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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Millions Worldwide Pledging to Refuse Single-Use Plastics This July**

This July, people from all corners of the globe are uniting in a pledge to avoid single-use cups, plastic drink bottles, and plastic food wrap in a collective effort to combat plastic pollution. These “Top 3” items for this year’s global Plastic Free July challenge are single-use plastic items many of us use each day. By making simple swaps and adopting new habits, participants can make a significant impact. Last year, an estimated 89 million Plastic Free July participants avoided a massive 240 million kgs of plastic waste.

According to UNEP, approximately 36% of all plastic produced is used in packaging, including single-use plastic products for food and beverage containers, and approximately 85% of that ends up in landfill. Less than 10% of all plastic ever produced has been recycled; the rest is in landfill or the environment. With United Nations plastic treaty negotiations nearing their final stages, a recent survey found close to nine in ten people favor global rules banning plastics.

“Our throwaway culture drives the triple planetary crisis we face today. Not just the crisis of pollution and waste, but the crisis of climate change and the crisis of nature and biodiversity loss. What we produce too often ends up dumped in landfills or in the environment – directly or through leakage and burning. And we then go straight back to the source, the environment, for more, causing untold damage to the planet,” said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP.

“We know that recycling and cleanup efforts aren’t enough to stop the growing amount of plastic pollution entering landfills, our environment, and ultimately the world’s oceans. We must turn off the plastics tap now, and Plastic Free July is the perfect opportunity for everyone to get involved. Whether that’s pledging to avoid one of the “Top 3” or another single-use plastic in your own life, or getting a workplace involved, there are so many choices to try,” said Rebecca Prince-Ruiz, Executive Director of the Plastic Free Foundation.

Over the past 13 years, the Plastic Free July challenge coordinated by the Foundation has activated a global social movement of people committed to turning the tide. In the last 5 years alone, participants have avoided 10 billion kgs of household waste and recycling—more than some of the world’s biggest clean-up efforts combined.

Plastic Free July is the only behavior change campaign in the world focused on reducing plastic waste. Rebecca emphasized that small steps can make a big difference. “We know that when people take a pledge by choosing to refuse single-use plastic, it not only helps to make new habits but people around them notice and feel inspired to do the same. This year, our message is to reassure people that this isn’t about being perfect; simply choose one item to pledge to avoid during July and give it a try. We know that when people take part for a month, new habits will be created.”

From households worldwide to community groups in Australia, schools in Nepal, cafes in New Zealand, corporate offices in Europe, councils in Africa, and governors in the USA, millions of people are taking action to be part of the solution to plastic pollution. By growing this community, working together, and supporting each other to make a change, we know that we can continue to help turn off the plastics tap.

To make a Plastic Free Pledge and find helpful ideas and solutions, visit the website [www.plasticfreejuly.org](http://www.plasticfreejuly.org).

### **About Plastic Free July**

Plastic Free July is a global social movement that prevents around 300 million kgs of plastic from polluting the world each year. The Plastic Free Foundation is a small not-for-profit organization committed to ending global plastic waste. In addition to supporting and expanding our global movement through public opinion surveys, we are bringing the voices of citizens to the global plastics treaty currently under negotiation. Our ultimate objective is to support and create the community change needed to bring about systemic change and turn off the plastic tap. Through our unwavering dedication and commitment to this cause, we are making a difference in the world and leaving a lasting impact.

Key statistics show the campaign's impact:

- 89 million participants in 2023
- 240 million kgs of plastic waste avoided in 2023 campaign
- 29% of global consumers were aware of Plastic Free July.
- 87% of participants made at least one lasting change.
- Research shows participants reduced their waste and recycling by 4.1%.

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In 2023, 89 million people took part in Plastic Free July, choosing to refuse single-use plastic, together avoiding 240 million kgs of household plastic waste.

As plastic production and waste generation increases, it is clear we can't recycle our way out of the problem and need to "turn off" the plastics tap. Waste avoidance (which starts at the point of purchase and consumption, not disposal) needs to be a critical part of the solution.

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