

Impact of plastic on the marine environment - the international dimension



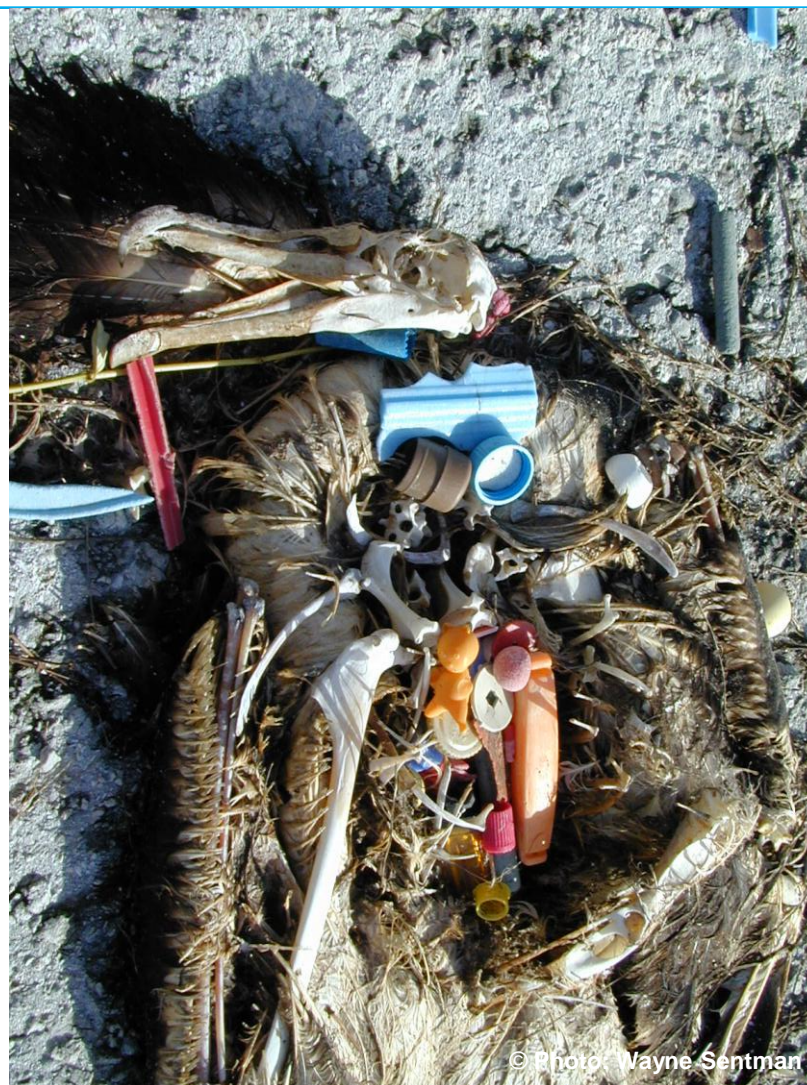
Ulf Björnholm, Head of UN Environment Brussels

7 November 2017

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Some facts and figures

- 31% of global fish stocks have disappeared
- >8 million ton plastic leaks into the ocean each year
- >600 species are impacted – of which 15% are endangered
- 52% of sea turtles have plastic's in their belly
- This has a major economic cost – e.g. marine litter costs the EU fishing fleet USD 82 million/year
- By 2050, oceans will carry more plastic than fish, and 99% of seabirds are likely to have ingested plastic



© Photo: Wayne Sentman

This is not only a problem for biodiversity

- 3 billion people rely on fish as source of protein
- 850 million people live within 100 km from coral reefs
- A large majority of cities are close to the coast, harnessing nature for trade, agriculture and industry
- 80% world's population live in areas with high water security threats

We need a Global and regional perspective

- 2017 – a “Year of the oceans” – with a major focus on marine litter
 - ✓ SDG 14 Conference in New York
 - ✓ “Our Oceans” Conference in Malta
 - ✓ UN process on Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction
 - ✓ Convention on Biological Diversity Sustainable Oceans Initiative
 - ✓ The UN Environment Assembly with Pollution as its main theme
 - ✓ IPCC work on Oceans and the Cryosphere
 - ✓ G7 action on Marine Litter
- This political momentum must translate into **real action** on the ground, through:
 - ✓ **Global guidance** – under UN leadership
 - ✓ **Regional cooperation** – for example regional seas and fisheries conventions
 - ✓ **Continued EU leadership** – from all EU institutions
 - ✓ **Strong partnerships** – the private sector needs to step up!
 - ✓ **More and better knowledge**

Policy action that will make a difference

- We need both regulation and economic incentives (and voluntary action!)
- Create a **circular economy**: close the material loop and improve plastics management
- Drastically reduce production/use of **single-use plastics** – through smarter design, longer life-span, recovery
- Reduce the production/use of **non-recoverable plastics** e.g. in cosmetics and personal care products
- **All stakeholders** must act – and cooperate
- *Biodegradable plastic will not be a silver bullet*

Join the Clean Seas Campaign!



