

New Zealand national statement

As an island country amid the vast Pacific Ocean, New Zealand takes the issue of marine litter and plastic pollution seriously.

Our efforts to address the impact of marine plastic begins at home, where New Zealand is currently building the foundations for a transformed waste system, including a specific focus on plastics. This includes expanding investment, introducing system level change through refreshing our national waste strategy and legislation, strengthening operational and compliance activity, and addressing specific material streams and products. For example, we are phasing out hard to recycle food and drink packaging made from PVC and polystyrene and some degradable plastic products (e.g, oxo and photo degradable). We are also phasing out several single-use plastics. These phase outs will be complete by July 2025. This follows our plastic bag ban in 2019 for which there has been strong public and business support.

Internationally, we are already actively involved in a range of initiatives that focus on combatting marine plastic pollution on a global and regional scale. These include the UNEP and Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, the UN's Clean Seas Campaign, and contributing to the Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environmental Programme (SPREP) regional marine litter action plan. We are also a leading advocate for the reform of environmentally-harmful fossil fuel subsidies in a number of fora, including the WTO, to address one of the root causes of the plastic pollution problem, namely artificially cheap virgin plastics.

New Zealand wants to be part of global solutions to tackle the impacts of plastic pollution. New Zealand therefore supports the launch of negotiations towards a new global agreement on marine plastic pollution at next year's UN Environment Assembly meeting. Our focus is on working to finalise our national position in order to inform negotiations towards a new global agreement at UNEA5.2. We look forward to UNEA5.2 agreeing to an intergovernmental negotiating committee mandate that is sufficiently flexible to enable transparent, inclusive and robust discussion on a global agreement.

We look forward to engaging on the development of a global agreement to prevent new plastic pollution and to manage the plastic pollution already in our environment.