



Empowering Future Leaders: Youth Debate on Plastic Use and Marine Litter Prevention

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Across Bangladesh, a transformative movement is unfolding, led by students and young leaders committed to tackling plastic pollution. The Inter-School and University Debate Competition on Sustainable Plastic Use and Marine Litter Prevention has become a powerful platform for shaping informed, environmentally conscious future leaders. Through critical debates, knowledge-sharing, and advocacy, students are taking center stage in the fight against plastic waste, ensuring that sustainable practices become a national priority.

This initiative is part of the “Integrated Approach Towards Sustainable Plastics Use and Marine Litter Prevention in Bangladesh” project, implemented by the Department of Environment (DoE) with technical support from UNIDO and the Norwegian government. It aims to mobilize youth voices, foster critical thinking, and drive real change in how plastic is used, managed, and perceived in Bangladesh.



Final Session of University Inter-Debate Competition, Dhaka



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The debate competition, spanning multiple districts—Narayanganj, Sirajganj, and Cox's Bazar—brought together over 1,350 high school students from 48 debate teams and 36 universities, engaging in thought-provoking discussions on plastic waste, marine litter, and sustainable management. The topics ranged from the effectiveness of public awareness vs. policy enforcement to the responsibility of consumers vs. corporations in tackling plastic pollution.



Finalists at the Inter-School Debate, Narayanganj

For school students, the event was a gateway to understanding their role in plastic waste reduction, responsible consumption, and marine ecosystem protection. University participants, on the other hand, explored policy implications, corporate accountability, and the role of circular economies in addressing plastic pollution. The competition was not just about debating—it was about inspiring action. Students took their learnings beyond the debate halls, engaging their schools, families, and local communities in discussions on plastic waste reduction and sustainable alternatives.



Distinguished Guests at the Final Inter-University Debate Program, Dhaka



Workshop and Knowledge Sharing Session, Sirajganj

Beyond the competition, students participated in interactive workshops, expert-led discussions, and knowledge-sharing sessions that deepened their understanding of plastic waste management, marine conservation, and circular economy principles. With over 42,400 people indirectly impacted, the initiative has sparked a ripple effect, creating young ambassadors for sustainability who continue to spread awareness within their communities.

The impact of this initiative goes far beyond the competition itself. It has paved the way for a new generation of environmentally conscious leaders, policymakers, and activists who are ready to champion sustainability at local and national levels. One university participant shared, "This experience has changed the way I see environmental challenges. It's not just about debating—we are shaping the policies and behaviors of tomorrow. I now see myself as part of the solution."

Continued support is required in sustaining these efforts and expanding the program to more fishing communities. Together, we can empower these communities to lead the way in marine litter prevention and create a sustainable future.



Student Participation at the Final Inter-School Debate Program, Cox's Bazar

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