

Plastic treaty would be historic for planet: UNEP chief

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Curse of plastic: The beach at Hann Bay, a densely-populated district of the Senegalese capital Dakar.

The world has a rare opportunity to clean up the planet for future generations by uniting behind an ambitious treaty to tackle plastic trash,

the UN environment chief told AFP.

Inger Andersen said a global plastics treaty being negotiated in Nairobi "holds the potential and the promise of being the biggest multilateral environmental breakthrough" since the Paris climate accords signed in 2015.

"This is a big moment. This is one for the history books," the executive director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) told AFP in an interview.

The framework for a legally binding plastics agreement is still being hammered out ahead of a UN environment summit starting on Monday in Nairobi, where UNEP is headquartered.

There are competing proposals being considered but more than 50 countries have backed calls for a treaty that includes tough new controls on plastics, which are largely derived from oil and gas.

This could include limits on the manufacture of new plastic, or the phasing-out of single-use products that choke oceans and [marine life](#) and take centuries to break down.

Delegates meeting in Nairobi are expected to agree on the broad template for a treaty and establish a negotiating committee to finalise the terms, a process that would take at least two years.

'Stop the plastic tap'

Andersen said it was too early to speculate about specific details of the treaty but stressed it was "hopeless" to try to curb plastic litter without addressing the source.

Some 400 million tonnes of new plastic are manufactured every year—a figure set to double by 2040.

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