



**PRESS STATEMENT:  
EU-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL LAUNCHES FIRST POSITION PAPER ON  
SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN ASEAN:  
CALLS FOR COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL APPROACH TO ADDRESS THE PLASTIC PANDEMIC**

**Singapore – 17 November 2021** – The EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) today launched its paper on single-use plastics in ASEAN. The report, “Fighting ASEAN’s Plastic Pandemic,” examines the prevalence of plastic pollution in the region, which has been exacerbated by the global COVID-19 health crisis. While single-use plastics have been useful in the fight against the pandemic, particularly in providing sanitary protection, lockdowns have contributed to a significant increase in waste generation. COVID-19 has also complicated waste management processes, and the decline in global economic activity has governments focusing their attention to recovery efforts, rather than channelling public funds into financing recycling value chains.

If left unchecked, the plastic pandemic could have long-lasting impacts on the region’s economy, environment, and public health. Given that countries are looking to rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic in a manner that is sustainable for future generations, the EU-ABC believes this is a critical juncture for all stakeholders to address the urgent problem of single-use plastics waste through solutions like developing an ASEAN-wide framework on phasing out disposable plastics, and looking beyond downstream plastic management into regulating the upstream stages in the life-cycle of single-use plastics waste.

The EU-ABC commends ASEAN-wide efforts to tackle plastic pollution, like the ASEAN Framework on Marine Debris and the introduction of the Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community. The work, however, must not end here.

“At a time when the world is focussed on climate change issues following COP26, now is also the time for the ASEAN region to begin to put meat on the bones of their recently announced Circular Economy Framework,” said the EU-ABC’s Executive Director Chris Humphrey. “Moving to accelerate measures aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating single use plastics in the region should be an easy first step in that process. This paper today from the EU-ABC sets out a series of easily executable recommendations that the Member States of ASEAN could implement to show their seriousness at tackling key environmental issues,” he added.

Jay Thyagarajan, Corporate Vice President of Business Area SEA Novo Nordisk said the company is “committed to being a sustainable business and [has] a bold ambition in place, to have ZERO Environmental Impact. Across ASEAN, each Novo Nordisk Affiliate has committed to an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to reduce our environmental footprint, including minimising, and eventually eliminating, all usage of single use plastic. Many people are working towards minimising consumption and waste a reality, and we want to be part of that change and movement. We have the capacity and the will to lead the way.”

Speaking further on the need to phase out single-use plastics, Danone’s global Chairman and CEO Alexandre Ricard said, “For the past three years we have been striving to accelerate every aspect of our business, and the crisis must not be a threat but rather an opportunity to speed up the implementation of our Sustainability & Responsibility roadmap.”



“The end of single-use plastic Point of Sale (POS) items is one of the many ways we will do our share to bring positive change to the world we live in, and achieving this goal four years ahead of schedule underlines our employees’ commitment to do so,” he added.

**END.**



Notes to editors:

### **1. About the EU-ASEAN Business Council**

The EU-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC) is the recognised voice for European business within the ASEAN region. It is recognised both by the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat, recently being accredited as an Entity associated with ASEAN under Annex 2 of the ASEAN Charter. Independent of both bodies, the Council has been established to help promote the interests of European businesses operating within ASEAN and to advocate for changes in policies and regulations which would help promote trade and investment between Europe and the ASEAN region.

As such, the Council works on a sectorial and cross-industry basis to help improve the investment and trading conditions for European Businesses in the ASEAN region by sharing information and ideas with policy and decision makers and amongst its members and regional players within the ASEAN region.

The EU-ABC's membership consists of large European Multi-National Corporations and the nine European Chambers of Commerce from around Southeast Asia, representing a diverse range of European industries cutting across almost every commercial sphere from car manufacturing through to financial services and including FMCG and high-end electronics and communications. Our members share a common aim to enhance trade, commerce and investment between Europe and ASEAN.

### **2. Executive Summary of the Single-Use Plastics Paper:**

This paper proposes a range of recommendations to improve the scope of ASEAN'S mitigation efforts in addressing the problems of single-use plastics and significantly strengthen the institutional capacity of the organization to phase out single-use plastics.

The final section of the report provides additional details, but in brief, these recommendations include the following:

1. Develop an ASEAN-wide framework on phasing out single-use plastics that is sufficiently flexible to support different speeds of implementation.
2. Develop an ASEAN-wide comprehensive Circular Economy standard framework to drive the plastics end-of-life value chain.
3. ASEAN should conduct studies to identify the most problematic single-use plastic items, their relative importance in the economy, and then establish a roadmap to phase out targeted SUP items.
4. Through legislation that is closely consulted with the private sector and with sufficient grace period, consider imposing a minimum percentage requirement for recycled plastic; a tax proportional to the percentage of virgin plastic composition used to targeted single-use plastic products; tiered fiscal incentives for the usage of recycled plastic or more sustainable and naturally biodegradable materials; and a phased approached to the banning of plastic bags and plastic straws in shops and wet markets.



5. Provide ASEAN-wide or governmental support for innovation, research, and development for/of sustainable and naturally biodegradable materials as alternatives to plastic polymers, and standardised technologies to monitor waste generation and waste pathways.
6. As part of building a green finance ecosystem, develop a form of plastic retirement mechanism that allows the transition from single-use plastics to more sustainable materials.
7. Consumer goods companies to have a sustainable packaging plan and a clear commitment that includes a vision for plastics to never become waste.
8. Packaging recyclability and waste management to be approached as a shared responsibility that requires multi-stakeholder and system-wide solutions.
9. Consumers play a key role. To support their involvement, there can be a budget-based funding of easy-to-use drop-off stations. There should also be educational programmes/outreach initiatives for consumers to understand waste management, various types of plastics, as well as biodegradables and how to incorporate these in their lives.

**Member companies from the EU-ASEAN Business Council stand ready to collaborate and partner on the recommendations outlined in this paper.**

To download the position paper, please go to <https://www.eu-asean.eu/publications>.

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