and polluted waterways. Plastic pollution endangers the survival of marine and land animals, which in turn damage ocean ecosystems. It is estimated that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by weight.

There are many ways that plastic ends up in the ocean. One of the most common ways is through littering, dumping, and stormwater runoff that carries plastic debris from streets, sidewalks, and landfills into stormwater drains, which discharge into rivers and streams that eventually end up in the ocean.

From 1950 to 2017, almost 10 billion tonnes of plastic were produced.

The issue of marine plastic pollution, including litter and microplastics, began to gain international attention in the early 2000s. UNEP played a crucial role in raising awareness about marine plastic pollution when it published a report in 2011 titled "Marine Litter: A Global Challenge," which highlighted the need for international action to address the issue. Then in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as the Rio+20 Summit made marine plastic litter a priority issue moving forward. A few years later, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, which included Goal 14: "Life Below Water." Target 14.1 specifically addresses the reduction of marine pollution, including plastic litter. At the first meeting of the UN Environment Assembly in 2014, "Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics" was considered an emerging global environmental problem.

The resolution recognized how the inappropriate management and disposal of plastic affects the marine environment, natural resources, fisheries, tourism, and the economy as well as the potential risks it poses to human health. Subsequent sessions of UNEA continued to discuss and adopt resolutions related to marine plastic litter and microplastics. These resolutions called for action, research, and cooperation at the international level and established an expert group to enhance the creation of a global framework to deal with marine litter and microplastics. All these efforts culminated in 2022 in the adoption of a resolution calling on Member States to end plastic pollution.

An Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) is developing a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, with the aim of having it finalized by the end of 2024. Talks within the INC have



focused on measures considering the entire life cycle of plastics, from extraction and product design to production to waste management, enabling opportunities to reduce waste before it is created as part of a circular economy.

Despite efforts and progress, eliminating marine plastic litter and microplastics will be challenging in light of the fact that production and consumption are expected to accelerate with no regard for the present and the future. UNEA delegates will need to think beyond the already provided solutions and find innovative solutions on the international, regional, and sub-regional levels to safeguard the environment.





Official Resources on the Topic

- [UNEA Resolutions On Marine Litter](#)

Summary: Evolution of the UNEA's work on the topic, summarizing the resolutions that express concerns and solutions over the years.

Published: 2023

- [Ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics](#)

Summary: This website presents an overview of the work of the ad hoc open-ended expert group (AHEG) on marine litter and microplastics carried out from 2018-2020. The AHEG on marine litter and microplastics was established at the third session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA).

Published: 2023

- [Fast Facts – What is Plastic Pollution?](#)

Summary: Provides a brief introduction to plastic pollution that examines what plastic pollution is, why we are producing too much plastic, and what is being done to address it.

Published: 2023

- [Solutions from the One Planet network to curb plastic pollution](#)

Summary: This report tackles the usage of plastic in industry, the causes of plastic pollution, solutions to reduce the use of plastic packaging, and solutions for governments and the industry regarding reusable, recyclable, compostable, and biodegradable packaging.

Published: 2023

- [Addressing the challenge of Marine Plastic Litter with Circular Economy practices](#)

Summary: After providing an introduction to the Marine Plastic Litter problem, this publication focuses on how Circular Economy practices can be used to address the problems associated with marine plastic litter. Toward this end, it asks questions like, how products can be designed without packaging or with less material, how single-use products can be designed with biodegradable materials, how products can be designed to make recycling easier, and how they can be designed to be used longer.

Published: 2019



- [Foresight Brief: Marine Plastics Litter and Microplastics](#)

Summary: Gives a great overview of the topic, including, the types of plastics and polymers found in the ocean, how they get there, and their impact on the marine environment. Overall it provides answers to three important questions: Why is this issue important?, What has been done to address this issue? What still needs to be done to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics in our rivers and oceans?

Published: 2017

- [Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics: Global Lessons and Research to Inspire Action and Guide Policy Change](#)

Summary: Study on marine debris and microplastics which was mandated by the Environment Assembly in its resolution 1/6. It is recommended to read topic 2, regarding governance frameworks, subtopics 5.1, 5.5, and 5.8 about sources of macro and microplastics, topic 7 about the impacts, and topic 8 concerning solutions.

