



# The CleanSeas campaign on Marine Litter

## The issue

Each year, at least 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans, the equivalent of a full garbage truck every minute. Between 60 and 90% of the litter that accumulates on shorelines, the sea surface and the sea floor is made up of plastic, the most common items being cigarette butts, bags, remains of fishing gear, and food and beverage containers. The consequences are severe: marine litter harms over 600 marine species (15% of which are endangered), it impacts on coastal economies, and can enter the human food chain through fish consumption. In the last 20 years, the proliferation of microbeads and single-use plastics has made the problem even more serious, and unless we act now, our seas will be hit with a plastic tide caused by human consumption.

If no action is taken, by 2050 there could be more plastic than fish in the oceans. In response to this crisis, UN Environment promotes the Clean Seas campaign; we hope you will join us in our call to action.

## Introduction to CleanSeas

In February 2017 UN Environment launched CleanSeas, with the aim of engaging governments, the general public, civil society and the private sector in the fight against marine plastic litter.

The campaign seeks to address the root causes of the problem through a five-year strategy that includes:

- i) educating and engaging citizens,
- ii) collaborating with governments and the private sector,
- iii) replicating and scaling up the efforts around the world.

The campaign's key assets are its ability to convene Member States and work with them to implement concrete initiatives, its global reach through the UN network, and a unified call to action that can support national movements to influence change.



## Overall goal

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**CleanSeas** aims to drive a shift towards substantial up-stream actions in the fight against plastic litter. The goal is to have industrial plastics management improved, non-recoverable plastics (e.g. microplastics in cosmetics) phased out, and single-use plastic significantly reduced within the next five years.

## Objectives

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### 1. UN Environment invites Governments to:

- Establish National and Regional Marine Litter Action Plans.
- Pioneer national legislation and policies to promote marine litter reduction.
- Set up national plastic management systems to measure and reduce their plastic footprint.

### 2. UN Environment invites the private sector to:

- Commit to reduce plastics use in production, product design and packaging.
- Improve, measure and report actions to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics.
- Showcase good practices and raise the profile of this issue with their audiences.

### 3. UN Environment aims to increase and improve public engagement by:

- Reaching the widest possible audience through the campaign's social and digital channels.
- Registering thousands of individual commitments to action, which range from reducing personal use of single-use plastic to engaging in beach clean-up initiatives.
- Supporting national movements to come together under one globally recognized brand, with assets that can enhance national efforts.

## Impact

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As of March 2018, only one year after **CleanSeas** was launched:

- **42 Governments** have already joined the campaign and committed to specific legislative or policy actions. The full list is as follows:  
*Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Grenada, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Maldives, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Saint Lucia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, UK, Uruguay.*
- **Key private sector partnerships and non-governmental alliances** have been established, including with:  
*DELL, Volvo Ocean Race, Volvo Car, Musto, the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators, the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria, the Flipflop Project, WWF, the Lonely Whale Foundation and others.*
- **Tens of thousands of citizens** have pledged to reduce their own plastic footprint and/or take action in their communities to raise awareness on plastic pollution and propose local initiatives including petitions, consumer actions and beach clean-ups.

## Funding

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To achieve the goals above, significant funding for the campaign is needed over the next five years. While UN Environment contributes with its staff and expertise, CleanSeas relies almost entirely on voluntary contributions from member states and the private sector.

Since its launch, the campaign has become a key asset to contribute to policy dialogue and the promotion of positive change in national legislation, programs and projects. Through CleanSeas, UN Environment is intensifying partnership activity around marine pollution and contributing new expertise and access to decision-makers and the scientific community for its stakeholders.

By supporting the Clean Seas campaign, you will contribute to saving our oceans from the plastic threat, to protect marine wildlife and human health, and to support coastal economies.

**Together we can turn the tide on plastic.**



For further information and inquiries:  
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