

**World Environment Day 2025**  
***Beat Plastic Pollution, Now, Together***  
**Position Paper**

Globally, World Environment Day has been celebrated on 5<sup>th</sup> June every year since 1972 to promote sustainable practices, advocate for policy changes, and inspire individual and collective action. Every year, this day is celebrated worldwide with a specific theme, and the main theme of this year's World Environment Day is 'Ending Plastic Pollution.' The designated 2025 World Environment Day host venue is the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province in the Republic of Korea, which declared a vision to become free of plastic pollution by 2040. It is worth noting that 430 million tons of plastic are produced worldwide every year, two-thirds of which is single-use plastic that is discarded as waste<sup>1</sup>. This waste is causing widespread environmental and public health damage through water, air, and soil pollution. To minimize the impacts of plastic pollution, a global plastic treaty is being developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). As part of this process, representatives from 175 countries will convene in Geneva, Switzerland, for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) in August 2025. They are expected to agree on a legally binding treaty specifying global targets to reduce plastic production, phasing out toxic chemicals in plastics, and providing financial and technical support for developing countries. Therefore, this year's World Environment Day is uniquely positioned for impact.

**Governance deficits in plastic waste management globally:** Plastics are derived from fossil fuels, and about 12% of global oil extraction and 8.5% of gas extraction takes place to produce plastic every year. The production and disposal of plastics are responsible for around 3.4% of annual greenhouse gas emissions<sup>2</sup>, which exacerbate climate change. However, only 11 out of 194 countries that signed the Paris Agreement included greenhouse gas emissions from plastics within their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) plans. Bangladesh is not among these 11 countries. As a result, plastics are not discussed as an agenda item in global climate negotiations. Although UNEP is developing an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, it is facing opposition from oil-producing companies and countries regarding any production caps. On the other hand, around 350 million tonnes of plastic are thrown away each year, half of which ends up in landfills as plastic waste in the absence of recycling. This non-degradable plastic lingers in our environment for a long time, finding its way to our food chains and contributing to many diseases, including cancer. It is worth noting that marine litter derived from plastic waste contributes to marine ecosystem loss, worth \$13 billion annually.

**Governance deficits in plastic waste management in Bangladesh:** Mismanaged plastic waste is a significant urban environmental challenge for the cities and towns of Bangladesh. According to the Department of Environment (DoE), approximately 8 lakh 21 thousand tonnes of plastic waste are generated annually in Bangladesh. Dhaka city alone produces 646 tonnes of plastic waste per day<sup>3</sup>, and a big portion of this waste ends up in rivers, canals, and waterbodies. The bulk of plastic waste is recycled by the unregulated informal

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. (2023, April 25). *Everything you need to know about plastic pollution*. Retrieved May 19, 2025, from <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/everything-you-need-know-about-plastic-pollution>

<sup>2</sup> Karali, N., Khanna, N., & Shah, N. (2024). *Climate impact of primary plastic production*. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Retrieved May 19, 2025, from <https://energyanalysis.lbl.gov/publications/climate-impact-primary-plastic>

<sup>3</sup> World Bank. (2021). *Towards a multisectoral action plan for sustainable plastic management in Bangladesh*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. Retrieved May 19, 2025, from <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/901761623332701147/>

sector, and their recycling practices are not environmentally friendly. Most of the city corporations, municipalities, and private organizations in Bangladesh cannot collect, segregate, and recycle plastic. As a result, this improperly managed plastic waste is clogging the sewerage network and water bodies, and ending up in riverbeds. This has significantly increased the cost of dredging activities and surface water management in Bangladesh, while harming river & marine ecosystems and worsening the impacts of climate change. However, there is a general lack of awareness among citizens, and the government's role in inclusive plastic waste management is also limited.

On the other hand, although the production and marketing of single-use polythene bags have been banned, enforcing this ban has been hindered due to institutional weaknesses and a lack of accountability. The plastic industry in Bangladesh manufactures a wide array of 2,500 different plastic items, for which about 14 lakh 9 thousand tons of virgin plastic resin are imported every year<sup>4</sup>, which could be reduced if more local plastic materials were available from recycling. The import tax for raw materials for plastic manufacturing was reduced from 25% in 2015 to 5% in 2022, further discouraging recycled plastic flow due to the price difference. Along with discouraging the use of single-use plastic in government premises, there is a government action plan to reach a 50% plastic waste recycling rate by 2025 and achieve a 30% reduction in annual plastic waste generation by 2030. However, the current status of these targets is unclear. Participation of the private sector, especially the plastic producers, distributors, and recyclers, is limited in setting such targets. In 2025, the government unveiled guidelines for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), making producers responsible for their plastic products and packaging after reaching the end of life. These new policies require improved transparency and disclosure practices from the government as well as the private sector, which are currently missing.

Within this context, TIB is presenting the following demands for the consideration of the concerned parties.

#### **Issues to highlight at the INC by the Bangladesh delegation**

1. Finalize the global plastic treaty for ratification urgently. An inclusive decision-making process must be adopted, barring those with conflicts of interest in the fossil fuel sector. Bangladesh must work together with other nations to achieve the ambitions of the global plastics treaty.
2. As part of the treaty, countries should aim to ban the use of hazardous chemicals in plastic production and achieve a 100% recycling rate by 2040.
3. The legally binding international agreement must encourage countries to compile their plastic-related emissions data and use the information to amend their successive Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) plans.
4. Following the polluter-pays principle, plastic producers must be held accountable for their fair share of the harm caused by plastic pollution.

#### **Recommendations for the Bangladesh government**

5. Make a declaration at the INC to become free from plastic pollution by 2040.
6. Revise the National 3R Strategies for Waste Management to develop a regulatory framework for a modern waste management system aligned with global commitments.
7. To ensure the collection, segregation, and recycling of plastic in a modern waste management system, increase the technical and financial capacities of city corporations, municipalities, and the Department of Environment (DoE).
8. When it comes to waste management-related decision-making and awareness campaigns, include the viewpoints of civil society, youth groups, and all other stakeholders.

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<sup>4</sup> World Bank. (2021). *Towards a multisectoral action plan for sustainable plastic management in Bangladesh*. Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. Retrieved May 19, 2025, from <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/901761623332701147/>

9. Recycling should be encouraged by increasing import duties and reducing other incentives for the plastic industry.
10. Develop a long-term action plan for informal plastic recyclers so that they can be integrated into waste management systems, and the environmental footprint of their activities can be improved.
11. Raise awareness about the impacts of single-use plastic and the responsibility of producers after plastic consumption. Widely publicize the approved Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guidelines.
12. Organize mass awareness campaigns highlighting the environmental impact of plastic littering.
13. Undertake periodic cleanup drives to reduce legacy plastic waste and mitigate associated impacts.
14. Make responsible entities accountable for their plastic pollution through existing legal frameworks.