Published: 2016





Official Statements/Documents issued by Member-States

Statements

- [2nd Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee \(INC-2\) to Develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution](#)

Summary: Published by the reporting service of the The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), an independent think tank whose mission is to shape and inform international policy on sustainable development, this documents provides a summary record of country statements delivered at the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-2) to develop an international legally binding instrument (ILBI) on plastic pollution. Summaries of the following country statements delivered on 31 May 2023 can be found in this document: Brazil, India, Costa Rica, Samoa, Ghana, Philippines, Malaysia, Palau, Mauritius, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Africa, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Republic of Korea, China, Angola, Switzerland, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Russian Federation, Canada, Qatar, Thailand, Norway, Bangladesh, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Zambia, Iceland, United Kingdom, Côte D'Ivoire, Cameroon, Australia, Turkiye, New Zealand, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Israel, Togo, Monaco, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Morocco, Tunisia, Singapore and other International Organizations.

Published: 2023

- Summary report, 1–2 September 2021
Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution *Summary:* Published by the reporting service of the The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), an independent think tank whose mission is to shape and inform international policy on sustainable development, this document provides a summary record of country statements delivered at the Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution from 1-2 September 2021. Summaries of the following country, IGO and political group statements can be found in this document: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Sweden, Kenya, Seychelles, Russian Federation, European Union, Argentina, United States, United Kingdom, Malaysia, Switzerland, Burkina Faso, Philippines, Liberia, Belize, Brazil, Indonesia (Alliance of Small Island States), Colombia, Uruguay, Japan, Qatar, Ethiopia, Norway, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Bangladesh, Georgia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Nepal, Dominican Republic, Libya, Mexico, China, Sierra Leone, Ecuador, Ghana, Viet Nam, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Peru, Denmark, Azerbaijan, Belgium,



European Union, Algeria, Brazil, Yemen, Iceland, Cameroon, Fiji, Romania, Costa Rica, France, Israel, Eritrea, Finland, Malta, Guatemala, Greece, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Chile, Japan

Published: 2021

- Summary report, 9–13 November 2020
4th Meeting of the Ad-hoc Open-ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics (AHEG-4)
Summary: Published by the reporting service of the The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), an independent think tank whose mission is to shape and inform international policy on sustainable development, this document provides a summary record of country statements delivered at the 4th meeting of AHEG from 9-13 November 2021. Summaries of the following country and IGO statements can be found in this document: the European Union, Japan, United States, Switzerland, Chile, Kenya, Rwanda, Colombia, Philippines, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, New Zealand, Canada, Norway, Mexico, Peru, United Kingdom, Malaysia, The Gambia, China, Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Guinea, Slovenia, Morocco, Kuwait, France, Togo.
Published: 2020
- [2nd Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to Develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution](#)
Summary: Published by the reporting service of the The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), an independent think tank whose mission is to shape and inform international policy on sustainable development, this document provides a summary record of country statements delivered at the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-2) to develop an international legally binding instrument (ILBI) on plastic pollution. Summaries of the following country statements delivered on 31 May 2023 can be found in this document: Brazil, India, Costa Rica, Samoa, Ghana, Philippines, Malaysia, Palau, Mauritius, Jordan, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Africa, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Republic of Korea, China, Angola, Switzerland, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Russian Federation, Canada, Qatar, Thailand, Norway, Bangladesh, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Zambia, Iceland, United Kingdom, Côte D'Ivoire, Cameroon, Australia, Türkiye, New Zealand, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Israel, Togo, Monaco, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Morocco, Tunisia, Singapore and other International Organizations.
Published: 2023



- [HAC Member States Join Statement INC-1](#)

Summary: This joint statement by the High Action Coalition that includes Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Uruguay that draws attention to the risk of plastic pollution, including microplastics, and how it poses a risk to human health, ecosystems, and biodiversity. These countries call for a legally binding instrument, capable of protecting human health and the environment.

Published: 2022

- [United States National Statement for Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee INC-1 on Plastic Pollution](#)

Summary: In its statement, the USA called for the need for a legally binding instrument, drawing attention to the necessity of eliminating the release of plastic into the environment and the necessity for robust and transparent national reporting on measures of progress made and implementation of solutions.

