

## Hopes for global treaty to end plastic pollution

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via Kate Ter Haar on flickr.com

Countries worldwide could soon sign a treaty to limit how much plastic pollution we create. Representatives from 175 nations have been meeting in South Korea to talk about the problem of plastic waste. The United Nations Environment Program

said the treaty is necessary to help protect the future of the planet. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres spoke about how serious the problem is. He said: "Our world is drowning in plastic pollution. Every year, we produce 460 million tons of plastic, much of which is quickly thrown away." The U.N. said a treaty is, "an insurance policy for this generation and future ones, so they may live with plastic and not be doomed by it".

Antonio Guterres gave a warning of what might happen in the future if we do not act now. He said: "By 2050, there could be more plastic than fish in the ocean. Microplastics in our bloodstreams are creating health problems that we're only just beginning to understand." The president of South Korea echoed Mr Guterres' comments. He asked governments to agree on a path to zero plastic pollution. He said we have relied too much on plastic because it is so convenient. He added: "The waste accumulated in our oceans and rivers now jeopardizes the lives of future generations." He asked governments, "to open a new historic chapter by finalizing a treaty on plastic pollution".

Sources: [dw.com](https://www.dw.com) / [un.org](https://www.un.org) / [thehill.org](https://www.thehill.org)

### Writing

We do not need plastic. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

countries / treaty / plastic / pollution / the future / the planet / insurance / doomed / warning / fish / ocean / bloodstream / president / convenient / rivers / historic

### True / False

- 1) Many countries have signed a treaty to reduce plastic. T / F
- 2) The UN said the treaty is important to save the future of the U.N. T / F
- 3) We throw away 460 million tons of plastic every year. T / F
- 4) The UN likened the treaty to an insurance policy for our future. T / F
- 5) The UN said there could be more fish than plastic in the oceans by 2050. T / F
- 6) Microplastics are causing health problems we never knew about before. T / F
- 7) The article says we depend on plastic too much because it is convenient. T / F
- 8) The UN asked governments to write a chapter in a book on pollution. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| 1. <b>worldwide</b>    | a. caution   |
| 2. <b>waste</b>        | b. trashed   |
| 3. <b>necessary</b>    | c. road      |
| 4. <b>serious</b>      | d. garbage   |
| 5. <b>thrown away</b>  | e. useful    |
| 6. <b>warning</b>      | f. globally  |
| 7. <b>problems</b>     | g. risks     |
| 8. <b>path</b>         | h. essential |
| 9. <b>convenient</b>   | i. important |
| 10. <b>jeopardizes</b> | j. issues    |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'plastic'?
- c) How worried are you about plastic pollution?
- d) What problems does plastic pollution cause?
- e) How will the treaty change the plastic pollution problem?
- f) What other kinds of pollution do you worry about?
- g) How much plastic do you throw away?
- h) What can we use instead of plastic?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Countries worldwide could soon sign   | a. of plastic waste     |
| 2. talk about the problem                | b. too much on plastic  |
| 3. Our world is drowning                 | c. policy               |
| 4. an insurance                          | d. happen in the future |
| 5. they may live with plastic and not be | e. generations          |
| 6. a warning of what might               | f. a treaty             |
| 7. there could be more plastic than fish | g. in plastic pollution |
| 8. we have relied                        | h. chapter              |
| 9. the lives of future                   | i. doomed by it         |
| 10. open a new historic                  | j. in the ocean         |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What happens if there is more plastic in the ocean than fish?
- What do you know about microplastics?
- How would you feel about a zero-plastic world?
- How convenient is plastic?
- Why might plastic risk the lives of future generations?
- What things do we really need plastic for?
- What questions would you like to ask the UN?

## Spelling

- rravsepeetnetsi from 175 nations
- necessary to help ctpoter the future
- Our world is gnnirwdo in plastic
- a treaty is an rnuaacsnie policy
- for this nngareteoi
- not be medodo by it
- sctlrpsmaioic in our bloodstreams
- ecehdo Mr Guterres' comments
- we have dreile too much on plastic
- because it is so neincetvno
- in our enocas and rivers
- open a new iocthris chapter

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. h	4. i	5. b
6. a	7. j	8. c	9. e	10. g

## Role Play

### Role A – Food Cartons

You think food cartons are the best things made from plastic. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): shopping bags, bottles or cups.

### Role B – Shopping Bags

You think shopping bags are the best things made from plastic. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): food cartons, bottles or cups.

### Role C – Bottles

You think bottles are the best things made from plastic. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): shopping bags, food cartons or cups.

### Role D – Cups

You think cups are the best things made from plastic. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): shopping bags, bottles or food cartons.

## Speaking – Plastic Things

Rank these with your partner. Put the most useful at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| • Food cartons  | • Forks   |
| • Shopping bags | • Bottles |
| • Toothbrushes  | • Buckets |
| • Cups          | • Toys    |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	F	4	T	5	F	6	T	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.