

## **SYMPHONY'S GLOBAL DISTRIBUTOR BASE SLAMS UN'S CALL TO BAN PLASTIC BAGS**

Degradable plastics distributors from around the world - many from countries with a big plastic waste problem, poured scorn on the UN's call for a world-wide ban on "single-use" plastic bags.

At their global distributors' conference held in England by Symphony Environmental, delegates from over 50 countries slammed the suggested ban as impractical and based on lack of understanding of modern plastics technology.

The call for a ban was made by Achim Steiner, head of the UN's Environment Program (UNEP), who said there was "zero justification" for manufacturing plastic bags anywhere." Delegates to the conference gave Mr Steiner's remarks two out of ten for practicality and common sense.

Symphony is a specialist in d<sub>2</sub>w oxo-biodegradable plastic – a short-life material which is manufactured to degrade then biodegrade much more quickly than ordinary or recycled plastic, without giving off any methane gas. It biodegrades completely on land or water leaving no fragments of petro-polymer. It is made from a by-product of oil which used to be wasted, and it does not contain heavy metals.

Said Eduardo van Rost, Symphony's Distributor in Brazil, which has a big plastic waste problem, "Mr Steiner made his remarks out of concern for marine life and the growing amount of plastic pollution in the oceans. The solution lies not in banning plastic bags, which are too useful for people to give up, but to encourage consumers to switch to oxo-biodegradable plastic. He obviously hasn't heard of this technology"

Said Emin Yargan, Symphony's Distributor in Turkey "In my region of the world, the use of d<sub>2</sub>w oxo-biodegradable plastic has become increasingly popular as consumers realise that it really will harmlessly degrade if it gets into the environment after its useful life and not lie around for decades disfiguring the landscape and blocking our drains."

Said John Fell, Symphony's distributor in New Zealand. "The whole point about d<sub>2</sub>w plastic is that it is designed to degrade of its own accord if it escapes into the open environment. This is a big plus in my country where we have a beautiful landscape and coastline which must be protected from the accumulation of plastic waste. Of course we try to educate people not to discard their litter but some of it will always get into the environment" In Mexico, Latin America's leading bakery has switched to d<sub>2</sub>w plastic bread-wrappers to decrease the environmental problem from food packaging and is now using d<sub>2</sub>w plastic to wrap its snack foods as well. "Many people just don't realise how useful a material this is in a country like ours" says Symphony's Mexican distributor, Mauricio Yanez.

Professor Gerald Scott, Chairman of the British Standards Institute Panel on Biodegradability of Plastics, who spoke at the Conference, said "if the plastic waste in the Pacific Garbage Patch had been d<sub>2</sub>w plastic, most of it would have degraded before it arrived, leaving no harmful residues. d<sub>2</sub>w is not eco-toxic." Symphony's position is that the particles of what used to be a plastic are no more harmful than particles of seaweed and that, like seaweed, they will ultimately biodegrade. Professor Telmo Ojeda from Brazil also participated in the Conference. He said "the results of the work that I and other scientific colleagues have been doing leave us in no doubt that Symphony's d<sub>2</sub>w plastic is biodegradable." Symphony Environmental Ltd is a world leader in degradable plastics and is part of the Symphony Environmental Technologies Group, an AIM-listed British company dedicated to using technology to solve environmental problems. Its Distributors cover more than 70 countries worldwide, and its d<sub>2</sub>w, formulation was used last year in over 5 billion plastic products.

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