Published: 2022

- [UNEA-5 Statements](#)

Summary: Contains all the speeches given at the 5th meeting of the UN Environment Assembly, especially videos of the Opening Plenary. Countries do not speak exclusively about Marine Litter Pollution, but it provides key information on the work of UNEA and the topic appears in some speeches.

Published: 2021

- [Russian Federation's Statement at the Plenary of the UN Water Conference](#)

Summary: The Russian government stressed the importance of cooperation between multi-stakeholders, such as the academia, governments, private sector, and civil society, to implement an agenda to eliminate plastic pollution and marine litter. It also shows how Russia developed technology to track plastic throughout its lifecycle and how all countries should seek the same solution.

Published: 2021



Documents

- [Submission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the INC Plastic Pollution Secretariat](#)

Summary: Sets a framework containing core obligations, control measures, and voluntary approaches, as well as means of implementation to guarantee global coordination and cooperation on eliminating plastic pollution.

Published: 2022





Official Statements/Documents issued by Intergovernmental Organizations, Regional & Political Groups

Statements

- [Asia Pacific's Statement on UNEA-5](#)

Summary: On behalf of the 55 countries in the Asia Pacific region, the statement expresses concern about plastic pollution, marine plastic pollution, and single-use plastic product pollution. They advocate for a global framework “to prevent and reduce plastic pollution, marine plastic pollution and single-use plastic product pollution, which is informed by circular economy principles”.

Published: 2022

Documents

- [G20 Action Plan on Marine Litter](#)

Summary: G20 commitment towards implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda, which includes a plan to prevent and reduce marine litter by 2025.

Published: 2017

- [G7 Summit June 2015 – p. 14-15](#)

Summary: On pages 14 and 15, the G7 recognizes that marine litter poses a global challenge and notes its commitment to combat marine litter.

Published: 2015

- [Conclusions and Recommendations of the Workshop on the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter in Synergy with the Regional Seas Conventions](#)

Summary: Outlines agreed recommendations to coordinate an action plan to combat marine litter.

Published: 2015



Official Documents about the situation in UN Regions or Member-States

- [G20 Report on Actions Against Marine Plastic Litter Fifth Information Sharing based on the G20 Implementation Framework](#)

Summary: This G20 report documents actions taken to implement the National Action Plan of the Member States, in order to coordinate action between them to ensure the prevention and reduction of plastic waste, guarantee the safety of biodiversity and the marine ecosystem, promote innovative solutions, and ensure education and awareness on the topic. In section 6, called “Further Information” you will have access to all the data of the following actors that includes, descriptions of their national action plans, legislation enacted to regulate plastic and microplastic waste management, achievements to date, what is being done to educate and raise awareness and much more: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkiye, United Kingdom, United States of America, Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, Kiribati, Mauritius, Myanmar, The Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, and other International Organizations.

Published: 2023

- [Africa Region – Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter Law and Policy](#)

Summary: A brief introduction to plastic pollution in Africa. Presents the challenges African countries face in managing plastic waste, especially given the growth of the urban population in this region. It also summarizes the national legal frameworks by country: Botswana, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Published: 2023

- [Blue Awakening as Latin American and Caribbean states say no to plastic – UN Environment Programme](#)

Summary: Presents the action of Latin American and Caribbean countries to tackle plastic pollution, including Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Saint Lucia, and Uruguay.

Published: 2023



- [Policies, regulations, and strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean to prevent marine litter and plastic waste](#)

Summary: This report organizes an extensive and in-depth amount of content on how Latin American and Caribbean countries are organizing nationally to address the problem of marine litter. In summary, it is possible to see both the general context of the region and the policies of each Latin American state. The general idea is to ensure that plastic products are properly managed throughout their life cycle and solve the mismanagement of plastic waste.

