

2021 CCOEP Theme: “Creating a Better World: Eliminating Problems Related to Plastic Waste”

In the 21st century, humans have faced many significant problems throughout the world. One severe problem amongst them is the use of plastic. Approximately 90% of plastic waste is not recycled, 8 million tons of plastic flowing into the sea each year. If we do not solve this worsening problem, we will face a future with more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050.

At the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2017, a resolution was passed aimed to end marine plastic pollution, and tackling plastic pollution, including microplastics. This has become a global concern after China, which used to accept large amounts of the world’s waste, has banned imports of recycled waste since 2018. Many countries and organizations manage to tackle the problems of plastic waste by focusing on the 5 Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refuse, and Repair). Additionally, people across borders seek effective solutions that deal with the thorny issues, such as recent campaigns for ending single-use plastic. Our search for the solutions and actions will be a part of accomplishing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the year 2030. To this end, students in the CCOEP forum are seeking collaboration with their counterparts and come up with ideas about “What we can do to create a better world?”

In this online forum, we are focusing on “Eliminating Problems Related to Plastic Waste”, and we have chosen five topics to help us understand the issues from different perspectives. Choose one out of the following five topics below and present your research findings while making your posters as a group and engaging in discussions during the forum.

Note: The focus is on “eliminating plastic waste,” and “food waste” is not included in our discussions.

Discussion for the following five topics:

1. Production (Group 1 & 2)

Key words: extraction, product producers, factories, industrial waste, biodegradable products, biomass plastic, zero-waste design, smart design, etc.

Guiding questions:

- What are the problems/situations related to **production** – involving product producers and factories?
- What are the effects on others / the environment?
- What has been done to help solve these issues?
- Are the current practices /actions related to **production** sustainable?
- How can SDGs help improve these issues?
- What changes are needed in **production** in society at large?

2. Distribution / Retailing (Group 3 & 4)

Key words: disposal of unsold products, packaging, fast-fashion, micro fiber, waste management, etc.

- What are the problems/situations related to **distribution** - shipping, transportation, and stores?
- What are the resulting effects on others / the environment?
- What has been done to help solve these issues?

- Are the current practices /actions related to **distribution** really sustainable?
- How can SDGs help improve these issues?
- What changes related to **distribution** are needed in society at large?

3. Consumption (Group 5 & 6)

Key words: consumers, single-use, Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Refuse • Repair (5Rs), awareness, shopping bags, etc.

- What are the problems/situations related to **consumption** - in households, schools, etc.?
- What are the effects on others / the environment?
- What has been done to help solve these issues?
- Are the current practices /actions related to **consumption** really sustainable?
- How can SDGs help improve these issues?
- What changes are needed in consumerism at large?

4. Disposal (Group 7 & 8)

Key words: material recycling, chemical recycling, thermal recycling, energy recovery, landfill, dumping, water treatment, etc.

- What are the problems/situations related to **disposal** - in garbage disposal sites?
- What are the effects on others / the environment?
- Are the current practices /actions related to **disposal** sustainable?
- What has been done to help solve these issues?
- How can SDGs help improve this issue?
- What changes are needed in **disposing** garbage at large?

5. Movement of garbage (Group 9 & 10)

Key words: trans-border flow of garbage, garbage imports and exports, potential disputes, etc.

- What are the problems/situations related to the movement of garbage across borders imports and exports?
- What are the effects on others / the environment?
- What has been done to help solve these issues?
- Are the current practices /solutions in dealing with these problems really sustainable?
- How can SDGs help improve these issues?
- What changes are needed in importing and exporting of garbage at large?