



PORTABLE WATER AND HEALTHY PACKAGING FOR SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

THE PLASTIC POLLUTION ISSUES

Every piece of plastic that's ever been created still exists in our world. Plastic pollution poses a significant threat to our environment. Single-use plastic is manufactured to last forever, yet is often used for only a few minutes, before being thrown away.

Nearly half of all plastic products are discarded after a single use and take up to 1000 years to disintegrate. Larger items, such as plastic bags and straws, can choke and starve marine life, while smaller fragments (microplastics) can cause liver, reproductive, and gastrointestinal damage in animals

Plastic was originally designed in the early 1900s to replace natural materials such as ivory and tortoiseshell, but its production has escalated to extreme levels. The production of plastic has surpassed all other man-made materials except steel and cement, and it's expected to increase by 40% over the next decade.

So where has all this plastic gone?

79% has accumulated in landfill or in the natural environment.

12% has been incinerated.

9% has been recycled.

The problems with plastic

The growing rate of plastic production raises problems in many areas of our society. It's contributing to waste and pollution issues, it's impacting our health, and it's threatening our oceans and wildlife.

Plastic pollution can alter habitats and natural processes, reducing ecosystems' ability to adapt to climate change, directly affecting millions of people's livelihoods, food production capabilities and social well-being.

UNEP's body of work demonstrates that the problem of plastic pollution doesn't exist in a vacuum. The environmental, social, economic and health

risks of plastics need to be assessed alongside other environmental stressors, like climate change, ecosystem degradation and resource use

Waste and plastic pollution

Plastics don't break down, they break up, becoming a permanent pollutant in our environment

Health impacts

- Microplastics have been reported in food for human consumption, deposit in organs may lead to Organ and system breakdown
- Microplastics may also be inhaled and have been found in human organs and in the placentas of unborn babies.
- Toxic chemicals like phthalates and BPA are present in the plastic water packaging
- Cancers

Threat to oceans and wildlife

- 8 million tonnes of plastic pollution enters our oceans each year
- It's estimated that by 2050, there will be more plastic in our oceans than fish
- More than 270 marine species are affected by marine debris through ingestion, entanglement and chemical contamination.
- In the next 30 years, 99% of seabirds will have ingested plastic.

Recycling plastic is not enough

- Only 9% of our plastic has been recycled, and only 10% of that has been recycled more than once
- Recycled plastics are mostly downcycled, meaning that they're recycled into products of lesser quality which are less likely to be further recycled
- Recycling is important, but will never be the solution to our rapidly expanding plastic consumption

The plastic pollution solutions

When we hear plastic pollution facts, it can be easy to feel hopeless about our situation. But the Plastic Free Foundation has shown that small changes, by millions of people, all add up and can make a large impact.

We can each make a world of difference by doing things such as using reusable cups, water bottles and choosing to refuse plastic-water bottles.

At a larger scale, we can also influence our communities to embrace long-lasting solutions and influence business and governments to take action.

Reuse and recycle

Give recycling a chance by following your local recycling guide and putting items in the right bin.

Circulate

Encourage organizations to move away from the concept of 'take, make and throw away' and towards a circular economy that promotes recycling and the reuse of materials. Push businesses to own the product management lifecycle and support ones that do through redesign and innovation.

Eliminate

Increase our single-use plastic bans to eliminate problematic or unnecessary plastic packaging. Consumers and businesses alike are forced to find alternatives to plastic.

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