

# The Global Plastic Crisis

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## Introduction

Plastic stays in the ecosystem for a long time, posing a hazard to wildlife and spreading pollutants. Plastic plays a role in global warming as well. Almost all plastics are manufactured from chemicals used in the manufacturing of climate-changing fossil fuels (gas, oil and even coal). As a result, our reliance on plastic prolongs our need for these polluting fuels. Plastics are also released into the atmosphere when they are burned in incinerators, releasing greenhouse gases and hazardous air pollution. The world is in the midst of a plastic catastrophe. Our earth is being drowned in plastic waste and micro plastics, which has become a global concern. While plastic has a variety of useful applications, society has become overly reliant on single-use or disposable plastic, which has serious environmental effects. Plastic garbage has become so pervasive in the natural world that experts have proposed that it could be used as a geological indication of the anthropogenic epoch. What has brought us to this point, and what does it signify for us, other animals, and the planet? This section provides a broad overview of the environmental concerns that plastics provide [1,2].

## Description

The plastics business originated in the United States in the early 1900s, when the first synthetic plastic was developed. Annual global plastic output has increased dramatically from 1.5 million metric tonnes in 1950 to 359 million metric tonnes in 2018. Plastic manufacturing has topped eight billion metric tonnes on a global scale, and it is likely to continue to rise in the next decades. Plastics pollute the environment at nearly every stage of their lifecycle, beginning with the usage of fossil fuels in their manufacture. Because plastic is a global concern, international cooperation is required to coordinate measures and make effective decisions in order to address this huge environmental issue. There are a variety of projects and activities aimed at tackling the problem of plastic waste and preventing plastic litter from entering the oceans. Countries agreed to establish an international negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution by the end of 2024 at the fifth UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) in February 2022. The resolution states that the instrument might include both mandatory and voluntary measures, and that it should be based on a holistic strategy that considers the entire lifetime of plastic [3].

Plastic pollution varies widely from country to country, both in terms of scale and impact, as well as in terms of financial and technical capabilities to handle it. As a result, any new global instrument must have mechanisms

that can effectively resolve these issues. Technical and financial resources will be needed in particular to support decision-making and aid developing nations and economies in transition in implementing the global remedies to the plastic crisis that will be agreed. While plastic has many beneficial applications, humans have developed a dependence on single-use plastic products, which has serious environmental, social, economic, and health ramifications[4]. Every minute, one million plastic bottles are purchased around the world, and up to five trillion plastic bags are used annually. In all, half of all plastic produced is intended for single-use applications – items that are used once and then discarded. Plastics, particularly microplastics, have become commonplace in our natural surroundings. They're becoming a part of the Earth's fossil record and a sign of the Anthropocene, our current geological epoch. They've even given the plastisphere, a novel marine microbial home, their name [5].

## Conclusion

Since the early 1950s, more than 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced (UNEP, 2018). Plastic has become a waste management challenge as a result of the vast amount of plastic produced and the rise in single-use plastics. Indeed, since 1950, over 60% of all plastic created has ended up in a landfill or in the natural environment. Find useful information about the management of plastic garbage in this section. Only 9% of all plastic created by humanity has been recycled, and only 14% of plastic waste is collected for recycling at this time (UNEP, 2019). Because landfill and fire disposal of plastic has negative repercussions for human and environmental health, recycling is increasingly considered as a viable solution to the plastic problem.

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