

JOURNEY TO END PLASTIC POLLUTION EVENT FACT SHEET

22 Oct 2024

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Event overview:

Less than five weeks away from the Fifth International Negotiating Committee meeting (INC5), Malaysia Stop Waste Trade Coalition is working toward engaging public awareness on the need for a stronger Global Plastics Treaty that prioritises plastic reduction and an end to single-use plastic. By inviting the NRES minister, the event acts two-fold, namely to unite fellow Malaysians against plastic pollution and engaging the government to uphold greater standards of accountability.

About Malaysia Stop Waste Trade Coalition

The Malaysia Stop Waste Trade Coalition is made up of a number of environmental NGOs in Malaysia including Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM), Consumers' Association Penang (CAP), Persatuan Tindakan Sekitar Kuala Langat (PTASKL), RE Sustainable Enterprise, Environmental Protection Society Malaysia (EPSM), Greenpeace Malaysia, Zero Waste Sabah and Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) Selangor - Green Living, and a few supporting organisations like Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4). Our main focus is on the waste trade industry with the aim to eliminate the impacts of the plastic waste trade in Malaysia. Some of our members are core members of the Break Free from Plastics movement.

Additional quotes from Malaysia Stop Waste Trade Coalition:

Mageswari Sangaralingam, Consumers' Association of Penang & Sahabat Alam Malaysia representative

The global production of primary plastic forecasted to triple to 1,100 million tonnes by 2050 represents a serious environmental and health crisis. The industry's narrative of circularity, recycling, and sustainable plastic is misleading. While these concepts sound promising, they do not align with the reality that most plastic waste is not effectively recycled and continues to pollute the environment.

More plastic production also means a greater output of toxic chemicals, posing significant risks to public health and the environment. It is difficult to counter the narrative that "more production means more pollution" because it is fundamentally true. Claims that plastic production can somehow be sustainable are unrealistic, as increased plastic production will always result in more waste and toxins.

The urgency of the plastic issue can no longer be overstated. The Global Plastics Treaty is an opportunity for systemic change across the whole life cycle of plastics. The world needs a treaty that confronts the full scale of the plastic crisis, addressing pollution at every stage, from the extraction of fossil fuels to production, packaging, distribution, use and disposal.

Wong Si Peng, The Center to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4 Center) representative

This event is an opportunity to raise awareness about the on-going Global Plastics Treaty negotiations by governments to end plastic pollution. This treaty is a huge deal as it presents an opportunity to globally harmonise the regulations on chemicals and harmful plastic polymers, restrict unnecessary plastic products or single-use plastics (SUPs), improve transparency and reporting on use of chemicals in plastic production and so much more.

While the treaty reflects global efforts to tackle the crisis of plastic pollution, this creative medium of art can help bring the message to local public, and we hope the Malaysian public will join in urging our government to negotiate for a strong treaty that will be effective in protecting Malaysians and our environment from the impacts of plastic pollution.

Wong Pui Yi, Malaysia Stop Waste Trade Coalition member

Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and China are reportedly responsible for 60% of the ocean plastic pollution in the world. Since China banned solid waste imports in 2018, Malaysia has emerged as the world's top importer of plastic waste, closely followed by our Southeast Asian neighbours.

Plastic extracts a hidden burden on our public healthcare systems, food security, fisheries, waste management, and tourism, and threatens our achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We have an opportunity to address this crisis with the Global Plastic Treaty. To create a safe and just future for all, the Treaty must drastically reduce plastic production and eliminate harmful polymers, products, and chemicals used.

Key event highlights

Fireside Chat: Planet or Plastic?

The fireside chat is organised as a part of the Global Plastics Treaty public engagement event - Journey to End Plastic Pollution, organised by the Malaysia Stop Waste Trade Coalition, in collaboration with Sunway University School of Arts, and Sunway Centre for Planetary Health.

Warm up session with **Sunway Centre for Planetary Health, Sunway University, Executive Director Prof. Tan Sri Dr Jemilah Mahmood.**

This session offers members of the public a chance to engage with our country's leading minds in the areas of environment, health, and human rights.

