

# Public Policy

UN (United Nations) Plastics Agreement



# The LyondellBasell Position on the United Nations Global Plastics Agreement

In March of 2022, Heads of State, Ministers of Environment, and other representatives from UN Member States endorsed a resolution at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) to [End Plastic Pollution](#) and create an international legally binding agreement. The resolution addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal.

As instructed by the resolution, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) has been working to develop an international agreement to address plastic pollution, and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process is being used as the vehicle to negotiate and deliver the agreement. The second session of the INC in June 2023 resulted in a mandate to prepare a zero draft of the international agreement in advance of the third INC session in Nairobi, Kenya set for [November of 2023](#).

## **Industry Collaboration**

Plastics manufacturers and companies across the plastics value chain are working together to engage with INC delegates proactively throughout the INC process by sharing viewpoints and debating options and solutions with delegates and other stakeholders from countries around the world. Plastic producers have a vital role to play in addressing this issue, and the plastics industry can be a partner in enabling sustainable solutions to support the development of an effective global plastics agreement.

LyondellBasell is actively participating in developing industry positions on the agreement through collaboration with industry partners, the World Plastics Council, International Council of Chemical Associations, Global Partners for Plastics Circularity, PlasticsEurope, the American Chemistry Council and America's Plastics Makers. The plastics industry is committed to an ambitious and country-driven approach to help governments meet their goal of eliminating new plastic pollution into the environment. The plastics industry also recognizes we are in a period of transition, with actions already underway such as recycling innovation and scale up, improving product design for circularity, and investing in waste management infrastructure. However, we recognize we need to move faster.

## The LyondellBasell Position

LyondellBasell supports governments' ambition to eliminate additional plastic pollution by 2040. To achieve this, we need to accelerate a circular economy in which plastic products and packaging are sustainably reused or recycled instead of being discarded, enabled by a global agreement that unlocks industry innovation and global investment in plastics circularity.

We agree with the importance of sustainable consumption and production and creating well-designed plastic products which enable waste minimization. Creating universal access to collection and environmentally sound waste management is the first step toward circularity. Eliminating plastic pollution is not realistic until we close this gap and create a circular economy in which used plastics are no longer perceived as waste.

We support a global agreement to achieve the goal of eliminating new plastic pollution while retaining the societal benefits of plastics. We also support the need to respect each country's unique situation and work collaboratively to accelerate progress toward eliminating plastic pollution.

To help end new plastic pollution and accelerate a circular economy for plastics, it is our position that the agreement should accomplish the following:

- 1. Accelerate the transition from a linear model where products are generally discarded after use to a circular economy where plastics are reused, repaired, or recycled.** For example, in support of a circular economy, policies and mechanisms to accelerate the use of recycled plastics through public-private partnerships and blended finance should be advanced.
- 2. Create a harmonized international policy framework to eliminate plastic pollution.** The creation of a harmonized policy toolkit with associated guidance and best practices in areas such as waste minimization, sustainable financing, product design by application, informal recycling economy, and other public policies would allow for the flexibility needed to enable countries to apply selected practices in a manner which best fits their national and local objectives and align with their current state of infrastructure, technology, and funding.

- 3. Enable progress toward net zero global greenhouse gas emissions and support achievement of sustainable development goals.** Plastics play an important role in lowering greenhouse gas emissions, enabling more affordable and clean energy and enhancing access to clean water. Plastics are strong and lightweight and allow products to be produced with less material than existing alternatives. Plastics help make our homes and cars more energy and fuel efficient, and plastic packaging helps reduce food waste. Because of this, we do not support plastic bans or production caps, as these limitations would result in unintended negative consequences. The global agreement should focus on addressing plastic pollution and continue to allow for innovation in plastics to support achievement of sustainable development goals.
- 4. Create country-specific action plans to build out waste management capacity and deploy innovative circular technologies.** Not all countries will be at the same place from the standpoint of infrastructure, technology, and funding necessary to meet the global ambition to end plastic pollution into the environment. Solutions that work for larger or more developed countries may not be feasible for smaller or developing countries. However, with harmonized policy and consistent guidance, countries should be required to develop action plans and enabling policies with national targets for reducing plastic pollution, increasing recycling rates and the use of recycled content, and prioritizing high leakage applications, with specific rates and dates.
- 5. Ensure harmonized standards, definitions, and reporting to promote fair and equitable access to recycling programs and feedstocks.** Standards and definitions should be uniform to ensure more consistent and effective implementation of the agreement. Uniform standards and definitions will also help enable harmonization of Government/national reporting based on common metrics relevant to track progress towards the agreement's objectives and will help create global transparency.
- 6. Increase transparency on plastics additives.** Disclosure of information on chemical composition is key to ensuring that plastic packaging is safe to be made, used, reused, and recycled. We believe that the safety of



plastics additives can be managed within the existing regulatory frameworks such as the United States Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and the EU's Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) programs. However, we also recognize that industry should strive to increase transparency surrounding plastics additives to ensure broader public and stakeholder access and visibility. To this end, the plastics and chemical industry, through the International Council of Chemical Associations Plastics Leadership Group, is embarking on pathways to improve transparency of additives used in plastics and will continue working with national governments and international negotiators throughout the INC process so additives can be used with confidence and deliver the benefits essential to so many critical products. In addition, we believe in designing and producing plastics with safety and circularity in mind. Guidance on design for recycling can include recommendations for more recyclable, sustainable, and less toxic additives where possible as part of the product design process.

- 7. Prevent new plastic pollution before focusing on existing plastic pollution.** The global agreement should focus on addressing future plastic pollution through

preventing new releases into the environment and encouraging circularity. Addressing concerns related to existing plastic pollution remains a high priority. However, this issue can be more effectively managed through a separate mechanism allowing the global plastics agreement to focus on first preventing the release of new plastic pollution.

- 8. Seek to eliminate future plastic pollution into the environment by achieving universal access to waste management through increasing public-private investments and increasing economic incentives.** We support mandatory participation in a certified program across the plastics value chain to help prevent plastic production pellets from entering the environment (e.g., Operation Clean Sweep®).
- 9. Respect the interests and rights of all people across the plastics life cycle.** A just transition is about leveraging the transition from a linear to a circular economy to advance decent working conditions, promote social inclusion, and help eradicate poverty. Putting people at the center of the efforts to end plastic pollution not only helps advance these goals but also secures the support and participation required for the transition itself.



# About Us

We are LyondellBasell (LYB) – a leader in the global chemical industry creating solutions for everyday sustainable living. Through advanced technology and focused investments, we are enabling a circular and low carbon economy. Across all we do, we aim to unlock value for our customers, investors and society. As one of the world's largest producers of polymers and a leader in polyolefin technologies, we develop, manufacture and market high-quality and innovative products for applications ranging from sustainable transportation and food safety to clean water and quality healthcare. For more information, please visit [www.lyb.com](http://www.lyb.com) or follow [@LyondellBasell](https://www.linkedin.com/company/lyondellbasell) on LinkedIn.