

UK National Statement

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I wish to congratulate the Chair on his appointment. To the Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates who have joined us today, whether in person or online, we greatly look forward to engaging with you over the coming days, weeks and years ahead.

The UK is delighted that the world came together at the UN Environment Assembly this year and made a commitment to begin negotiating a legally binding treaty to end Plastic Pollution.

It has been a long time coming and people *everywhere* want to see this *fixed*.

And in the United Kingdom we have started addressing it: by getting rid of the single-use plastics that litter our beaches and that most of us can do without – straws, drink stirrers, bags, cotton buds.

Our goal is to maximise resource efficiency and minimise plastic waste, by following the principles of the waste hierarchy: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and create a circular economy for plastic.

We will legislate to design avoidable plastic waste out of the way we do things and make producers more responsible for the plastic they produce.

And by introducing a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content.

But with the rate of plastic pollution projected to increase threefold between 2016 and 2040 this is far from enough.

We need to take a global concerted approach that addresses the issue across the whole lifecycle of plastic, with the urgency that it demands.

The UK believes the treaty should restrain the demand for plastics and increase the supply of recycled plastics for use in new plastic products.

It should ensure plastics are designed to ensure durability, recyclability and safety, enabling a circular economy for plastics that protects the environment and human health.

And it should ensure the plastic waste that we do produce is collected, sorted and recycled so that we keep plastic in circulation as long as possible and avoid leakage to the environment.

And we are delighted to have joined the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution by 2040 as founding members and invite others to join.

The negotiations this week will be critical to set us on the path to a new treaty by 2024.

And there is no doubt that the next two years will be challenging, but the eyes of the world are upon us: we are confident that everyone will bring the ideas, leadership and creativity required to solve this issue.

Thank you again, we look forward to engaging with all of you to turn the tide on plastic pollution and make the change that is so desperately needed a reality.