

5 June 2023

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

SYMPOSIUM



@thegreenHQ



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
MALCOLM ROSALIND

“Moving towards a global plastics treaty”

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How can we eliminate 'waste'?

What legal tools could we design to prevent plastics waste and pollution and stimulate an economy where plastics are retained as stock?

How can we influence policy-makers to implement those legal tools?

Prof Rosalind Malcolm, Co-Director,
Governing Plastics Network



Governing Plastics Network




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Governing Plastics Network blog that was especially busy discussing plastics pollution and climate during the Global Plastic Treaty's negotiations.

A photograph of a beach littered with numerous discarded plastic water bottles. The bottles are scattered across the dark sand, some lying on their sides and others partially buried. The background shows the ocean and a cloudy sky. A black rectangular box with a torn bottom edge is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

**Designing law to prevent
the ecological harm
caused by (plastics)
waste**

Key Points

- » **Moving from liability to prevention**
- » **Eliminating 'waste' as a concept**
- » **Designing legal tools to prevent waste and pollution and stimulate an economy where materials are retained**





Prevention not liability

- ‘A sperm whale which died after stranding on the Isle of Harris had a 100kg "litter ball" in its stomach.’

BBC News 2 December 2019,
Photo credit: SMASS

An Economy where stocks of materials are retained and do not leak into the environment



Our laws are based on an industrial linear economy 'take, make, throw away'



What we need are material and energy **flows** to be replaced by material **stocks** of assets where waste becomes an input



Think about the whole lifecycle of a product



How do we use the law to achieve this?



In a performance economy where prevention of harm is key ...

Provide services rather than sell goods

Re-use materials and products

Re-manufacture products

Extend service life rather than intensifying the flow of materials

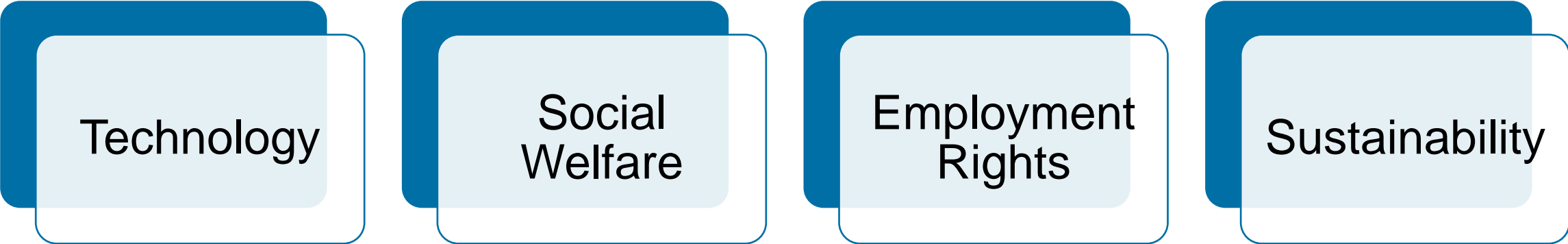
Require labour rather than energy or virgin materials

In a linear economy, current economic and business models generally focus on flows (GDP or added value) rather than prioritising the quality, value and use of stock



