



Reef Check Malaysia staff picking up plastic bottles at a beach in Mantanani Island, Sabah. — Filepics

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POST-CONSUMER plastics have value and can be put to good use. This is provided that the plastic material used for manufacturing products is recyclable.

Once plastic manufacturers make their products with recyclable material, these can no longer be called waste products as they can be reused.

This is the direction that big Malaysian corporations want to take.

They want all companies and brand owners of plastic products and packaging to ensure that their design is 100% recyclable to better manage plastic wastes.

There is also a call for an industrial land collection system of the plastic products for recycling as well as to create a circular economy.

A circular economy is an economic system aimed at eliminating waste with the continual use of resources.

Coco-cola Far East Limited head of public affairs, communications and sustainability Malaysia Khairul Ab Gahani said manufacturers should ensure that packagings have a second life and value in them.

"We should change the word 'waste', as it is such a negative word, because there is still value in post-consumer plastic.

"The aim here is to collect every single bottle and put them back in the market.

"Big corporations like Coca-cola, PepsiCo, F&N, Unilever and Tetra Pak, among others are looking into solutions that can be taken by the industry.

"We hope we can announce the plan by year end, so that we can have an industrial land collection system that will be driven by the industries.

"As we already have a good commitment, we hope to see results and programmes coming to life soon," he said at the 5th Waste Management Association of Malaysia's (WMAM) annual conference.

Waste Management Association of Malaysia chairman Ho De Leong said industries producing plastics

'Solution must go beyond recycling'

Experts say they have the technology to use plastics as raw material for future productions



A circular economy means to have a continuous process of recycling and reusing, and consumers must do their part.

face new heights of scrutiny.

"A new plastics opportunity has emerged for businesses to create value and drive more sustainable practice simultaneously.

"If regulatory and voluntary measures prioritising recycling and recovery is aligned with sustainable innovation, the global need for virgin plastic could be reduced.

"Global standardisation of plastic packaging types may be one solution to this issue," he said, adding that this could be realised through public sector collaboration to create effective policies, coupled with self-regulated industry standards.

Ho said a global commitment for a new plastics economy was announced in October last year by the United Nations with 290 signatories.

The commitment, he added, showed that many major public and private sectors were advocating for a circular economy model that closes the loop on plastics production and encouraged innovative reuse.

"By closing the loop, plastics would no longer be classified as waste. They would instead act as a key source of value, entering and re-entering the value chain," he said, adding that the technology to

enable the use of plastic as a raw material in future plastic production existed.

Health and environment

Housing and Local Government Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohammad Mentek said over 800,000 tonnes of rubbish from predominantly developed countries such as the US, UK, New Zealand and Australia were shipped into Malaysia to be recycled in illegal plants.

"The problem started when China closed its door on the importation of HS Code 3915