

**Statement by
David Cooper
Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
World Environment Day
5 June 2023
Theme: Beat Plastic Pollution**

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This World Environment Day is the 50th anniversary of this important commemoration. It is fitting to highlight pollution - one of the elements of the triple planetary crisis, along with biodiversity loss and climate change. On this World Environment Day, I challenge us all to step up and beat plastic pollution. Action against plastic pollution is also action in support of biodiversity.

Plastics affect all ecosystems, but they account for at least 85 per cent of total marine waste. As a result of land-based pollution, fisheries and other activities, currently 11 million metric tonnes of plastics go into our ocean annually. That is estimated to triple over the next twenty years. We cannot allow that to happen because, not only is plastic pollution detrimental to marine life, it is also destroying the aquatic ecosystems, and other ecosystems we rely on, at an alarming rate.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted last year with the aim of halting and reversing biodiversity loss and putting biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. In its Target 7 is a specific commitment to prevent, reduce, and work towards eliminating plastic pollution. The development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution will be another important step.

It is imperative that we, as a society, all work towards implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It will take a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach to see tangible results by 2030. It is time to act, and together we can get one step closer to beating plastic pollution and to achieving the 2050 global vision of “Living in harmony with nature”.

We can all take action. As consumers, our choices will make a difference between an increasing stream of plastics entering the ocean or closing the tap on the flow. As citizens, it is time to become politically engaged and demand the kinds of changes in laws and regulations that will stem the flow of plastic pollution.

I call on us all to beat plastic pollution to Build Back Biodiversity.

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