

# THE POWER OF CLOTHING

Special Feature  
Reducing  
Single-use  
Plastics

Always carry  
an eco bag



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LifeWear



# What's Wrong with Plastic?

An estimated 150 million tons of plastic waste is said to have accumulated in our oceans, caused primarily by a rapid global increase in single-use plastics in the 21st century. On top of that, another 8 million tons of new plastic waste flows into the ocean each year. That's the equivalent of approximately 50,000 jumbo jets. If we continue like this, our oceans will end up containing more plastic waste than living things, and the destruction of ocean-based eco-systems caused by plastic waste will have an immeasurable impact on our lives.



# Which Plastics to Reduce?

## Plastic: It's Value and Purpose

Plastic is used to make household goods such as refrigerators and washing machines, and transport vehicles such as automobiles and airplanes. Plastic has helped increase durability, lighten loads, and reduce oil and electric power usage. In medical facilities, plastic is used to make single-use equipment which is vital for health management, such as intravenous-drip bags and syringes.

## Reduce Single-use Plastic

This means plastic used in stores, or distributed by stores and thrown away after use, such as plastic bags, plastic bottles, and straws. A huge proportion of the waste that flows into our oceans is single-use plastic.





## a Shopping Bags

► Abolishing plastic shopping bags. Since September 2019, gradually switching to paper shopping bags made of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper or recycled paper and selling cotton eco bags in stores. Started charging for shopping bags in January 14, 2020.

# UNIQLO intentions for primary single-use plastics



## b Product Packaging

► Aiming to reduce HEATTECH, AIRism and other packaging by 60% by Fall/Winter 2020.

## d Shirt Clips

► Reducing use and researching alternatives.



Also reducing use of single-use plastic products such as size label seals, and transportation packing materials, and investigating environmentally friendly alternatives.

## c Hangers

► Aiming to reuse single-use plastic hangers for BRATOP and other ranges, and switch to environmentally friendly materials.



# What We Can Do Now!

**Dr. Keith Alverson, Director  
International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC)  
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**



Not long ago, back the 1950's, there were essentially no plastic consumer products being discarded. By comparison, over the past decade, the rapid rise in plastic waste has become an enormous problem. Plastic is cheap, convenient and easy to use making it a valuable and integral part of our lives. At the same time, plastic waste is flowing into our rivers, lakes and oceans causing all kinds of damage. For example, widespread news reports have covered beached whales, and many other marine species, that have died with many kilograms of plastic in their stomachs. As plastic continues to leak into the ocean, it is severely damaging our ocean ecosystems, negatively impacting our own lives. This said, our modern lives depend on plastic use. There are innumerable types of, and uses for, plastics. Thus, our challenge is to reduce our plastic use to only essential products, and those where it is most valuable and irreplaceable, while managing eventual disposal properly.

Plastics are used in airplanes, cars, trains and familiar everyday goods. If you are taken to the hospital in an ambulance and given an IV drip, the IV bag and syringe are single-use plastics. Although there have been initiatives seeking to reuse medical equipment, given the potential risk of infection, they are generally disposed of after a single use. However most single-use plastics are not valuable or

important, so it is easy to reduce their use right now. For example, it would be great if everyone got in the habit of bringing their own bag to put their purchases in when shopping, at no great inconvenience, but great potential benefit. This benefit would include deepening public awareness of the issue more broadly, motivating people to reduce plastic use in their everyday lives.

Reducing plastic waste is an urgent issue, but no single solution can be implemented simultaneously worldwide. Some nations and cities are more capable of managing waste products than others. Some incineration plants have better emission countermeasures than others. When we simply ban the use of single-use plastic bags it can cause unintended new problems, particularly among poorer populations. For example, in many slums people currently use these bags as an alternative toilet. Thus, individual communities need to introduce practical countermeasures consistent with local conditions.

Many private companies are clearly aware of the need to reduce plastics and are already taking proactive measures on a global scale. Private companies can do this freely, with rapid effect, and these efforts can both directly reduce plastic waste as well as triggering broader positive social impacts and societal awareness.



# What We Found When collecting River and Ocean Rubbish

Sadao Harada, Associate Professor  
Department of Public Studies, Osaka University of Commerce

Non-profit Project Hozugawa <https://hozugawa.org>



In 2018, Kameoka city, Kyoto Prefecture, issued the Kameoka Zero Plastic Waste Declaration. The Hozu river runs through Kameoka city, and this river is known as one of the most famous sightseeing spots in Kyoto for traditional boat tour for over 400 years today.

When boatmen first came to discuss the problem of river litter twelve years ago. I was researching water supply, but knew nothing about plastic pollution in the river. I was shocked by the huge volume of plastic waste, which is not possible to collect by cleanup only by boatmen.

I was born and raised in this town and felt something needed to be done, so we launched the Project Hozugawa environmental protection initiative with the local community. First, we created the digital mapping system for river litter. We have clarified “Where,” “How much,” and “What kind of” litter is in the river with community people. In 2012, we started the Kids Marine Litter Detective Team to develop future leaders.

