



23 February 2017 – [UN Environment](#) launched today an unprecedented global campaign to eliminate major sources of marine litter: microplastics in cosmetics and the excessive, wasteful, usage of single-use plastic by the year 2022.

Three European countries, Belgium, France and Norway are among the first nine countries to have already joined the so-called #CleanSeas campaign with far-reaching pledges to turn the plastic tide.

The campaign is urging governments to pass plastic reduction policies; targeting industry to minimize plastic packaging and redesign products; and calling on consumers to change their throwaway habits – before irreversible damage is done to our seas.

Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment, said, "It is past time that we tackle the plastic problem that blights our oceans. Plastic pollution is surfing onto Indonesian beaches, settling onto the ocean floor of the North Pole, and rising through the food chain onto our dinner tables. We've stood by too long as the problem has gotten worse. It must stop."

Throughout the year, the #CleanSeas campaign will be announcing ambitious measures by countries and businesses to eliminate microplastics from personal care products, ban or tax single-use bags, and dramatically reduce other disposable plastic items.

As an example of the commitments already made by the first countries to join the campaign is Indonesia's pledge to slash its marine litter by a massive 70 per cent by 2025; Uruguay will tax single-use plastic bags later this year and Costa Rica will take measures to dramatically reduce single-use plastics through better waste management and education.

Each year, more than 8 million tonnes of plastic ends up in our oceans, wreaking havoc on marine wildlife, fisheries, tourism, and costing at least \$8 billion in damages to marine ecosystems. Up to 80 per cent of all litter in our oceans is made of plastic.

According to some estimates, at the rate we are dumping items such as plastic bottles, bags and cups after a single use, by 2050 our oceans will carry more plastic than fish and an estimated 99 per cent of seabirds will have ingested plastic.

For further information see: <http://www.cleanseas.org>