



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



Naseem Sheikh

World Environment Day 2023- Solutions To Plastic Pollution

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated annually on 5 June and encourages awareness and action for protecting the environment. It is supported by many non-governmental organisations, businesses, and government entities and represents the primary United Nations outreach day supporting the environment. World Environment Day 2023 is a reminder that people's actions on plastic pollution matter.

The steps governments and businesses are taking to tackle plastic pollution are the consequence of this action. It is time to accelerate this action and transition to a circular economy. It is time to #SolutionsToPlasticPollution.

The following ten facts demonstrate how widespread the problem of single-use plastic is and how most individuals contribute to it.

Every year, over 380 million metric tonnes of plastic are manufactured. Since the 1950s, when plastic was first used, 8.3 BILLION metric tons (9.1 billion US tons) of plastic have been manufactured. The annual production of plastic weighs about the same as the whole human population.

Each year, five trillion plastic bags are created globally. A bag may take up to a thousand years to decompose. Each year, Americans discard 100 billion bags, equivalent to approximately 12 million barrels of crude oil! This waste, which equals around 307 bags per person, may be eliminated using reusable shopping bags.

Every day, half a billion drinking straws are used alone by Americans.

Every year, 500 billion plastic cups are used worldwide. Additionally, more than 29 million US tonnes of polystyrene (plastic foam) are produced globally annually. Almost 25 billion Styrofoam coffee cups are discarded by Americans each year.

With 146 million metric tonnes utilised, the most significant demand for plastic in 2017 was packaging manufacturing.

In total, people consume 1.2 million plastic bottles each minute. Ninety-one per cent of plastic is not recycled. A single-use product is where around half of the plastic we produce annually is going.

Almost every plastic item ever produced is still around in some way or another.

Every year, at least 14 million tonnes of plastic enter our seas. Many nations lack the necessary waste management and disposal infrastructure, including sanitary landfills, incinerator facilities, recycling capacity, and circular economy infrastructure.

Plastics are not innocuous when they end up in landfills. When animals unintentionally consume them, they decompose into minute poisonous particles that pollute the environment and rivers and enter the food chain.

According to German researchers, the amount of microplastic contamination on land is four to 23 times more than in the ocean, depending on the habitat. Ultimately, this may harm both people's and animals' health.

Plastic pollution is one of our planet's most pressing environmental issues. With the widespread use of plastic in our daily lives, plastic waste has become a significant problem, with plastic debris finding its way into our oceans, rivers, and even our food chains. While the problem of plastic pollution may seem impossible, several solutions can be implemented to tackle this issue.

The first solution to plastic pollution is to reduce our reliance on single-use plastics. Single-use plastics, such as plastic straws, bags, and utensils, are some of the most significant contributors to plastic pollution. We can switch to reusable alternatives, such as metal, or bamboo straws, cloth bags, and bamboo utensils, to reduce our reliance on these items. By doing so, we can reduce the amount of plastic waste generated and prevent it from entering our environment.

The second solution is to implement better waste management practices. Proper waste management practices, such as recycling and composting, can help to divert plastic waste from landfills and prevent it from ending up in our environment. Governments, businesses, and individuals can all promote better waste management practices by investing in recycling infrastructure, providing education on waste reduction and recycling, and properly disposing of plastic waste.

Another solution to plastic pollution is encouraging innovation in plastic production and disposal. Researchers and businesses can work together to develop new materials that are biodegradable or easier to recycle. Governments can incentivise these innovations by providing grants and tax breaks to companies working to reduce plastic waste. Additionally, new technologies can be developed to dispose of plastic waste more effectively, such as pyrolysis or gasification, which can convert plastic waste into usable energy.

Finally, a solution to plastic pollution is to increase public awareness and education about the issue. Many people are unaware of the impact of plastic pollution on the environment and the steps that can be taken to reduce plastic waste. By providing education and awareness-raising campaigns, we can help to mobilise communities and encourage action to tackle plastic pollution.

Pakistan, like many other countries, is facing the challenge of plastic pollution. However, Pakistan's government and civil society are taking several initiatives to reduce plastic pollution. The government of Pakistan took a five-year plan that aims to: adopt innovative plastic waste minimisation strategies; increase the re-use and recyclability of plastic waste; institute operational changes; enhance credible data collection; and open new avenues for revenue generation.

Here are some of the steps that Pakistan is taking to tackle plastic pollution:

Ban on Single-use Plastics: In August 2019, the government of Pakistan became one of 128 countries that announced a ban on single-use plastic bags in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan. The ban has now been extended to other cities as well. The government has also imposed heavy fines and penalties (ranging from 500 to 500,000 Pakistani rupees) for ban violators. Pakistan's ban halted the production of 600,000 kilograms per annum.

These efforts got results; a survey conducted after a year in September 2020 showed that 80% of the participants felt that the ban had increased their knowledge of plastic pollution. Thanks to regulation, the survey showed that all of the retailers interviewed had shifted towards using alternative bags.

In 2021 Pakistan's first plastic road made with 10-tonne bottles went functional.

Plastic Waste Management: The government of Pakistan has launched a campaign to improve plastic waste management practices.

The campaign includes awareness-raising campaigns, the installation of waste bins, and the development of a plastic waste management policy.

Promotion of Alternatives: The government is promoting alternatives to plastic bags, such as cloth and jute bags. The government has also launched a campaign encouraging citizens to use reusable water bottles and containers.

Plastic Waste Recycling: Pakistan is promoting plastic waste recycling by investing in recycling infrastructure and incentivising businesses that recycle plastic waste. The government is also working with the private sector to develop innovative solutions for plastic waste recycling.

Community Engagement: Civil society in Pakistan is actively engaging communities in the fight against plastic pollution. Many NGOs and community-based organisations are organising awareness-raising campaigns and clean-up drives to educate people about the impacts of plastic pollution and the steps they can take to reduce it.

Plastic pollution is a global issue that affects every nation, and different countries are taking various steps to tackle it. Here are some examples of how other nations are beating plastic pollution, particularly for single-use plastics:

Rwanda: Rwanda has one of the world's strictest bans on single-use plastics. The country banned plastic bags in 2008, and since then, it has become one of the cleanest nations in Africa. The ban is enforced through heavy fines and even jail time for violators...[Read More](#)

Kenya: Kenya has implemented a ban on single-use plastics, including plastic bags, straws, and water bottles. The ban is enforced through heavy fines and imprisonment for violators.

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