



Brussels, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022

# Waste Free Oceans launches its first projects in the Caribbean

## Press Release

**Following the success of the WFO African Roadshow, which started in 2021 and which ends this year with projects in Egypt, Kenya and Tanzania, Waste Free Oceans is proud to announce new projects in the Caribbean. This new Roadshow's main objective is to raise awareness among local communities and authorities of the damage caused by plastic pollution, both to the environment and to human health, to eventually enhance a better plastic waste management; but it also represents the starting point of a much larger project.**

The WFO Caribbean Roadshow will start in the Dominican Republic at the end of June 2022. We will first organize an event with Hogar del Niño, the inclusive education center in La Romana which provides education and medical care to children as well as support services to their families. For several days, the children of the center and WFO's volunteers will clean up beaches of La Romana.

Simultaneously, with the support of the international eyewear brand Eco, with whom we collaborated to develop an eyewear collection made of recycled ocean plastic, we will place our waste catching trawl on a river for a few months. The WFO trawl is a device that is usually attached to fishermen's boats and which can collect from 2 to 8 tons of waste on each journey. This time, the trawl will be placed statically on a river and regularly emptied by volunteers. Over the next few months and with the support of Eco, Waste Free Oceans' trawl will collect about 10 tons of waste. The collected plastic will then be sorted and recycled by the local recycling plant Rizek Vidal Recycler's and will be used to create new WFO products.

Eco will also support multiple cleanups with volunteers in the Dominican Republic which will take place in July.

After the Dominican Republic, WFO will buy new trawls to use them in other Caribbean countries, among which Haïti, Puerto Rico, Jamaica and Guadeloupe, in which we will also organize cleanups and educational events and disseminate our actions through local media to inspire local communities to take action.

The main objectives of this Roadshow are to clean up beaches and seas and to bring attention to the disastrous environmental consequences of unsorted and unrecycled waste, this way



encouraging a change in behavior and consumption habits and a more responsible waste management.

Pollution in the Caribbean accounts for about 12% of global plastic waste, meaning 17 000 tons of plastic waste dumped in landfills every day. Even though millions of people in the Caribbean rely on the collecting, sorting, transporting and selling of recyclable material to live, the vast majority of them does it informally.

This is the reason why this Roadshow also lays the foundations of a bigger project initiated by Waste Free Oceans, and which is divided into two parts: the first one consists in the sanitizing and development of the Ozama and Isabela rivers, and the second one in setting up a full-scale recycling plant in the Dominican Republic that would be supplied with all the plastic waste of the whole Caribbean region. This plant would make use of chemical recycling to reprocess plastic waste that cannot be mechanically recycled and which would eventually be turned into green fuel used by local communities. The recycled plastic would also be used to build social houses and emergency shelters.

*“The plant is a global solution for the whole region. It would not only strengthen a local circular economy, but also bring technology and new job opportunities in the Dominican Republic and in all the Caribbean islands. Above all, this project represents a significant step forward for the environment,”* said **Luc Mellaerts, Vice-President of WFO The Americas and leader of the project.**

The cleanups and educational cleanups in the Dominican Republic will then continue in Haiti, Jamaica, Guadeloupe and other Caribbean countries later this year. Stay tuned, and join us!

**Follow the journey:**

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/18014224>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WasteFreeOceans>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wastefreeocean>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/wastefreeoceans/?hl=en>

**START DATE & LOCATION:** Dominican Republic, La Romana, June 25 2022

**HASHTAGS:** #WFOCaribbeanRoadshow



### **ABOUT ECO EYEWEAR**

The international brand Eco manufactures fashionable eyewear made of recycled material.

### **ABOUT HOGAR DEL NIÑO**

Hogar del Niño is a non-profit organization in La Romana providing medical care, food and education to children and teenagers in the Dominican Republic through development and sustainable projects.

### **RIZEK VIDAL RECYCLER'S**

Rizek Vidal Recycler's is a recycling facility in Santo Domingo founded by Jorge Rizek.

### **ABOUT WASTE FREE OCEANS**

Waste Free Oceans (WFO) is a non-profit organization that mobilizes the fisheries sector, the plastics industry, brand owners, and the wider public in order to reduce the impact of marine litter in the oceans. WFO's operations focus on marine litter cleanups and "Closing the Loop" projects, enabling new and innovative products to be designed and produced from the collected ocean waste.

Find more information on: <https://www.wastefreeoceans.org/>

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