

# UNEA Monitor

UNEA Monitor is a daily newsletter powered by Major Groups during the UN Environment Assembly. The newsletter tracks the most important negotiations and events and delivers the daily news through the lens of civil society.

## Outcome Session of the 2nd UN Science Policy Business Forum on the Environment

### Perspective of the Civil Society

The closing session of the 2nd Science Policy Business Forum on March 10, 2019, moderated by Axel Threlfall of Reuters, offered highlights from presentations and discussions that had taken place during the two days of the Forum. Speakers from industry, education and civil society were invited to give two-minute overviews of various thematic topics.

These included the importance of big data and earth observation for measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and for improving decision-making; the need to engage with the private sector that has experience in data science and the resources for developing infrastructure for combining different types of data; new opportunities resulting from the decreasing cost of data, in particular in the developing world; the potential of business side innovations to improve nutrition and food security while limiting environmental impacts; the key role of citizen science in delivering the 2030 Agenda through supplying data, filling gaps, and driving behavioral change; the significance of creating business networks that can drive environmental change; and the importance

of co-creating pathways for sustainable development and empowering start-ups.

Highlights of the session were the engaging statements from youth leaders who summarized their experience of the Forum and emphasized the value of establishing a dialogue across generations, and the inspiring presentation of a start-up that had educated 200 children to produce lamps from waste.

Closing remarks were given by Mr. Satya S. Tripathi, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Head of New York Office, and Dr. Jian Liu, UN Environment Chief Scientist.



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The session also held a minute of silence in memory of those who lost their lives in the devastating fate of Ethiopia Airways that morning.

## Statement from the #BreakFreeFromPlastic Movement

Previous UN Environment Assemblies and other international bodies have taken up the issue of plastic pollution, especially marine plastic litter and microplastics, recognizing it as an increasingly serious issue, which requires an urgent global response. The case against plastic has been gaining strength in the last few years. While the data on how much plastic is accumulating in marine and land environments has been clear and dire for years, there is an increasing understanding of the full impacts of plastic pollution on human health – from cancer to neurological and respiratory disorders to developmental harm. Plastic not only is an environmental crisis: it is also a growing public health crisis on a global scale. Yet the plastics industry is only planning to expand, intending to increase production by more than 30 percent in the next five years.

Representatives from members of the #BreakFreeFromPlastic movement are requesting that one outcome from UNEA-4 be the creation of a Working Group to explore options, including a new convention on plastics with reduction targets for use and production. This vision is endorsed by more than 90 organizations worldwide. This Working Group, established during UNEA-4, would send the message to the world – including the plastics and consumer goods industries – that we are prepared to act vigorously to protect marine and human health.



Major Groups morning meeting at the MGs Green Tent on Monday, March 11, 2019.

**The Major Groups are truly saddened by the unfortunate event and loss of lives that occurred on Sunday morning. As a group, we offer our condolences to the families and friends who lost loved ones. Our thoughts remain with you.**

#### **Editorial Team:**

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