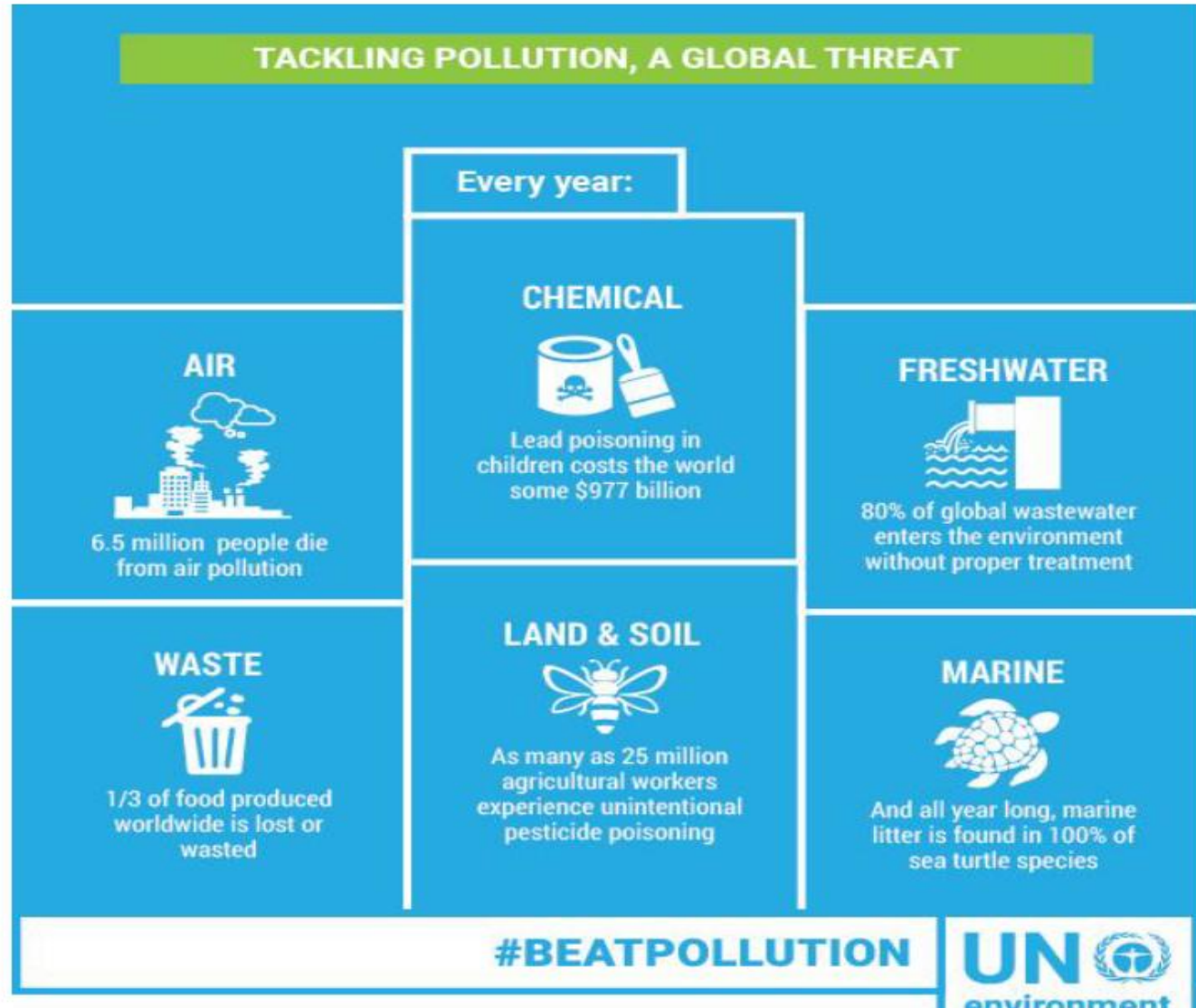
Turn the tide on plastics!
[Cleanseas.org](https://cleanseas.org)



The UN Environment Assembly

NAIROBI 4-6
DECEMBER
2017

THEME:
*TOWARDS A
POLLUTION-
FREE PLANET*



#BeatPollution!

SIGN THE PLEDGE

1,187,020

commitments on web and social media.
Now it's your turn to #BeatPollution.





Looking ahead

6th International Debris Conference
12-16 March 2018, San Diego

