

Question 18

Plastic waste is increasing in many countries. What problems does this cause, and what measures can individuals and governments take to reduce it?

The increasing use of plastic has created serious environmental problems around the world. Plastic waste damages ecosystems, threatens wildlife and contributes to pollution. Both governments and individuals have an important role in reducing this problem.

One major problem is that plastic takes a very long time to break down. Large quantities of plastic therefore accumulate in landfills, rivers and oceans. Marine animals can mistake plastic for food or become trapped in it. Plastic waste can also enter the human food chain through contaminated water and seafood.

Another problem is that producing and disposing of plastic requires energy and resources. Burning plastic can also release harmful substances if it is not handled properly.

Governments can reduce plastic pollution by restricting unnecessary single use plastic products and improving recycling systems. They can also encourage businesses to use reusable or biodegradable alternatives. Public education campaigns can help consumers understand the environmental consequences of excessive plastic use.

Individuals can contribute by carrying reusable bags and bottles, avoiding unnecessary packaging and separating recyclable waste. Small changes in daily behaviour can make a significant difference when adopted by large numbers of people.

In conclusion, plastic pollution threatens wildlife, ecosystems and human environments. Governments should introduce effective regulations and recycling systems, while individuals should reduce unnecessary plastic consumption and dispose of waste responsibly.