



## Industry endorses plan to recycle 70% of plastic packaging globally

DAVOS-KLOSTERS, SWITZERLAND, 16 JANUARY 2017

Key highlights:

- More than 40 industry leaders endorse a global action plan on plastics production, use and after-use.
- The action plan, laid out in a new report *The New Plastics Economy: Catalysing action* launched by the World Economic Forum and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation at Davos, would see 70% of plastic packaging reused and recycled globally, up from today's recycling rate of 14%.
- The remaining 30% of plastic packaging, equivalent to 10 billion garbage bags per year, needs fundamental redesign and innovation.
- This new report comes from the organisations that last year calculated that there could be more plastics than fish in the ocean by 2050. Now, they outline how a solution could be reached.

More than 40 industry leaders have endorsed a new action plan to tackle global plastics issues, and have begun working together to create a more effective global system for plastics. The action plan is presented in *The New Plastics Economy: Catalysing action*, a new study by the World Economic Forum and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation with analytical support from SYSTEMIQ, which reveals that concerted action by industry could result in reuse and recycling of 70% of all global plastic packaging, up from today's recycling rate of just 14%. The authors last year revealed that there could be more plastics than fish in the ocean by 2050.

The report provides a clear transition strategy for the global plastics industry to design better packaging, increase recycling rates, and introduce new models for making better use of packaging. It finds that 20% of plastic packaging could be profitably re-used, for example by replacing single-use plastic bags with re-usable alternatives, or by designing innovative packaging models based on product refills. A further 50% of plastic packaging could be profitably recycled if improvements are made to packaging design and systems for managing it after use. Without fundamental redesign and innovation, the remaining 30% of plastic packaging (by weight) will never be recycled and will continue to destine the equivalent of 10 billion garbage bags per year to landfill or incineration. Innovation in packaging design, recyclable and compostable materials, and reprocessing technologies are likely all required to move this challenging segment forward.

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The action plan was produced as part of the New Plastics Economy initiative, which was launched in May 2016 as a direct result of Project MainStream, a multi-industry, CEO-led collaboration led by the World Economic Forum and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. The New Plastics Economy initiative brings together more than 40 leading organisations representing the entire global plastics industry, from chemical manufacturers to consumer goods producers, retailers, city authorities and recyclers, to work together towards a more effective global system. Core Partners in the New Plastics Economy initiative include Amcor, The Coca-Cola Company, Danone, MARS, Novamont, Unilever, and Veolia.

*"The New Plastics Economy initiative has attracted widespread support, and across the industry we are seeing strong initial momentum and alignment on the direction to take. The New Plastics Economy: Catalysing action provides a clear plan for redesigning the global plastics system, paving the way for concerted action."*

- Dame Ellen MacArthur, Founder, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

*"This could drive systemic change. The plan puts innovation at the heart of a strategy that could shift the entire system while unlocking a billion dollar business opportunity. Alignment along value chains and between the public and private sector is key to this."*

- Dominic Waughray, Head of Public-Private Partnership, Member of the Executive Committee, World Economic Forum

The focus of the New Plastics Economy over the next year will be on bringing about wide scale innovation. The initiative will launch two global innovation challenges to kick-start the redesign of materials and packaging formats, and begin building a set of global common standards (a 'Global Plastics Protocol') for packaging design, concentrating initially on the most impactful changes. It will also improve recycling systems by delivering collaborative projects between participant companies and cities. To support the shift to "circular" design thinking and systems perspectives and to inspire innovators, entrepreneurs and designers, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and IDEO are launching a new, publicly available [Circular Design Guide](#) at Davos in January 2017.

*"Minor changes in material, format and treatment can – in conjunction – make the economics of recycling viable and take us into a positive spiral of higher yields, lower costs and better design. The result will be plastic that remains a valuable material before and after use."*

– Prof. Dr. Martin R. Stuchtey, Professor for Resource Strategy and Management at Innsbruck University; Co-Founder, SYSTEMIQ

To read the full report, visit: [newplasticseconomy.org](http://newplasticseconomy.org)  
or [ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications](http://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/publications)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS:

This report was produced by the World Economic Forum and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, as part of the New Plastics Economy initiative, with analytical support from SYSTEMIQ.

### WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

The Forum engages the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas. It was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It is independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests. The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance. Moral and intellectual integrity is at the heart of everything it does. As assumptions about growth models are overturned, the international balance of power continues to fray, and scientific and technological breakthroughs promise to transform economies and societies, the unique platform provided by the Forum helps leaders from all walks of life to prepare for exponentially disruptive change.

For further information: [www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org) | @wef

### THE NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY

The New Plastics Economy is an ambitious, three-year, \$10 million, initiative to build momentum towards a plastics system that works. Launched in May 2016, the New Plastics Economy is supported by Wendy Schmidt, through The Eric and Wendy Schmidt Fund for Strategic Innovation, as Lead Philanthropic Partner, and MAVA Foundation, Oak Foundation, and players of People's Postcode Lottery (GB), as Philanthropic Funders. Amcor, The Coca-Cola Company, Danone, MARS, Novamont, Unilever, and Veolia are the initiative's Core Partners.

Applying the principles of the circular economy, the New Plastics Economy brings together over 40 key stakeholders across the value chain to re-think and re-design the future of plastics, starting with packaging. The initiative is led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with a broad group of leading companies, cities, philanthropists, policymakers, academics, students, NGOs, and citizens.

The New Plastics Economy initiative focuses on five interlinked and mutually reinforcing building blocks:

1. Dialogue Mechanism – Bringing together for the first time a group of leading companies and cities across the global value chain to complete collaborative demonstration projects and inform the other building blocks
2. Global Plastics Protocol – Re-thinking plastic packaging materials, formats and after-use systems and standards to provide an economically and environmentally attractive target state to innovate towards
3. Innovation Moonshots – Mobilising targeted innovation 'moon-shots' focused on system wide solutions that have the potential to scale globally
4. Evidence Base – Closing critical knowledge gaps by building an economic and scientific evidence base from which to draw insights. An initial study with Plymouth Marine Laboratory examines the socio-economic impact of plastics in marine environments.
5. Stakeholder Engagement – Engaging a broad set of stakeholders, including academics, students, policymakers, NGOs, and industry associations in the redesign of a better system.

Through these actions, the New Plastics Economy initiative aims to set direction, inspire innovation and build momentum towards the vision of a plastics system that works, moving the plastics industry into a positive spiral of value capture, stronger economics and better environmental outcomes.

Further information: [newplasticseconomy.org](http://newplasticseconomy.org) | [@NewPlasticsEcon](https://twitter.com/NewPlasticsEcon)

### **THE ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION**

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation was created in 2010 to accelerate the transition to a circular economy. The Foundation works across five areas: insight and analysis, business and government, education and training, systemic initiatives, and communication. With its Knowledge Partners (Arup, IDEO, McKinsey & Co., and SYSTEMIQ), and supported by Core Philanthropic Funder (SUN), the Foundation works to quantify the economic opportunity of a more circular model and to develop approaches for capturing its value. The Foundation collaborates with its Global Partners (Cisco, Danone, Google, H&M, Intesa Sanpaolo, NIKE, Inc., Philips, Renault, Unilever), and its CE100 network (businesses, universities, emerging innovators, governments, cities and affiliate organisations), to build capacity, explore collaboration opportunities and to develop circular business initiatives. The Foundation has created global teaching, learning and training platforms on the circular economy, encompassing work with leading universities, schools and colleges, and online events such as the Disruptive Innovation Festival. By establishing platforms such as the New Plastics Economy initiative, the Foundation works to transform key material flows, applying a global, cross-sectoral, cross value chain approach that aims to effect systems change. The Foundation promotes the idea of a circular economy via research reports, case studies and books series, using multiple channels, web and social media platforms, including [circulatenews.org](http://circulatenews.org) which provides a leading online source for circular economy news and insight.

Further information: [ellenmacarthurfoundation.org](http://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org) | [@circulareconomy](https://twitter.com/circulareconomy)

### **SYSTEMIQ**

SYSTEMIQ Ltd is a new kind of enterprise that combines advisory, business building and investment expertise to deploy human talent and long term capital into new and disruptive systems of land use, energy generation, circular industrial systems and urban living. SYSTEMIQ accelerates system change by cultivating, incubating and scaling solutions that deliver superior economic environmental and social value.

Further information: [systemiq.earth](http://systemiq.earth) | [@System\\_iQ](https://twitter.com/System_iQ)