A performance economy needs a complete rethink of public policy

A socio-technocratic approach



Technology

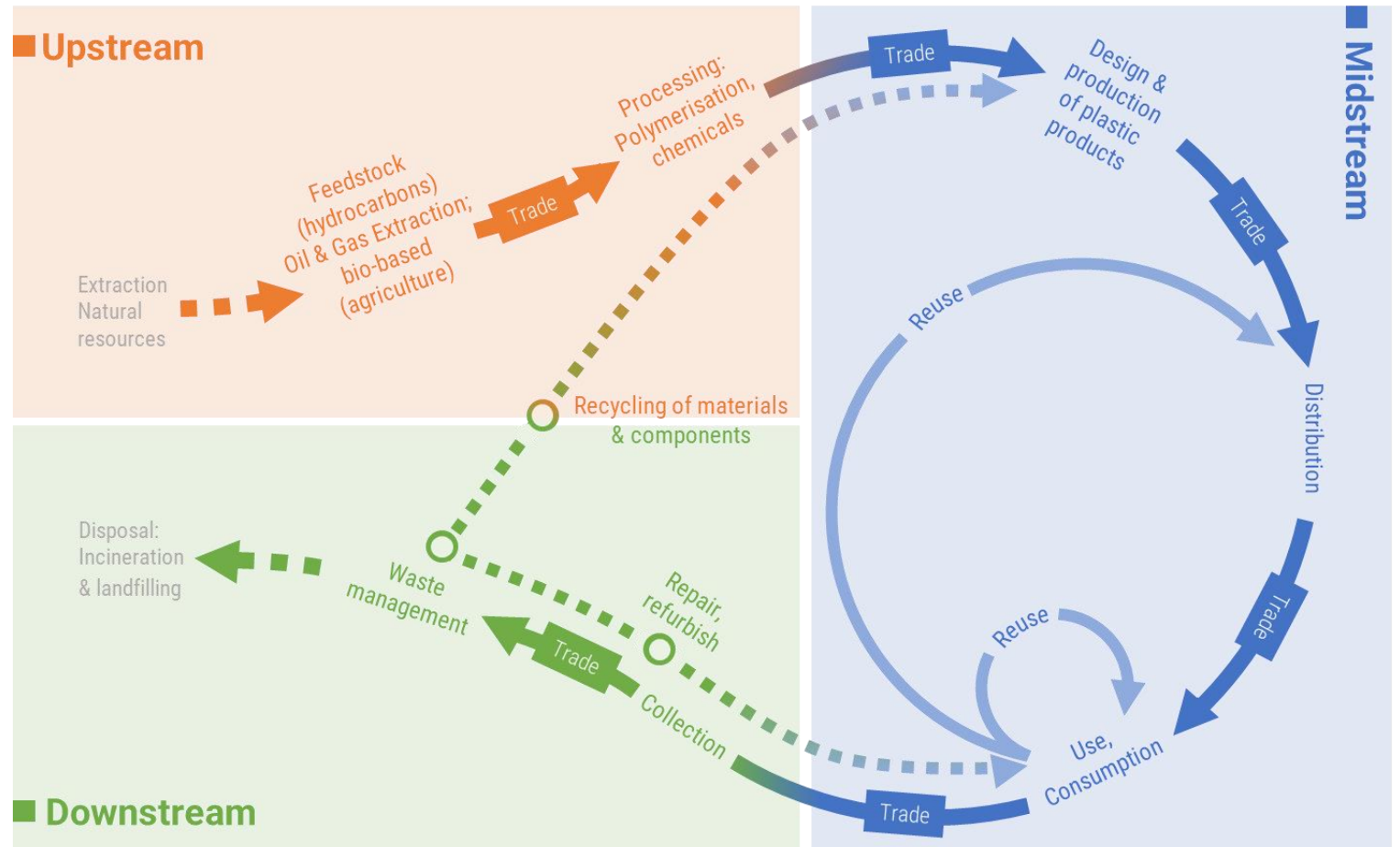
Social
Welfare

Employment
Rights

Sustainability

The Lifecycle of Plastics (UNEP)

UNEP/PP/INC.1/11



The World

» Global Plastics Treaty

legally binding agreement by 2024. The resolution addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design and disposal.

UN Environment
Global Plastic Pollution Agreement: A historic moment

Watch Later Share

GLOBAL PLASTIC POLLUTION AGREEMENT

UNEA 5.2

Watch on YouTube

For more information visit: www.unep.org/environmentassembly

16:03
22/02/2023

Moving towards a global plastics treaty?




The problem is to identify and evaluate those legal tools for the management of plastics and their waste which are most effective in stimulating an economy where plastics are retained as stocks rather than wasted



And then to implement and enforce them.

Our end-point?



Living well within a finite planet



Thank you

Prof Rosalind Malcolm

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To receive information
about our activities and
research, [join the Governing
Plastics Network.](#)