



MEDIA RELEASE

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LAUNCH: Local and Subnational Governments Coalition to end plastic pollution.

Today, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, the Gouvernement du Québec, the Government of Catalonia, UCLG and Partners officially launched the Global Coalition of Local and Subnational Governments to end Plastic Pollution and issued a call for action. The coalition is an international coalition of local and subnational governments, and partner organizations, with the primary goal of stopping plastic pollution and ensuring that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee recognizes the critical role that local and subnational governments have in addressing the current plastics crisis.

Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, said, *"ICLEI has long promoted multilevel governance as a vital way to collectively tackle our most pressing global sustainability challenges. Through our ICLEI Circulars program, we have supported our constituency to effectively use systems approaches for understanding, planning and managing resources, infrastructure and pollution in their jurisdictions. It is ever more important that considerations from local and subnational governments are taken into account during the negotiations between Member States so that we end up with an ambitious plastics treaty that enables collective action across all levels of government and with all stakeholders."*

Underlining the critical role that local and subnational governments can play in ending plastic pollution, Benoit Charette, Minister of Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Fauna and Parks, Government of Quebec emphasised that *"Local and subnational governments must play a leading role in tackling the triple environmental crisis. We are convinced of the need to take ambitious measures to put an end to plastic pollution. It is clear that implementing significant actions to reduce*

plastic pollution requires concerted action at all levels of governments. *Together, we can make the difference and forge an ambitious and effective global agreement.*"

Plastic pollution has become one of the most pressing environmental issues. Global plastic production has risen exponentially in the last decades, to more than 460 million tons¹ per year, and only an estimated 9% has been recycled². Of the 8.3 billion tons of plastics produced since the 1950s³, 79% have ended up in landfills or seeped into the environment^{4[4]}. Plastics make up 85% of marine debris, and are amongst the largest, most damaging, and long-lasting types of waste^{5,6}. In a business-as-usual scenario, plastic waste is estimated to increase more than 300 % by 2060⁷.

Ms Meritxell Serret, Minister of Foreign Action and European Union, Government of Catalonia, highlighted that *"We, local and regional governments are a key player in making this treaty a reality. We're the closest level of governance to the citizens, we have expertise, competencies, capacity to legislate and budget, on areas directly related to waste, plastic pollution, and just transition. We're on the ground and we're ready to help."*

Ms Emilia Saiz, UCLG World Secretariat Secretary General recalled that: *"The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution knows no boundary, and its effects are felt at the local level the most. Plastic pollutes the water we drink, the food we grow, our parks and the streets of our neighborhoods. Local and subnational governments must deal with these impacts firsthand, but they also hold the power to make a difference. We are working hard through the Global Taskforce and the Local and Subnational Governments Coalition to end plastic pollution in order to shape policies, implement regulations, and drive innovation to end plastic pollution."*

In highlighting the impact that plastic pollution has on cities, Zachary Tofias, Director of Food and Waste, C40 stressed that *"Cities see first hand the harmful consequences of plastic waste. The plastic crisis is the climate crisis, and we can not simply recycle our way out of this problem. Together we are calling for a robust solution aligned with the principles of zero waste and a just transition that makes our cities cleaner, healthier and more resilient. We are pleased to be working together with cities and partners to avoid single-use materials, and deliver equitable and inclusive opportunities through a more circular economy."*

¹ *Global Plastics Outlook*, February 22, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1787/de747aef-en>.

² "Plastics," European Environment Agency's home page, September 18, 2023, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/plastics>.

³ United Nations Environment Programme, *From Pollution to Solution: A Global Assessment of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution* (Nairobi, 2021).

⁴ UNEP, "Our Planet Is Choking on Plastics," Visual Feature | Beat Plastic Pollution, accessed 2024, <https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution>

⁵ *Global Plastics Outlook*, February 22, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1787/de747aef-en>.

⁶ *World Economic Forum and Ellen MacArthur Foundation and McKinsey & Company, "The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics," How to Build a Circular Economy*, 2016, <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/the-new-plastics-economy-rethinking-the-future-of-plastics>.

⁷ *Global Plastics Outlook*, February 22, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1787/de747aef-en>.

Addressing plastic pollution is a complex issue, involving multiple sources and actors, and requiring different stakeholders to join forces and intervene at various levels. Local and subnational governments (LSNG) are at the frontline of the plastic pollution crisis, facing increasing pressure to mitigate and respond to its devastating impact on the health and well-being of the environment and communities. As part of a whole of government approaches, it is essential to highlight the significant contribution that local and subnational governments make in addressing this worldwide challenge. The treaty should address the imbalance of the plastic value chain by establishing global rules and regulations across the full lifecycle of plastics, place accountability and appropriate measures upstream, and reduce the risk that cities responsible for waste management face by the uncontrolled accelerating growth in plastic waste generation.

To strengthen the global response to plastic pollution, The Global Cities Hub joins the LSNG Coalition to urge Member States to:

- ***Include LSNGs in the Negotiation Process and ensure their meaningful participation to harness their expertise and valuable local insights.***
- ***Recognize and Support explicitly the pivotal role of LSNGs in the treaty, in particular in relation to its implementation.***
- ***Follow a Comprehensive Approach by developing a robust treaty framework that addresses the entire plastic lifecycle, holds stakeholders accountable, and prioritizes waste reduction measures."***

The coalition also seeks to ensure that the future international instrument on plastic pollution has a high ambition to address plastic pollution, and also create healthy and thriving communities and workforce in line with the principles of a Just Transition, while ensuring a sustainable economy. Further objectives of the coalition include:

- Objective 1: To gather LSNGs support from around the world; creating a common voice to call for an ambitious legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, including the rules and regulations needed, as mentioned in the coalition statement. This will ensure that LSNGs are considered in post-INC processes.
- Objective 2: To include the essential role of LSNGs in the future instrument on plastic pollution and key considerations for LSNGs which includes the ambition of the instrument.
- Objective 3: To advocate and raise awareness among Member States to ensure that they acknowledge and take into account the role of LSNGs in the provisions of the treaty.

Yumi Nishikawa, WWF Plastic Smart Cities stresses the importance of a global binding treaty to end plastic pollution *"Local and subnational governments play a pivotal role in implementing waste management policies and efforts to end plastic pollution. However, the transboundary nature of plastic products and pollution presents challenges that extend beyond their jurisdiction. National and voluntary measures have*

been insufficient in addressing the escalating plastic crisis. A global treaty with binding global rules is essential for tackling challenges that cross jurisdictions and provide resources for local and subnational governments to combat plastic pollution. This year, world leaders have a historic chance to take decisive action and change the course of the worsening plastic crisis.

WWF Plastic Smart Cities is excited to join Local and Subnational Governments (LSNG) Coalition to end Plastic Pollution and gather LSNG support in a united and elevated platform that calls for an ambitious legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution. We would like to see key consideration for LSNGs that creates a healthier global environment in line with the principles of a just transition while ensuring a sustainable economy."

LSNG representatives are invited to endorse this effort by signing the Coalition Statement, Parties are invited to support the Coalition and help bring the Coalition objectives into their official positions. **For more information about the coalition and to read the Coalition Statement, please visit: <https://circulars.iclei.org/our-work/local-and-subnational-governments-coalition-to-end-plastic-pollution/>.**

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Local and Subnational Government Coalition Partners

Convening partners:



Founding LSNG Signatories:



In collaboration with:

