

# Newsletter (July-September 2020)

Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO

## A walk towards Building a Zero-waste Community for a Pollution Free Environment in Bangladesh

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*“It is so disappointing to see a huge amount of waste remained uncollected every day. I am really glad to know that ESDO has initiated such a project regarding this issue. Dhaka North City Corporation will provide every possible assistance needed to run the project successfully.”*

**Md. Atiqul Islam, Hon'ble Mayor, DNCC**



ESDO organized a project inception workshop entitled ‘Building Zero Waste Communities for a Pollution-Free Environment in Bangladesh’ on 12th September 2020 with the relevant stakeholders along with the officials of the Government.

Md. Atiqul Islam, Honorable Mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation; Dr. A.K.M. Rafique Ahammed, Director General, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh; Syed Marghub Murshed, ESDO’s Chairperson and Former Secretary, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh; Shibu k Nair, Indian Coordinator, GAIA Asia Pacific; Dr. Shahriar Hossain, Secretary-General, ESDO; Ms. Siddika Sultana, Executive Director, ESDO along with the Executive Community Members, Advisory Council Members, team members of ESDO and media personnel were present in the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to officially launch the project and share information about the goal, objectives, and implementation strategies with the stakeholders and media, and also to discuss and get recommendations from them. Their valuable guidance, feedback, and recommendation encouraged team ESDO tremendously. ESDO hopes to achieve the target towards building a zero-waste community in Bangladesh and be the pioneer in Bangladesh.

# 3rd July, International Plastic Bag Free Day

## Experts and activists around the world emphasized plastic bag ban regulation and enforcement

Plastic bags are the single most pollutant behind marine litter and plastic pollution globally. According to experts and activists from around the world, the COVID-19 virus transmits through plastic bags and other single-use plastics. They emphasized plastic bag ban regulation and enforcement on the occasion of International Plastic Bag Free Day 2020.

Environmental experts, activists, and professionals attended the webinar and discussed the need to promote plastic bag-free living. About 50 participants, mostly students and youth representatives from Bangladesh, Nepal, Kenya, and Belgium participated in the event virtually and expressed their solidarity with the global efforts to ban plastic bags and phase out single-use plastics.

During the discussion a theme presentation highlighted the shocking facts on plastic bag, that globally we use 5 trillion plastic bags per year! That's 160,000 a second! And over 700 a year for every single person on the planet! About 2 million plastic bags are used every minute around the world (Earth Policy Institute). Most bags are simply thrown out and less than 1% are recycled.

Griffins Ochieng, Programs Coordinator, Centre of Environmental Justice and Development– CEJAD, from Nairobi; Gaelle Haut, EU affairs Project Manager, from Brussels; Froilan Grate, Executive Director of GAIA Philippines and the Asia Pacific Coordinator for the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives and Md. Ziaul Haque, Director, Department of Environment (DoE) graced the webinar as the speakers. Dr. Shahriar Hossain, Secretary-General, ESDO, and Siddika Sultana, Executive Director, ESDO moderated the discussion.



**Invitation to Webinar on the Occasion of International Plastic Bag Free Day 2020**

Every second, 160,000 plastic bags are used around the world! It takes more than 500 years for a plastic bag to degrade but they still don't break down completely rather turn into microplastics that absorb toxins and continue to pollute the environment!

On the occasion of International Plastic Bag Free Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2020, ESDO is going to organize a Webinar to discuss the need to Promote and Support Plastic Bag free Culture around the globe. The webinar will bring together nationally and internationally recognized experts to share new approaches to eliminate plastic bag usage from communities!

*Join with us and Share your thoughts!*

**Speakers:**

1. **Griffins Orchieng**, Programs Coordinator, Centre for Environment Justice and Development – CEJAD
2. **Gaelle Haut**, EU Affairs Project Manager
3. **Md. Ziaul Haque**, Director (AQM), Department of Environment (DoE), GoB
4. **Dr. Shahriar Hossain**, Secretary General, ESDO

**Participate:**

**Date and Time:**  
3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020, 4pm - 5 pm BST (GMT+6)

To Register: Email at [info@esdo.org](mailto:info@esdo.org)

Organized by:  
Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO

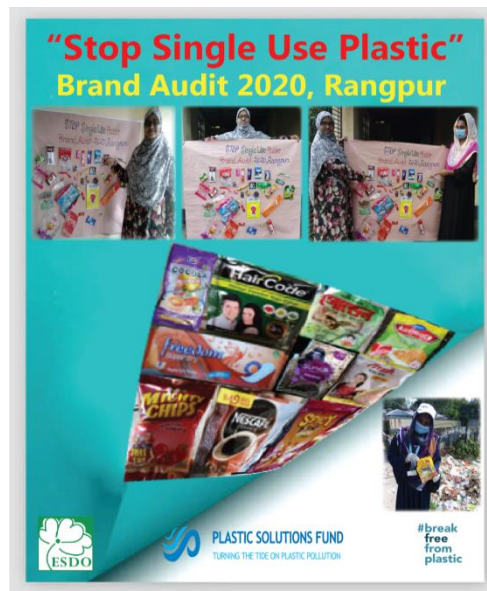
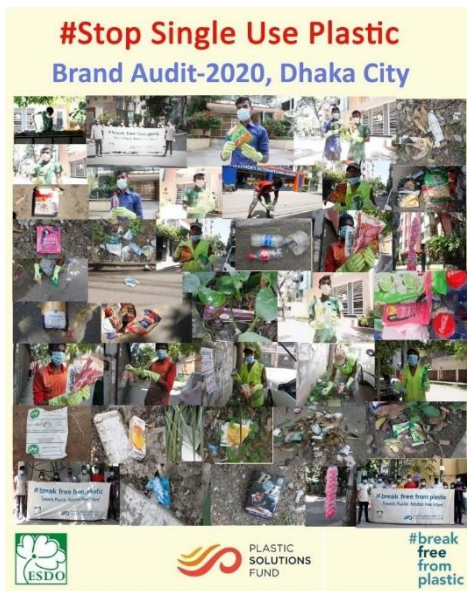
*Say no to Polythene...*

*Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO organized a webinar over digital platform Zoom on Friday on 3rd July 2020 from 4 pm to 5:30 pm to discuss the urgency and importance of enforcement of plastic bags ban law in Bangladesh and beyond.*

## ***ESDO celebrates International Plastic Bag Free Day 2020***



# Brand Audit 2020– Participants urge to ban Single-Use Plastic!



Every year, Break Free from Plastic change makers and allies work together to perform a global audit of plastic waste collected from cleanups to hold the biggest corporate polluters accountable and Environment and Social Development Organization - ESDO has been serving as a core member of *Break Free from Plastic* movement and has been observing brand audits both physically and virtually with different age of people since 2018 .

To create awareness on safeguarding the environment from the harmful consequences of single-use plastic, ESDO organized 'Brand Audit' from 19th September to 22nd September 2020 at Dhaka city, Rangpur city, and other districts. This year's Brand Audit didn't just limit to one city but people from different districts of Bangladesh participated and raised their voices against Single-Use Plastic.



This year due to COVID - 19 pandemic, ESDO devised an alternative way to observe the day along with brand auditing. An experience sharing webinar was organized by ESDO with our volunteers and participants where they shared their experiences regarding this issue on 23rd September 2020. Volunteers and participants from different districts who participated in Brand Audit 2020 had joined the event. ESDO's Secretary-General Dr. Shahriar Hossain and Executive Director Siddika Sultana along with other ESDO team members were present at the webinar.






## Press Briefing on 'Rise in Asbestos–Cancer-Concerns with Johnson & Johnson Talc–Based Baby Powder'

**#JNJKnew**      **#toxictalc**

**Press Briefing on**  
**"The Rise of Asbestos Cancer Concerns with Johnson and Johnson Talc Based Baby Powder"**

**Venue: Virtually, through online platform Zoom**  
**Date: September 5th, 2020; Time: 11 am – 12:30 pm**

**Organized by:**  
**Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO**

To express solidarity with the global campaign against Asbestos based baby powder, ESDO organized a virtual media briefing to discuss about and shed light on the chemical contents of Johnson and Johnson talc-based baby powder in Bangladesh. The discussion was also intended to sensitize the government to take initiatives of facilitating laboratory-based test for alleged cancer-causing asbestos in *J & J* talcum baby powder on 5th September 2020 through virtual platform Zoom.

ESDO appreciated BSTI (Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution) initiative to maintain the standard of service and quality of the goods and also urged them to continue testing the talc powder to find presence of harm-causing material.

In the media briefing, the speakers stated that, despite the ban on Johnson and Johnson Talc-Based Baby Powder in developed countries, those banned products are still being imported and sold in developing countries like India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, etc. In other word, millions of children whose parents trusted this famed product were put into grave danger of life-threatening cancer.

Johnson and Johnson Baby Powder is already banned in the USA and Canada because of the presence of Asbestos that has the potential ability to cause cancer. However, Bangladesh is yet to address this issue properly as they lack enough laboratory support to test and analyze these talc-based products.

The briefing was participated by technical advisors, Prof. Dr. Abul Hashem, Former Chairman, Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution – BSTI; Johora Shikder, Deputy Director, BSTI; Prof. Dr. Nur Nabi, Chairman, Chemical Division, BSTI; Dr. Md. Shafiur Rahman; MBBS; MPH, Assistant Professor, Department of Occupational and Environmental Health, NIPSOM; Dr. Shahriar Hossain, Secretary-General, ESDO; Siddika Sultana, Executive Director, ESDO along with other ESDO team members and media personnel.

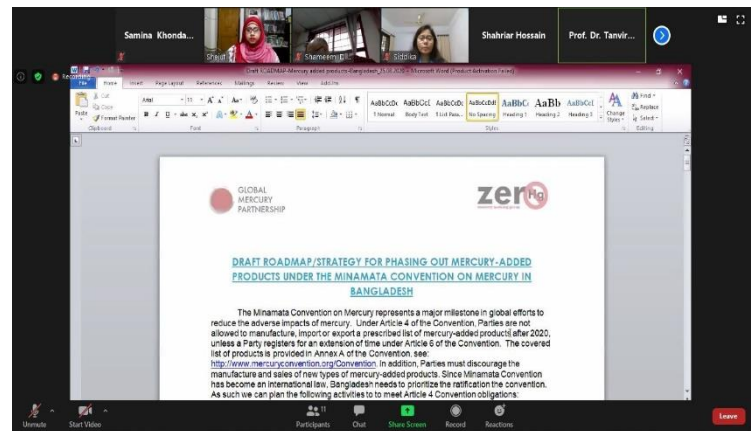


# A discussion on Draft Roadmap/ Strategy for Phasing out Mercury-added products under the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Bangladesh'

ESDO in association with European Environmental Bureau-EEB developed a draft Roadmap/ Strategy under the project 'Contribution towards early ratification and implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and towards phasing out mercury-added products in Bangladesh'. The draft strategy was shared with the Project Support Group (PSG) members on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 through a virtual meeting on Zoom. The sole objective of the meeting was to get prudent feedback on the draft strategy from the PSG members and to incorporate the recommendations in the draft roadmap towards ratifying Minamata Convention.

The virtual meeting was participated by Professor Dr. Abu Jafar Mahmood, Principle Technical Adviser of ESDO and Former Professor, Department of Chemistry, University of Dhaka, Professor Md. Abul Hashem, Senior Technical Adviser of ESDO and Chairman of Chemical Division, Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), Md. Mokhlesur Rahman, Former Inspector General of Police (IGP) and ESDO Board Member, Istiak Ahmed, Former Country Director, IUCN, and Technical Adviser of ESDO, Md. Saidur Rahman, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Masud Iqbal Md. Shameem, Coordinator of MIA project, Department of Environment (DoE), Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, Associate Professor, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology - BUET, Dr. Shahriar Hossain, Secretary-General, ESDO, Siddika Sultana, Executive Director, ESDO, Sayda Mehrabin Shejuti, Assistant Program Officer, ESDO and Samina Khondaker, Junior Program Associate, ESDO.

All of the participants focus on the importance of getting rid of mercury-based products despite its fame for brightening the skin color. They urged the government to speed up the ratification of Minamata Convention on Mercury to ensure a nation free of nervous system damage caused by mercury.



# Team Orientation Workshop for the project “Building Zero Waste Communities for a Pollution-Free Environment in Bangladesh

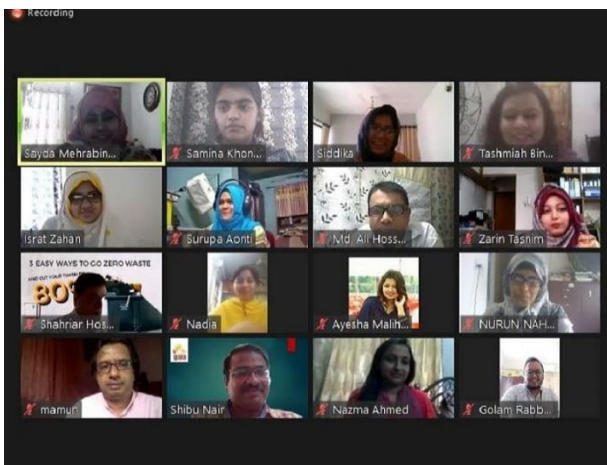


ESDO organized a 3-day long Team Orientation Workshop for the project ‘Building Zero Waste Communities for a Pollution-Free Environment in Bangladesh’ from 23rd to 25th July 2020. The broad objective was to articulate and create a deeper understanding of the project goal, objectives, and henceforth of knowledge, skills, abilities, and capacity of staff that is required for the project operation as well as successful implementation.

Syed Marghub Murshed, respected Chairperson of ESDO and former Secretary of the Government of the people’s Republic of Bangladesh, Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmed, Technical Advisor, ESDO and former Country Representative, IUCN, Bangladesh, Shibu K. Nair, Indian Coordinator of Global Alliance for Incineration Alternatives – GAIA and Mr. Naeefy Abdallah, Country Manager, PORTICUS were present on the first-day session.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, the first two days were held virtually through Zoom and the last day was organized in ESDO’s head office at Lalmatia, Dhaka with some of the participants attending through Zoom. ESDO has initiated the pilot project to build Zero Waste Communities in three particular places in Bangladesh to replicate the concept all over Bangladesh.

Zero waste principle focuses on turning the wastes into resources through 4R (*Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover*). It encourages ecofriendly small and medium entrepreneurship as well.



The participants acquired knowledge on project goals, activities, target, etc. and performed group and individual work on *Zero Waste Principles* and Effective Approaches, Project Development, Assessment and Documentation of Current Waste Profile and Waste Management, Zero-Waste community, Partnership and Linkages, Awareness and Environmental education, Community Capacity building, Setting up of Facilities and Units, Alternative livelihood, Policy advocacy, Media Advocacy, and Communication Strategy, Monitoring, and evaluation. Furthermore, team members generated new ideas through group works and individual work. Each participant gave feedback, suggestions, and recommendations to make the project more fruitful.



## ESDO conducted Zero Waste Survey

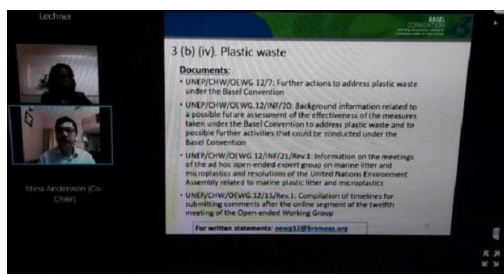


To create a zero-waste Bangladesh, ESDO launched a unique project named ‘Building Zero Waste Communities for a Pollution-Free Environment in Bangladesh.’ The project goal is to create ecologically and environmentally conscious rural and urban communities that seek and implement appropriate waste management systems/approaches to reduce health risks and improve the well-being of the community and environment. The ultimate target is Building a Zero waste community towards ending environmental health risks and community wellbeing in Bangladesh. For those purposes, a survey is being conducted to know the current situation of waste management of households in 3 different locations that are in Dhaka Lalmatia Block B, C, Rangpur City, and Betgari.

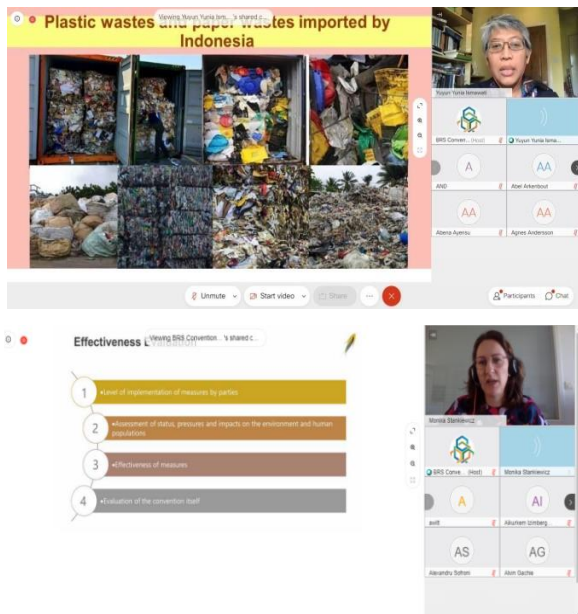
## Online segment of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention



To maintain momentum on reducing the trans boundary movement of hazardous wastes despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the 12th meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention (OEWG12) convened a two-day online segment. This meeting followed an eventful Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2019 that included states amending the Convention to address plastic waste, the creation of a new Plastic Waste Partnership, and approval of the technical guidelines on e-waste and used electrical and electronic equipment. 2019 also saw the Ban Amendment, which prohibits the export of hazardous wastes from developed to developing countries, finally enter into force and bring renewed attention to waste shipments.



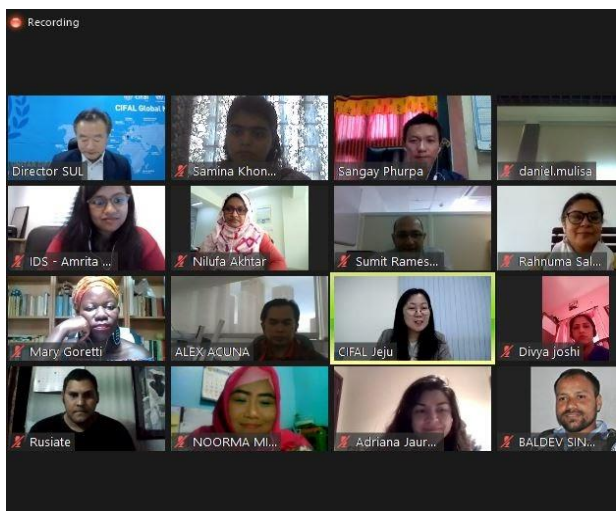
The online meeting featured robust discussions on what more the Basel Convention should do on plastic wastes, waste lead-acid batteries, and transboundary e-waste shipments. Participants received valuable inputs from various participants from all over the world.



From 1st – 3rd of September, 2020, Secretary-General, Executive Director, and Assistant Program Officer of ESDO attended OEWG for the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal.

There were some side events which was also joined by the above superiors along with two team members of ESDO. Each team member has participated in different side events. Dr. Shahriar Hossain attended *Impact of COVID-19 on transboundary movements of hazardous and other wastes and illegal traffic*. Siddika Sultana attended *Strengthening coordination and engagement on waste issues and* Mehrabin Shejuti attended *Evaluating the effectiveness of Conventions* while Golam Rabbani, Junior Program Associate attended *E-Wastes: Closing the Remaining Loopholes* and Samina Khondaker, Junior Program Associate attended *Hidden Dangers in Plastic Waste: The Next Basel Challenge*.

## CIFAL Jeju workshop on "Post COVID-19 era: Pathways to Resilient Livelihoods of the Urban Poor during the Pandemic"



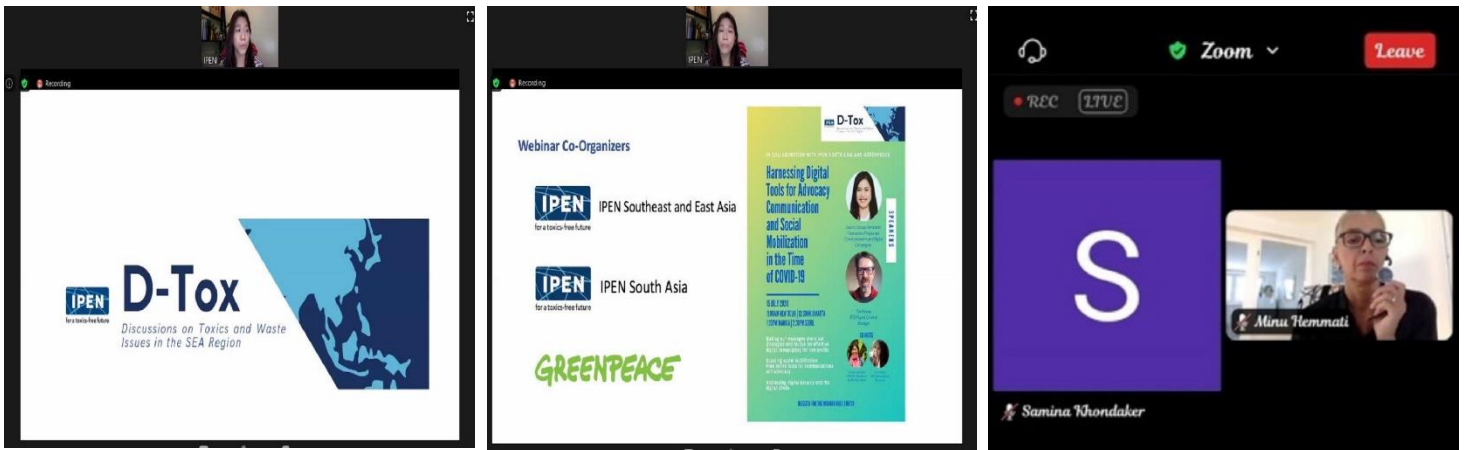
The actions taken to contain the pandemic are unevenly and disproportionately influencing the urban poor in multiple ways, including job loss, rise in prices, loss of remittances, limited rationing of food and other basic goods, limited access to health care services, and disruption to education. Rigorous quarantine measures have brought a large part of economic activities to a still, leaving many urban poor without means to make a living. It is greatly feared that the pandemic could generate new extremely poor people to an extent to which our relentless efforts to combat poverty following the 2030 agenda are to little avail. It is estimated that the pandemic could push about 49 million poor more into extreme poverty in 2020 alone.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put the world in a crisis like no other in recent decades in terms of its economic and social impacts. The pandemic has made everyone struggle with a cumbersome new normal such as shelter-in-place or stay-at-home orders and social distancing guidelines. For more than one billion urban people living in slums or informal settlements globally.

With this view, CIFAL Jeju organized an online workshop on "Post COVID-19 era: Pathways to Resilient Livelihoods of the Urban Poor during the Pandemic" on July 28 and August 4, 2020. One of the delegates from ESDO attended the workshop virtually through Zoom.



## ESDO attends webinars



All kinds of national and international organizational workshops or seminars are being held on online platforms since COVID -19 outbreaks. ESDO attended more than 15 webinars in the past three months. The webinars are held in different countries with different subjects to be discussed.

For example, ESDO attended webinars related to plastic such as ‘Plastic, Health, and Your Family’, ‘Plastic Pollution Coalition’, related to communication such as ‘Harnessing Digital Tools for Advocacy, Communication, and Social Mobilization in Time of COVID-19’, related to environmental justice such as ‘Alternatives Assessment and Environmental Justice: Current State of Practice, Challenges, and Opportunities’, ‘Gender and Chemicals’, ‘Hidden Dangers in Plastic Waste: The Next Basel Challenge’, ‘E-Wastes: Closing the Remaining Loopholes’, ‘Dirty Business of Making Plastics recording, ppts & links to additional information’, etc. These webinars expand our knowledge and broaden our point of view on many critical issues that we face all the time.

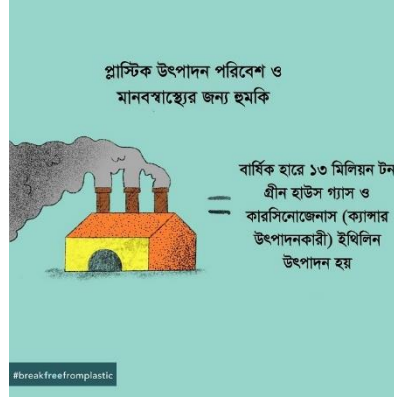
## A glance at Mercury-Free Dentistry Online Survey

Questionnaire Survey for Mercury Free Dentistry

ESDO has committed itself to the advancement of dental amalgam. Following a joint initiative, ESDO, in collaboration with the Bangladesh Dental Society (BDS), started conducting a Mercury-free Dentistry survey during the month of March. But unfortunately, due to the outbreak of COVID – 19, ESDO put halt to its survey. But this survey was very important as it was going to play a vital role in a petition that ESDO and BDS are going to submit to the Bangladesh Government in the upcoming November’20. So, ESDO started to take this survey virtually from June’20. Over 8000 dentists were reached online till now and the response is quite impressive as most of them ensured that they don’t use mercury in their dental treatment. This survey is a part of the national assessment of dental amalgam users and non-user.