Published: 2021



Non-Official Resources about the Topic

- [World Ocean Day: How much plastic is in our oceans?](#)
Summary: Brief explanation about the release of plastic on the oceans and the impacts on the marine environment and human health.
Published: 2023
- [Plastic Pollution – The Sea Cleaners](#)
Summary: Gives important numbers and data in an interactive way, explaining why only 10% of plastic waste is recycled, what happens to the plastic waste once it is thrown away, and other key information.
Published: 2023
- [Ocean Rights Testimony \(Earth Law Center\) – U.N. Ocean Conference](#)
Summary: Guaranteeing Ocean Rights is key to solving the issue of marine litter pollution, considering that this is caused not only by the mismanagement of plastic disposal but also by the lack of care for the ocean and marine environment.
Published: 2022
- [Effects of Microplastics on Fish and Human Health](#)
Summary: This article stresses how the presence of microplastics in seafood can be a hazard to human health.
Published: 2022
- [Impacts of Plastic Pollution in the Oceans on Marine Species, Biodiversity and Ecosystems](#)
Summary: Tackles the interactions of plastic with Nature, the pollution on the food chain, ecosystems that are at risk due to plastic pollution, and how to deal with the roots of the problem.
Published: 2022
- [Rights of Nature: Perspectives for Global Ocean Stewardship](#)
Summary: Although this article doesn't focus specifically on plastic pollution, it provides an important perspective on the necessity for a new international legally binding instrument for the conservation of the ocean. The best way to address these issues is to guarantee that oceans have the same rights as humans.
Published: 2020

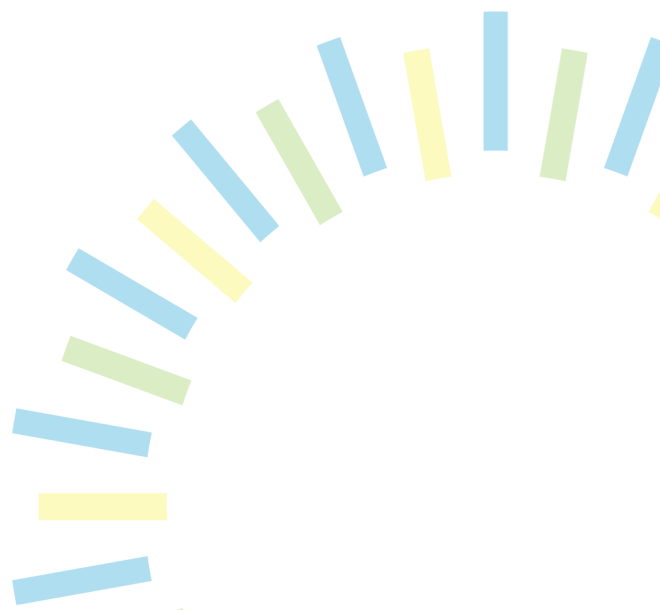


Non-Official Resources about Member-States or UN Regions

- [India and France to engage with like-minded nations to bolster talks for legally binding instruments to end plastic pollution](#)
Summary: The work of two countries towards the blue economy and ocean governance. Summarizes solutions that India and France are working together to implement.
Published: 2023
- [Marine environment – EU policies to protect Europe's ocean, seas, and coasts](#)
Summary: Framework of EU for conservation of its ocean, seas, and coasts, including the problems caused by marine litter.
Published: 2023
- [Plastics – the Facts 2022 \(Plastics Europe\)](#)
Summary: Underscores an examination of recent data considering the production, demand, and waste management of plastics in Europe.
Published: 2022
- [Plastic Pollution in Africa – Identifying Policy Gaps and Opportunities](#)
Summary: This report is divided into three sections, the first one tackles plastic pollution in Africa, setting the challenges, sources, and impacts of plastic pollution. The second underlines policy gaps and legal framework on the topic. And the third, and last section, states the opportunities, solutions, and ways of dealing with plastic pollution on the continent.
Published: 2022
- [Plastic pollution in Nigeria is poorly studied but enough is known to urge action](#)
Summary: Addresses the effects of plastic pollution on the country and notes that the low levels of recycling pose a huge threat to plastic pollution management.
Published: 2022
- [Initiatives and Labels for Plastics for the Circular Economy in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
Summary: This report gathers information on plastics in a circular economy, eco-labels, and environmental declarations, but the most important is section 4, which provides information on initiatives in Latin American and Caribbean countries, specifically Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, and Uruguay.



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