

# Outcomes of the Act #For Nature Forum Turning the Tide on Marine Plastics: How UNEA 5 can be a turning point

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## Objective of the Townhall

This Townhall organized by the Global Partnership on Marine Litter in collaboration with the UN Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment addressed the following question: What actions should UNEA 5 take on

marine plastic litter, and how can technology, finance and initiatives by stakeholders contribute to robust policy action in support of the ambition to eliminate all discharge of litter into the ocean in the long-term?

## Outcomes of the Townhall

- Exchanges on what action UNEA-5 should take on marine plastic litter and how it can be a turning point towards a stronger global response
- An increased understanding of how business and industry can become part of the solution through incentives.
- An interest in how digital tools can connect data, action and transform our understanding and action on marine litter through a consultative multi-stakeholder approach. The session included a live demo by IBM, a founding member of the Science-Policy-Business Forum, that showcased a proof of concept of the Marine Litter Digital Platform. The Platform was designed in collaboration with the Global Partnership on Marine Litter and Partners, Science-Policy-Business Forum, UNEP Ecosystems Division, UNEP Science Division and the Citizen Science Global Partnership. As showcased during the 20-minute demo, it involves big data integration tools, multi-sector collaboration platforms and a pilot of Sam- the marine litter digital human who uses machine learning tools to share multilayered information on marine litter environment.
- A greater appreciation of looking at previous and existing processes and multilateral agreements to learn from what is in order to best move forward.

## Key messages to the UN Environment Assembly

- **The need for action is extremely urgent and Governments are responsible for making it happen.** The polls revealed that of the more than 1000 participants of the townhall, 93% indicated that the need for action is extremely urgent (6% moderately urgent and 1 % not urgent) and 66% indicated that Governments need to take on the main accountability for meaningful change to occur with 20% indicating private sector, 9 % citizen and 5% civil society. Both government and business have to take primary responsibility to develop and implement the required solutions, but all of the other sectors must be included as essential stakeholders in developing, promoting, and instituting the solutions.
- **Act Now at UNEA-5 for bold and inspiring change (UNEA-5 is make or break)** Many speakers and participants called for a global legally binding agreement on marine plastic litter and microplastics

which acknowledges differentiated situations and responsibilities, takes into account the lifecycle of plastic and which provides incentives and support where needed through technical assistance, financing and research. This is the moment for a global movement led by governments engaging all stakeholders and UNEA-5 is the platform to agree on the way forward.

- **Listen to nature and innovate for transformative change to address drivers and root causes.** The science is very clear about the need for action – continue to gather collective data, learn from previous governance processes and embrace innovation in transforming production systems, design for recycling, waste management approaches, business models and financing systems and use opportunities such as artificial Intelligence and augmented insight to facilitate targeted action. It is also important not to underestimate the extent and impact of plastic litter from maritime activities, especially fisheries and aquaculture as abandoned lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear can have a disproportionately high social, economic and environmental impact. This is also true for litter in lakes, rivers and creeks
- **Collaboration is key to solve the issue and youth need to have a place at the table.** A collaborative innovation sandbox would have a very positive effect on education, awareness, and action on the issue. Such a sandbox incorporating input or feedback from young people would be especially important for education of the next generation and giving them a voice. Ensure that new measures, actions and innovation is actually sustainable, and not just another "smart" way to use plastic.
- **Build on and learn from existing work, knowledge and expertise.** Multilateral Environmental Agreements at regional and global levels can support aspects of this work and bring in regional contexts. Much can be learned from looking at environmental compliance and evaluation of implementation to further strengthen and support action.

Watch the townhall [here](#).

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