

PLASTIC POLLUTION IS A GLOBAL HEALTH THREAT

- As the world develops and adopts an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, **health** needs to remain a central part of the discussion.

There must be **NO** exemptions for plastics in health care

- First, we do **no harm**, but plastic harms human health and the environment at each stage of its life cycle.
- Health care represents almost **10% of the global economy**, and will continue to grow to provide equitable access to health care to the **growing population** worldwide.
- **Restrictions** already in place for plastic products like toys need to be extended to medical devices, and made global to ensure equity of protection.

THE WHOLE LIFE CYCLE MUST BE CONSIDERED

- From fossil fuel extraction through design and use of health care products, to reprocessing, reuse, recycling and final disposal. We are also fighting a climate crisis.
- **Innovation, cooperation, science, education and policy coherence** are key to address the massive plastics pollution problem that has not only invaded our oceans, air and lands, but also our bodies.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** has not only exacerbated the production, trade and use of single use plastics in health care but also it has shown the world the **power** of this sector.
- The health care sector can **model** how to transition away from fossil fuels, toxic chemicals, and unethical employment practices for the rest of the global economy.
- As part of the core obligations and control measures of a new Treaty devoted to plastic pollution, **health care products, its supply chain and waste need to be considered**.

Health Care Without Harm, founded on the basis of environmental health and justice, offers tools, resources, data, existing knowledge platforms and 26 years of experience. The power of health care professionals already engaged in mobilizing the sector towards a more sustainable and resilient one, is ready to join this effort.

INC-2. December 1

I also thank the process itself and you all for having an open negotiation. HCWH is here representing thousands of people who dedicate their lives to take care of our health.

In our day-to-day work, in HCWH we do capacity building within the health sector on sustainable procurement, medical waste management and other relevant climate topics.

Together with our partners, we produce data, we share experiences and we promote policy standards. We have created free tools to monitor different aspects of the use of plastics within the health sector; but **more incentives are required at the research interface.**

Many opportunities for reduction of unnecessary plastic use and for switching to safe reusable items exist in health care and solutions are already in place in hospitals across the world. **Awareness** has been key.

Manufacturers must also contribute to this change by bringing new and more sustainable products to market. We will always need to provide health care and we insist that medical devices are completely detoxify so they do no harm. **Unless the Treaty clearly marks the path, manufacturers will continue to follow the status quo.**

The majority of health care waste is either open burned or dumped; with its own threat to human health and wildlife. **Plastic waste disposal measures should be incorporated in the Treaty.**

Other actions that can be strengthened by this Treaty to solve the health care plastics crisis:

- Set national procurement policies
- Enforce extended producer responsibility for manufacturers
- Set legally binding standards, accompanied by suitable penalties for non-compliance;
- Incentivize innovation to redesign plastic medical products and their packaging,
- Audit plastics use to create a plan to reduce plastic consumption
- Ensure transparency for chemical information in plastics and obligation to report for manufacturers
- Align with mechanisms under the Basel Convention for reporting waste flows and bans as needed
- Ban toxic polymers and additives

We will continue to educate and influence shops and food businesses catering to hospitals as well as training health professionals and procurement officers in hospitals. We have seen successful measures to reduce and replace the use of plastics through sustainable procurement mechanisms and health care waste management processes. **We are already transforming the market and we need this Treaty to set a global legal framework.**

We stand ready to contribute with science and data, but emphasize that the science is already clear about the enormous harm done to human health and the environment by plastics, and there must be no delay to commitment and action.