You might wonder how large amount of waste end up in Japan’s rivers despite people are sorting and recycling waste properly. However, Japan is the world’s second largest per capita consumption of single-use plastic products. Wastes generated by 120 million people is an astounding amount. Plastic waste is light, and if the waste collection point near your house is poorly managed, it can get scattered by cats and crows, blown away by strong wind, and washed into rivers by storms.

Plastic waste is increasing so fast it has

already exceeded our domestic recycling capacity. Exporting excess waste to other countries for treatment is not a fundamental solution, and, as systems get stricter, recipient countries are starting to refuse to take it.

Plastic waste in rivers gradually drifts downstream into the sea. The Hozu River flows into other rivers and out into Osaka Bay, where an estimated 3 million single-use plastic bags are thought to have sunk to the seabed. That number is conservative if you count the countless bags that float away or becomes so-called “microplastics.” If our society will decide to reduce and stop this waste right now, I believe we can reduce volumes considerably.

Some people may be opposed to banning single-use plastic bags. However if we tell the facts of plastic pollution accurately, people will understand why it is necessary. In Japan, there is no opportunity to study the waste problem at the end of an elementary school excursion. Even university students have not been updated with the knowledge of 10 years ago.

From the point of view of regional economic policies, the transition to the new plastic economy also has great potential. Kameoka city boasts thriving textile, pulp and paper industries, so making paper and eco bags to replace plastic bags could energize the local economy.

We must start reducing the waste that has ballooned over the past decade. It is our duty and responsibility to future generations.



Many volunteers join the Hozu River Clean-up Campaign on the third Sunday of the month.



Plastic waste in the famous Hozu Gorge boating spot.



# Using Eco Bags for Global Environmental Sustainability

The plastic waste in our oceans is a huge problem.

Furthermore, we now know that single-use plastic shopping bags handed out by stores constitute a major proportion of the plastic waste in oceans.

Single-use plastic bags are threatening our marine eco-system in various ways as marine creatures mistake them for food and swallow them, or get them caught around their legs or necks.

Plastic shopping bags are light, tough-wearing, and convenient, but also fated to be discarded once people get home from the store and unpack their purchases. In other words, they are single-use plastic items.

Since most of us separate single-use plastic bags and shopping bags when we put

out the trash, some people probably expect them all to be collected and recycled.

A considerable portion of them are indeed collected, recycled and reused as recyclable waste. However, since the volume of single-use plastic bags started to balloon worldwide at the beginning of the 21st century, the proportion of bags that are not collected and recycled has increased sharply, and ends-up flowing into rivers, lakes and oceans.

Such shocking circumstances demand fundamental solutions. In other words, the determined implementation of a firm commitment not to use, or make, single-use plastic products whenever possible.

UNIQLO has used single-use plastic to date, not just in the form of white shopping bags given to customers in stores, but also in

instore product packaging, size labels, shirt clips, and hangers used to arrange BRATOP and other ranges. These are all single-use plastic items.

We anticipate the greatest reduction in plastic use by eradicating the large volume of white plastic shopping bags we distributed in the past. So that is where we've decided to begin.

From September 2019, we will start gradually eliminating plastic shopping bags. As an alternative, we will start offering paper shopping bags (made from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper or recycled paper), and selling cotton eco bags in stores. We then intend to start charging for paper shopping bags from January 14, 2020.

We have also started investigating

and researching environmentally friendly alternatives to replace our other single-use plastic items.

UNIQLO's ultimate simple, high-quality LifeWear clothing concept is founded on a policy to deliver long-lasting clothes, and a desire to support simple lifestyles. To reduce the amount of plastic waste in our oceans and waterways, we will ask customers to bring their own tote bags or use UNIQLO eco bags. Encouraging a lifestyle that doesn't create plastic waste can also contribute to global sustainability.

UNIQLO would like to invite all our customers to take this first step together with us, and support vital global plastic reduction efforts.



# UNIQLO has Begun



## 2 Abolishing Plastic Product Packaging and Shifting to Environmentally Friendly Materials

▶ Starting by abolishing packaging for slippers in 2019.

Before



After



# 1

## Abolishing Plastic Shopping Bags

▶ If you have your own eco bag, bring it with you when you come to our stores. If you don't have one, you can buy a new cotton\* eco bag for 190 yen instore from October 2019.



\*UNIQLO supports the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI). BCI is an organization that promotes sustainable cotton production by reducing the usage of water and agricultural chemicals that affect human health and the environment, improving soil quality, and establishing fair working environments for farmers and cotton production workers. <https://bettercotton.org/>





# Unlocking the Power of Clothing

We believe we can turn the power of clothing into a force for good. By designing, making and selling good clothing, we can make the world a better place.

Good clothing means simple clothing, high in quality, and built to last. It's clothing that enriches the lives of people who wear it by giving them comfort, protection and pleasure. It is produced in a way that is harmonious with nature, without excessive burden on the environment.

Good clothing is made by people of diverse backgrounds working with energy and enthusiasm, under conditions where their health, safety and human rights are respected and upheld.

And we will extend this same spirit to our customers and all our stakeholders, working with them to aspire to a better society where we all thrive.

This is our promise: to always work toward a better, more sustainable society.

<http://www.uniqlo.com/en/sustainability/>

Read more about UNIQLO sustainability initiatives

