

Marine Plastic Pollution

State of Play & Perspectives

Glen Wright

Combating marine plastic litter: state of play and perspectives

Julien Rochette, Romain Schumm, Glen Wright, Klaudija Cremers (IDDRI)

Why this study?

- Proliferation of initiatives – losing sight of big picture
- Summarise ongoing efforts, promote coherence

What is covered?

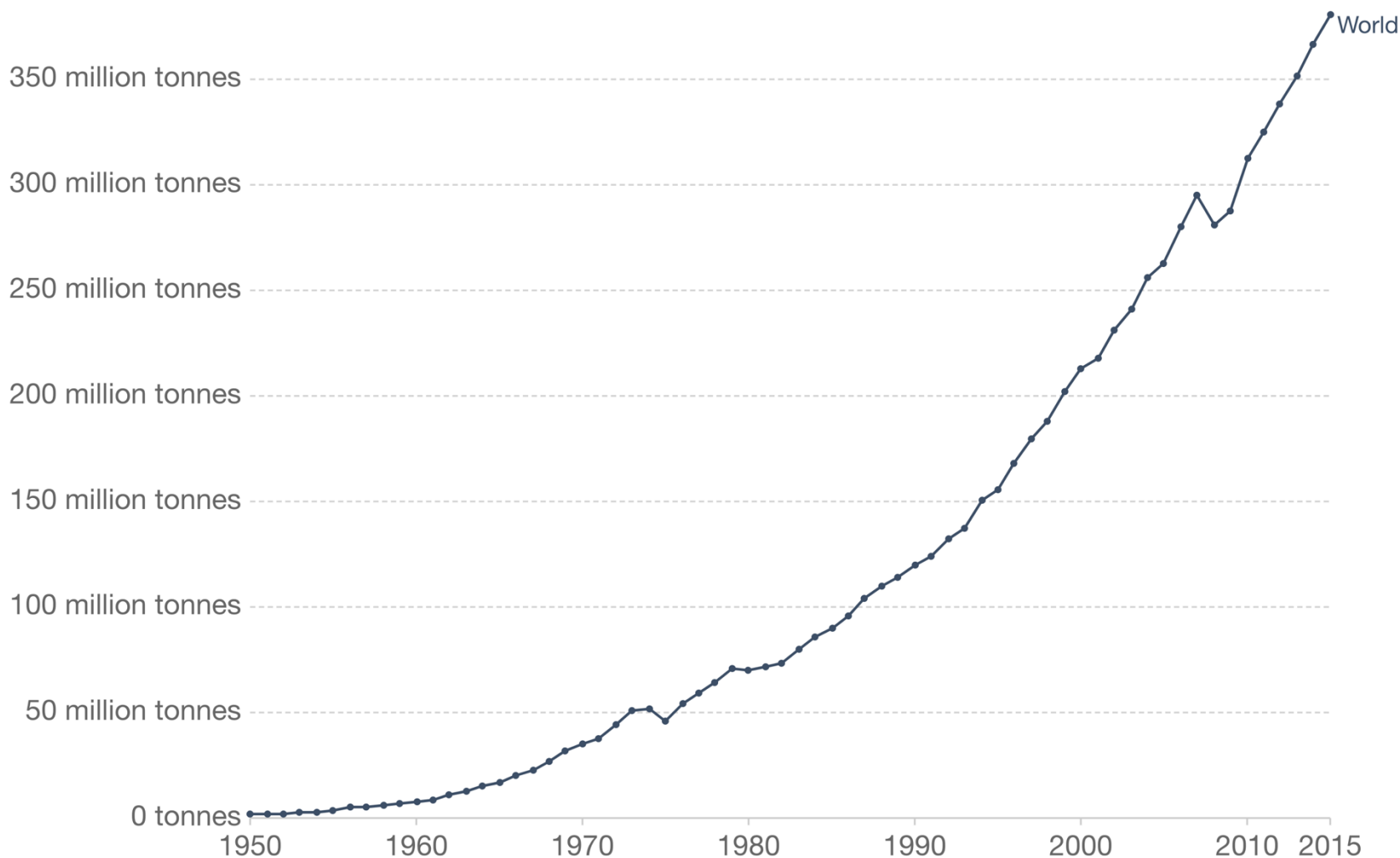
- Summary of environmental impacts
- Evaluation of legal framework
- Overview of civil society/private sector initiatives
- Discussions regarding a new treaty
- Perspectives on the future/next steps



Global plastics production, 1950 to 2015

Annual global polymer resin and fiber production (plastic production), measured in metric tonnes per year.

Our World
in Data



Level	Progress	Challenges
National	<p>A range of national efforts</p> <p>Many target single-use plastics</p> <p>Commitments, targets, strategies, financing</p>	<p>Systemic challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste disposal systems • Our economic model • Our patterns of consumption/production • Producer responsibility
Regional	<p>Many Regional Seas programmes have developed legal protocols</p> <p>Some regions also have specific action plans in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets and strategies vary widely • Limited capacity • Limited private sector engagement • Lack of financing
Global	<p>Various international agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law of the Sea • London Convention on pollution/dumping • Chemicals conventions • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented framework • Limited recognition of possible health impacts • Inadequate application of precautionary principle, transparency • Microplastics not covered

FIGURE 2. Examples of stakeholders' initiatives on plastic

CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS

Beach clean-up initiatives regularly organised by international, national and local NGOs; some initiatives, e.g. [The Ocean Cleanup](#) or [The Sea Cleaners](#) to extract plastic pollution from the Ocean; global clean-up campaigns such as the UN Environment [Clean Seas](#) initiative.

SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

Various research projects on marine plastic litter (e.g. [Tara Mission Microplastics](#)), citizen science programmes (e.g. [CoastWatch Micro Litter](#)), awareness raising campaigns (e.g. [Planet or Plastic?](#)).

IMPROVING CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Voluntary commitments from the private sector, e.g. Danone, Nestlé and Unilever. Eliminating plastic waste at the source, e.g. [The New Plastics Economy Global Commitment](#), led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and signed by 250 organisations.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Projects on plastics innovation and alternatives, e.g. [CLAIM project](#), [Parley Ocean Plastic](#), [Global Ghost Gear Initiative](#).

Alarming rates of pollution reaching the ocean

A range of initiatives underway at all levels


International community starting to consider a new treaty

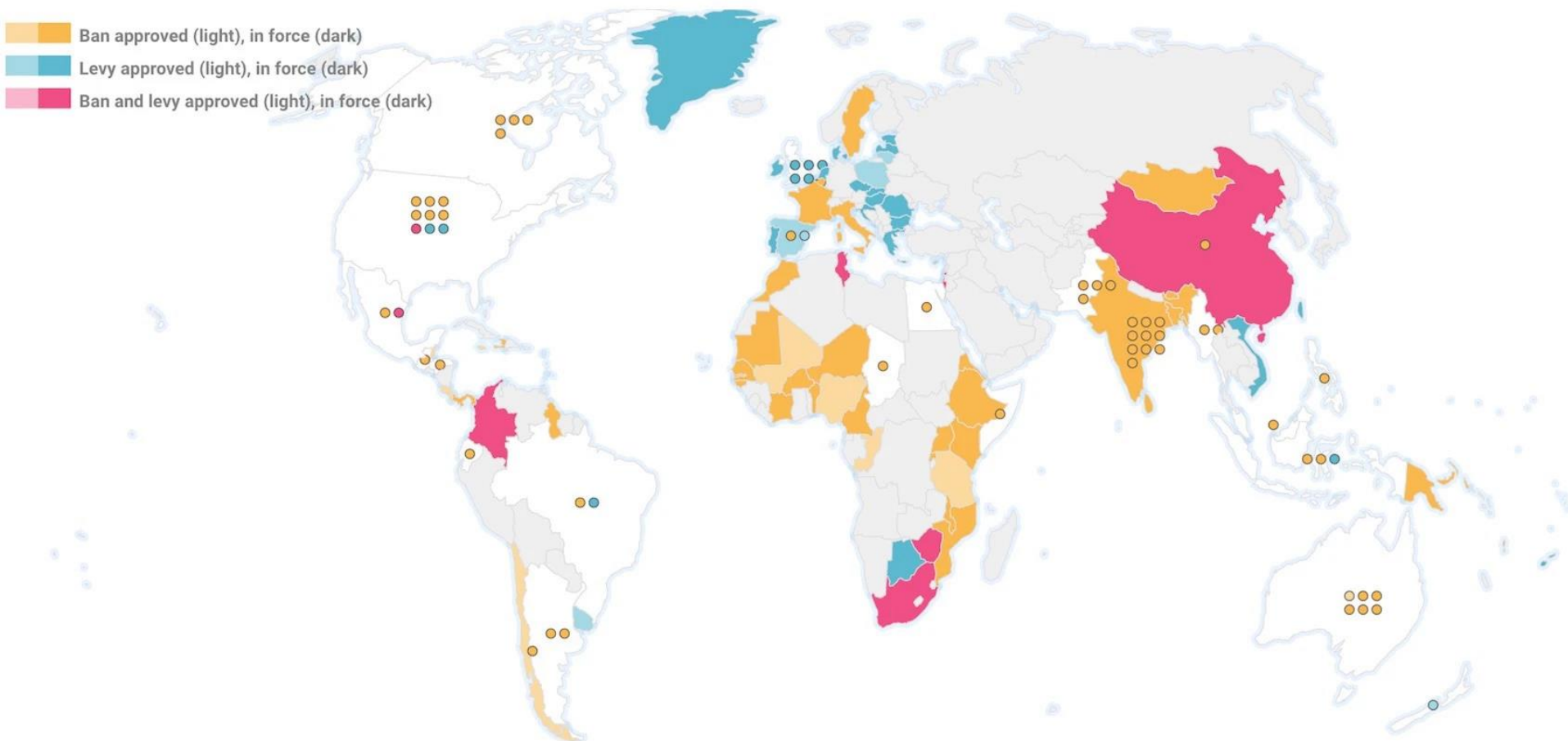
Recent experience with multilateralism suggest we should also pursue other avenues:

- Reinforce existing initiatives
- Better coordination at the global level
- Improve coherence between existing instruments

- 60% of plastic marine debris comes from urban centers
- 12% from megacities (>10m people)
- Waste set to double by 2050 (from 2 billion tonnes in 2016)
- 2 billion people lack access to regular waste collection
- 3 billion lack access to controlled disposal services



An impressive — and growing — number of  national and  local governments have **taken action against plastic pollution**



Data from "Banning single-use plastic: lessons and experiences from countries" UN Environment report (2018);
map developed by <https://www.unenvironment.org/interactive/beat-plastic-pollution/>; for interactive map, please follow the link.



PREVENTION

Avoid and minimize the use of plastic



COLLECTION

Collect, sort and manage plastic as a resource



DISPOSAL

Contain plastic waste in purpose built landfills



FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Incentives for plastic prevention, reuse and recycling



REUSE

Reuse to extend product and material life-cycles



RECYCLING

Recycle plastic to support a circular economy

CONTACT

Glen Wright
glen.wright@iddri.org
[@MarinePolicy](#)

IDDRI.ORG