Dear (name of company),

I made you this gift because I’m worried about how much plastic waste Christmas produces – 114,000 tonnes per year in the UK – and how plastics disproportionately impact women and girls. I ask you to reduce the unnecessary plastic packaging on your advent calendars: less packaging waste would be cheaper for (name of company) and healthier for both environment and women.

Greenpeace have uncovered the toxic effects of improperly managed plastic waste dumping from the UK in Turkey, and they have previously uncovered it in Malaysia. A BBC investigation revealed illegal plastic waste dumping in Romania. The Greenpeace report (Feb 2022) on dump sites in Turkey revealed plastics chemicals which harm unborn children, disrupt normal hormone functioning, and can be passed on through breastfeeding. Plastics used to wrap individual chocolates in your advent calendars are contributing to this.

14 million tonnes of plastic waste ends up in the sea every year, and the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI 2020) have reported on the health harms of collecting plastic waste on the predominantly female workforce in South-East Asia.

This is at the end of the plastic lifecycle, but from the beginning, links have been demonstrated between the female workforce in industries where plastics dominate and harmful health impacts such as infertility, spontaneous abortions, adverse birth outcomes and increased risk of breast cancer (SEI 2019). Studies have found microplastics in the placentas of newborn babies and in the breastmilk of nursing mothers. And of course plastics are made from fossil fuels, which drive climate change – again, this disproportionately impacts women and increases inequality.

I care deeply about this impact on the health of women and girls. This gift is a heart to wear on your sleeve, to show that you care about these things too. The green stands for the world we are part of, and the purple and green together stand for women and girls. If you would like to wear it, please go ahead. It was made with love.

Best wishes,

(your name)

[www.heartsonoursleeves.net](http://www.heartsonoursleeves.net)

Greenpeace (2022) ‘Plastic dumpsites in Turkey found to be highly contaminated with toxic chemicals’. Available at: <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/plastic-dumpsites-in-turkey-found-to-be-highly-contaminated-with-toxic-chemicals/>

Greenpeace (2020) ‘Malaysia endures toxic legacy of UK plastic waste exports’. Available at: <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/malaysia-endures-toxic-legacy-of-uk-plastic-waste-exports/>

BBC (2021) ‘British waste dumped in Romania’. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-europe-59557493>

SEI (2020) ‘5 ways reducing pollution can improve equality for women’. Available at: <https://www.sei.org/featured/5-ways-reducing-pollution-can-improve-equality-for-women/>

SEI (2019) ‘Why gender matters in tackling marine plastic litter’. Available at: <https://www.sei.org/perspectives/why-gender-matters-in-tackling-marine-plastic-litter-a-q-a-with-may-thazin-aung-and-babette-resurreccion/>

Mongabay (2021) ‘Great concern as study finds microplastics in human placentas’. Available at: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/01/great-concern-as-study-finds-microplastics-in-human-placentas/>