# Translation of Break Free from Plastic (BFFP) Plastic-free July graphics

Recognizing the great diversity in the world, BFFP felt the necessity to translate *Plastic-Free July* and *Recovery Principles for COVID-19* digital assets (graphics) into different languages and dialects in the Asia Pacific. From Bangladesh, ESDO volunteered to translate these assets into Bangali language so that it could reach as many people as it can reach. Aside from Bengali, the assets were also translated into Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Gujrati, Vietnamese, Bahasa, Cantonese, Mandarin, Arabic, and Spanish.



## ESDO celebrated Eid-UI-Adha

Eid al-Adha means the Eid of sacrifice. Muslims sacrifice an animal on this day, a symbolic sacrifice that reminds us of the real sacrifice required throughout life. This sacrifice is of our negative emotions such as malice, hatred, negativity, and pride. But with this festival comes health issues that cannot be ignored. Such as people sacrifice an animal and distribute the meat to poor and needy people. Most of the time, these meats are being distributed in single-use plastic bags or boxes which can be dangerously harmful to Human Health and Environment. With this view, ESDO developed several awareness materials to reduce or discourage single-use plastic and polythene usage on the occasion of Eid-ul Adha and disseminate them over social media platforms.

**Avoid Single Use Plastic During This Eid, Stay Safe, Stay Healthy**

- Avoid Plastic Bag for meat distribution** (Use cloth and paper bags instead)
- Do not store meat in polythene or plastic container** (Use reusable stainless steel and cloth freezer bag)
- Do not use plastic bags for waste dumping** (Dump wastes in biodegradable jute bags)

Coronavirus can last longer (up to 72 Hours) on plastic surfaces than on cloth bags. Reusable cloth bags can also be washed and disinfected easily. Avoid using single use plastic bags during this Eid to stay safe and healthy.

ESDO #break free from plastic PLASTIC SOLUTIONS FUND

**মাননীয় মেয়র,**  
**ঢাকা (উত্তর ও দক্ষিণ) সিটি কর্পোরেশন**

পরিবেশ ও জনস্বার্থে এইবারের কোরবানীর মাংস বিতরণ, বর্জ্য সংগ্রহের জন্য প্লাস্টিক ব্যাগ/বস্তার পরিবর্তে প্যাট বা কাপড়ের ব্যাগ/বস্তা ব্যবহার করার জন্য বিনীতভাবে অনুরোধ জানাচ্ছে।

আপনারা অবগত আছেন, এই বিপুল সংখ্যক প্লাস্টিকজাত বস্তা সাময়িক পরিচ্ছন্নতায় সাহায্য করলেও ভবিষ্যতে আমাদের পরিবেশে তা নানারকম সমস্যা সৃষ্টি করতে পারে। এই বস্তাগুলো অপচনশীল হওয়ায় তা নালা, নদীমা কিংবা জলাশয়ে জলাবদ্ধতা সৃষ্টি করে, যা পরিবেশ ও মানবস্বাস্থ্যের জন্য হুমকিস্বরূপ। করোনা মহামারীতে এ ধরণের বস্তা সংক্রমণের ঝুঁকি বাড়িয়ে তুলতে পারে।

আসুন, ঢাকা মহানগরী পরিচ্ছন্ন, দুর্গন্ধমুক্ত ও দূষণমুক্ত করতে সকলে একযোগে কাজ করি।

**পরিবেশ ও জনস্বার্থে -**  
এনভায়রনমেন্ট অ্যান্ড সোস্যাল ডেভেলপমেন্ট অর্গানাইজেশন - এসডো

ESDO

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ESDO is working to promote the coherent implementation of environmental dimensions of sustainable development since 1990. It should be mentioned that ESDO is the first organization to ban polythene bag in 2002. ESDO's activities continue with different issues like mercury-free dentistry, single-use plastic pollution, building zero waste community and micro beads including lead containing products.

In this quarter, ESDO primary objective was to make awareness plastic pollution during Covid-19 pandemic through consultations, webinars, publishing report and campaigns to raise awareness among the general people, government officials, stakeholders and policymaking. ESDO also conducted mercury free dentistry survey and zero waste online survey as well as organized webinar on roadmap of pursuing mercury free dentistry. ESDO also conducted team orientation under implementation of zero waste projects and plastic free july for expanding awareness in order to protect the world from environmental degradation.