

UNDP and The Ocean Cleanup partner to tackle plastic pollution



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and The Ocean Cleanup have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the aim of collaborating on the global elimination of plastic pollution in oceans and rivers.

The purpose of this partnership is to curb the release of plastics into marine ecosystems by promoting policies and changing behaviours that will enhance responsible plastic waste management systems, reduce overall plastic pollution and speed up the implementation of technologies for intercepting plastics in rivers to combat marine plastic pollution.

Eliminating plastic pollution key to planetary health

Plastic pollution presents a serious threat to the health of the world's oceans and to the billions of people who rely on marine resources for food and livelihood. Plastic accumulates in five areas in the world's oceans, known as the subtropical oceanic gyres. These vast circular currents trap floating trash inside of them, resulting in the formation of five ocean garbage patches. Collaborative partnerships like this play a crucial role in addressing this complex global challenge.

"Eliminating plastic pollution in all its forms is key to protecting human and planetary health and safeguarding sustainable development," said Achim Steiner, [UNDP](#) administrator. "This alliance is an important step to curb the flow of plastic pollution into oceans and rivers but also to raise awareness, support sound policy-making and trigger behavioural change along the entire plastic value chain."

The Ocean Cleanup in a nutshell

"After our valuable experience working with local UNDP teams to tackle riverine plastic pollution in the Dominican Republic, we are excited to partner with UNDP to further promote sustainable ocean health," said [The Ocean Cleanup](#) founder and CEO Boyan Slat. "We believe that, through this alliance, we can help accelerate the deployment of our technologies to eliminate plastics from the oceans and rivers, as well as support broader policies aimed at waste management and reducing plastic pollution."

Slat, a Dutch inventor, founded The Ocean Cleanup in his hometown of Delft, the Netherlands when he was just 18 years old. The mission of The Ocean Cleanup is to eliminate plastic from the world's oceans. It was during this period that he started attracting investors for his project, including well-known names such as the band Coldplay and multinational companies such as Coca-Cola, Maersk and Kia, as well as an impressive array of academic partners such as ETH Zürich, [Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research](#) (NIOZ) and TU Delft.

Towards a zero-plastic pollution treaty

This new partnership comes at a critical time as negotiations for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, are taking shape. In March 2022, UN Member States made a landmark decision to create a legally binding international treaty aimed at ending plastic pollution. This offers a singular opportunity to bring about systemic change throughout the global plastics economy.

The first session of UN negotiations for a [Global Plastics Treaty](#) – also known as INC-1 (Intergovernmental Negotiating

Committee) – concluded in Punta del Este, Uruguay on 2 December 2022. Many countries and large companies are now talking about a full life-cycle approach addressing plastic from when it is produced until its disposal. The meeting in Punta del Este ended with many details of the treaty yet to be ironed out. Despite this, there was a strong push towards the notion that a treaty must establish shared goals, targets and obligations for nations that sign on to it to enforce.

□ Together for a plastic-free future: Achim Steiner and Boyan Slat ink partnership agreement. (Photo: United Nations Development Programme/Fouad Juez)

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/news/undp-and-the-ocean-cleanup-partner-to-tackle-plastic-pollution>
