



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
DR. CRISTIANA PAŞCA PALMER
on the occasion of
World Environment Day
5 June 2018**

*Beat Plastic Pollution
If you can't reuse it, refuse it*

Every year, we use some 500 billion plastic bags. Every year, as much as 13 million tons of plastic finds its way into the ocean. Every year, 17 million barrels of oil are used to produce plastic.

These single-use plastics are convenient for us, the users. But they are not convenient for the natural ecosystems and for those that harbor them. Plastics kill some 100,000 marine animals each year. The victims include turtles, fish, birds and other species and living organisms.

Think about this. Then consider that global plastic production is projected to nearly double over the next 10 to 15 years. We have a recipe for potential disaster!

Plastic pollution is particularly a problem for oceans. Approximately one truckload of plastics ends up in the ocean every minute. Studies show that at this current rate, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050.

It might not seem personal, but it is.

Beyond the fact that we, the users, are the ones clogging the ocean with plastic, that plastic ends up then on our plate and in our body, affecting our health. We, as humans, are also directly affected.

The message is thus clear. We need to change our behavior and entirely rethink our approach to plastics – from manufacturing and distribution, to our use of single-use plastics. And we must work as a team: governments, businesses, and individual consumers of plastics. Joint efforts are essential to addressing the plastic pollution challenge and safeguarding our environment.

We can start by saying “NO”, on a day-to-day basis, when we are offered plastic straws, grocery bags, plastic utensils, plates and cups. This is easy, because the alternatives are readily available: reusable bags and reusable water bottles; dishes, glasses and metal silverware; and cosmetic and personal care products that do not contain microplastics. They are all in the same price range with the plastic options, but so much better mitigators of the risks that plastic poses to our health and to the health of our environment!

And we can take this a step forward: we can organize or participate in a clean-up of various nature-based sites, such as a beach, river, stream or a nearby park that may be littered with plastic. Investing some of our time and energy in taking care of our surroundings is an effective way to ensure that we breathe cleaner air, eat healthier food, and drink cleaner water.

Thus today, on the World Environment Day, I challenge you to take action: Let us safeguard the wellbeing of all life on Earth by reducing the use of single-use plastics.

It is easy, it is accessible, and it is impactful.

Let us build together our legacy by co-creating a healthier United planet.

Happy World Environment Day!

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