

Women's working group on ending plastics pollution

Plastic pollution is an environmental crisis, a profound human health emergency and a critical justice issue, especially for women and girls who are disproportionately affected. From birth to adulthood, even in placentas, plastics are here in our bodies.

The latest evidence from the Boston College–Minderoo group indicates a correlation with hormonal imbalances, bioaccumulation in specific organs that impairs their function, obesity, inflammation, miscarriages, gestational diabetes, hypertension, endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and, of course, cancer.

That's why we are demanding an ambitious, globally binding treaty that recognizes the health impact of plastics. A treaty that considers human rights. A treaty that considers the full life cycle of plastics, that recognize the health impacts

The treaty should have :

As the Women's Working Group on Ending Plastic Pollution, we urge Member States to ensure that the following provisions are retained and strengthened in the treaty. These articles are essential to protect human health, uphold environmental justice, and guarantee meaningful participation.

- About the preamble, we support the Principle of Non-regression which means refusing to give up on effective measures to combat plastic pollution, Human Rights, Rio Declaration principles must be reflected in the preamble.
- Article 3 – Scope: We strongly support the Mexico–Switzerland proposal for Article 3 because it offers a comprehensive and actionable framework to reduce plastic pollution at its source. What we value most is its dual-level approach: it empowers Parties to identify and phase out harmful plastic products nationally, while establishing a global list for coordinated action.

The inclusion of clear criteria such as included chemicals of concern, toxicity, bioaccumulation, intentionally added microplastics, environmental persistence, and lack of recyclability ensures that decisions are grounded in science and public health.

We also welcome the transparent nomination and evaluation process, the role of a subsidiary body, and the safeguards for Indigenous knowledge and socio-economic impacts. Crucially, the proposal avoids veto power by allowing voting when consensus fails, while respecting national circumstances through opt-out provisions. This balance of ambition, flexibility, and accountability is exactly what's needed to deliver a treaty that protects health, rights, and the environment.

- Article 5 – Plastic Production: We emphasize the importance of keeping Article 5 separate. Production limits must be addressed distinctly and decisively to reduce pollution at its source.

We support that to strengthen Article 5, which is essential for advancing circularity and reducing plastic pollution at its source. What we value most is the emphasis on reuse systems, which are critical for shifting away from single-use models and enabling sustainable consumption.

We also welcome the inclusion of product information requirements, especially for countries that rely heavily on imports, as this supports transparency and compliance.

Finally, we strongly support the provision for future development of design and performance criteria, informed by science and traditional knowledge, to ensure plastic products are safe, durable, and environmentally sound.

- Article 6 should establish a binding framework for the immediate reduction and limitation of plastic production, with legally binding controls on supply and production, especially for essential and of single-use plastic volumes alongside robust transparency requirements. Such measures must be implemented for the full life cycle of plastics. Therefore we ask member states to keep in the text and support the proposal of Panama on article 6, without this commitment the treaty would fail to be successful.
- On article 7: We strongly support the retention of Article 7, as it is the only provision that explicitly connects the full lifecycle of plastics from production to waste management. This article is essential for ensuring coherence across the treaty and for addressing plastic pollution holistically. Without Article 7, the treaty risks fragmenting responsibilities and missing the opportunity to regulate plastics in an integrated and effective way.
- Article 19 The text should retain Article 19 on Health and include legally binding obligations to prevent health impacts from plastic production and chemicals, while upholding the right to a clean, healthy, and safe environment, including in the workplace.

We strongly advocate for health to remain a central pillar of the treaty. Plastic pollution affects human health across its entire lifecycle from extraction and production to use, disposal, and environmental leakage. It is essential that the treaty includes disaggregated information/ data on health impacts, especially for groups in vulnerable situations, including women, who are often more exposed due to caregiving roles, informal labor, and daily contact with plastic-containing products.

- Article 20 on Participation

We strongly advocate for inclusive participation of all accredited NGOs, not only those with consultative status with the UN. This must include organizations accredited to the UNEA and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, as reflected in the SPP document.

We call on Member States to uphold these provisions as non-negotiable pillars of a treaty that is ambitious, just, and responsive to the lived realities of communities most affected by plastic pollution.