ENGAGE WITH CHINA

GOOD COP BAD COP2
Briefing notes

Resolution 4

Plastics - To phase out single use plastics by 2030 and reduce the use of all plastics by 75% by 2035 so that any remaining plastics are 100% recyclable.

Arguments for banning single use plastics

- Single-use plastic contributes to the microplastics that end up in water and are consumed by animals including humans.
- Plastics are non-biodegradable, so it can take hundreds or even thousands of years for plastic to break down, so there is long-lasting environmental damage.
- It affects all food chain organisms from tiny species such as plankton through to mammals such as whales

- **Effects on humans**
  Toxic chemicals leach out of plastic and are present virtually in everybody's blood and tissue. Exposure to them is related to tumours, birth defects, compromised immunity, disturbance of the endocrine system and other disorders.

(https://byjus.com/chemistry/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-plastic/)

- A significant proportion of pollution in the oceans is caused by single-use plastics and the production of single-use plastic also contributes to carbon emissions and in turn to climate change.
- The negative impacts of single-use plastics are felt disproportionately by developing countries.
- Bans on single-use plastics have been shown to significantly reduce plastic use.

- There are alternatives –

https://www.upm.com/articles/beyond-fossils/22/windows-roads-and-rubber-from-trees/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=contentmarketing&utm_term=HubQ2&utm_content=&gclid=CjwKCAiA2L-dBhACEiwAu8Q9YKz_GwLmxbmI1cdiI_IeLwO08z-EAFWzRKPjubim67VotUOSSAW7lBoCQMQQAvD_BwE

Arguments against phasing out single use plastics

- Single use plastics often have a smaller environmental footprint than reusable items

- Single use plastics can often be recycled which is fine if they can be disposed of carefully.
- Medical plastic products – specifically designed to be used only once to prevent cross contamination & infection – e.g. Instruments such as PPE, latext gloves, syringes, applicators, drug tests, bandages and wraps cannot be reused.
- Prevents felling of trees for paper bags/cardboard - production of paper bags produce higher CO2 emissions than plastic bags.
- Plastics – provide energy saving in manufacture, efficiency & convenience.
- Food Waste – reduces food waste as keeps food fresher & for longer and avoids contamination.

Developed Countries shipping plastic waste abroad

China was a preferred destination for the shipment of plastics and other types of waste. However, in February 2017, China introduced restrictions on the types and quality of plastic waste it would accept, through its National Sword Initiative. This diverted the flow of low-quality plastics to other countries like India, Indonesia and Turkey. Even these countries are now introducing restrictions.

In 2021, strict limits on the export of plastics were introduced to the Basel Convention, a multilateral environmental agreement which regulated global trade in waste. Signatories to the convention now have the right to reject the import of plastic waste and return it to the exporting country.

These developments have strengthened the argument that developed nations must reduce their plastics production overall, better manage their plastic waste locally, and simplify the types of plastics being produced (to make them easier to recycle).

Resource links:
HTTPS://WRAP.ORG.UK/TAKING-ACTION/PLASTIC-PACKAGING/INITIATIVES/THE-UK-PLASTICS-PACT

https://seas-at-risk.org/publications/best-practices-to-reduce-and-phase-out-single-use-plastics-in-europe/

https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/08/future-without-plastic

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