- **Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability**
Y.B. Nik Nazmi bin Nik Ahmad

- **Representative of Malaysia to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission of Human Rights (AICHR)**
H.E. Edmund Bon Tai Soon
- **Consumers' Association of Penang & Sahabat Alam Malaysia representative**
Mageswari Sangaralingam

Exhibition details:

The Dark Side of Plastic Exhibition

Microplastic pollution has reached critical levels, found in the deepest ocean in the Mariana Trench, in the furthest ice in Antarctica, in the clouds, in our food, in our bodies, and even in our babies.

Scientists have identified more than 16,000 chemicals used in plastic products. At least 4,200 chemicals (26%) are hazardous to our health and the environment, and these are accumulating in the global environment.

The exhibition invites attendees to take a walk with us and listen to the stories on display: the Story of Toxics, the Story of Food, the Story of Sachets, the Story of Waste, the Story of Health and – the Story of Plastic.

<i>Story of Toxics</i>	The virtual Toxic Tours by Break Free From Plastic highlights community-led work happening to combat petrochemical corporations and advocate for a sustainable environment, jobs and healthcare.
<i>Story of Food</i>	A series of artworks by Co2_karbondioksida art collective made from food packaging waste, collected from communities in Muar and their own daily consumption, representing the amount of plastic waste entering our food chain.
<i>Story of Sachets</i>	Break Free From Plastic worked with 2023 News Photographer of the Year in Asia Pacific (Getty Images Global Editorial Awards), two-time World Press Photo awardee, and Pulitzer Prize finalist, Ezra Acayan, to document the lifecycle of sachets - from production lines to overflowing landfills, and from polluted waterways to the hands of vulnerable communities.
<i>Story of Waste</i>	A gallery of photographs highlighting the implications of plastic waste exports to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey, imported from all over the world. Because what we dispose of could end up threatening the health and futures of whole communities, treating them as “disposable” too.
<i>Story of Plastic</i>	<p>Noktah, meaning “full stop” in Malay, serves as the focal point for a transformative group exhibition that delves into the critical theme of planetary health. Far from representing an end, the title holds a deeper meaning as a single dot, when repeated thrice, forms an ellipsis - a symbol of growth, continuity, and forward march towards a sustainable future.</p> <p>Each artist in Noktah correlates their projection mapping with a UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which guides the artists towards themes like climate action,</p>

	biodiversity conservation, responsible consumption, and health.
Story of Health	<p>A ground-breaking feature documentary <i>Plastic People: The Hidden Crisis of Microplastics</i>. The film investigates our addiction to plastics and the growing threat of microplastics - discovered by leading scientists in human organs, blood, brain tissue, and even the placentas of new mothers.</p> <p>Acclaimed author and science journalist Ziya Tong and award-winning director Ben Addelman join forces in an urgent call for all of us to rethink our relationship with plastic.</p>
<p>Unearthing Real Solutions</p> <p>False solutions usually focus on the end of the plastic lifecycle, managing the pollution or waste while failing to stop pollution at its source. Real, proven solutions are safe, economical, sustainable, and these reduce our reliance on natural resources - such as reuse and refill systems, and zero waste approaches.</p>	
Story of Hope	<p>Negotiations for a Global Plastics Treaty can effectively reverse the tide of plastic pollution through international laws and policies - but only if these policies are impactful and address the root of the issue.</p> <p>That includes addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A reduction of plastic production ● Eliminating harmful polymers and chemicals ● Restricting unnecessary plastic products ● Increasing transparency and traceability of chemicals used in plastic production ● Enhancing waste management ● Protecting vulnerable communities from the impacts of plastic pollution
Story of Refill	<p>Alternative delivery systems that focus on reuse and Zero Waste practices exist and must be scaled up. Examples of these are the refill, return, and reuse business models utilised by Zero Waste stores, the sale of packaging-free goods, and disposable-free business operations (e.g. no plastic bags, cutlery, and containers).</p>

Booths

Gerai OA	Gerai OA is a volunteer-run group working with indigenous artisans to document, revive & revitalise heritage crafts with 100% of the sales returned to the named artisans.
Zero Waste Malaysia's Green Wira Showcase	Enables visitors to share opinions on environmental education in schools and play with the Green Wira Monster to learn about alternatives to single-use disposables.
ReadyCare Refill Machine	Produces bio-based or plant-based household cleaning liquid from Ipoh.