

2025

July - September

Quarterly E-Bulletin



www.esdo.org
www.bansup.esdo.org



info@esdo.org



ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION-ESDO

The Battle to Keep Plastic at Bay Continues!

The Fifth Session of The Inter-Governmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) on Plastic Pollution

The second segment of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2), held in Geneva, concluded without an agreement on the highly anticipated Global Plastics Treaty. Despite progress in technical negotiations, deep political divides over the scope, ambition, and financing of the treaty stalled an outcome due to a lack of consensus. For Bangladesh and other Global South countries, this outcome reflects the urgent need to amplify voices that demand equity, justice, and ambition in the treaty process. Unfortunately, stalemates on key issues were noted. Countries disagreed on production reduction targets, financial mechanisms, and technology transfer—blocking the adoption of a consolidated treaty text. With INC-6 approaching, the treaty process remains uncertain but crucial. Global South leadership, including Bangladesh, will be vital in ensuring a binding and ambitious agreement.



Youth Dialogue on Plastic Pollution & Treaty Negotiations

As part of BFFP's Global Week of Action 2025, this event was held at ESDO's Head Office in Dhaka on July 28, 2025, just days before the resumption of INC-5.2 negotiations in Geneva. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness by creating space for the youths to critically exercise their voice in relation to the Global Plastics Treaty. Four youth groups brainstormed responses to guiding questions around treaty advocacy, reducing single-use plastics, and community engagement. The session yielded locally grounded recommendations that are globally relevant.



Shaping Our Voice for INC-5.2!



Toxic playtime: Uncovering Heavy Metals in Children's Plastic Toys

Toys, essential for nurturing the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children, have tragically become silent carriers of toxic substances in Bangladesh. ESDO, in association with BAN Toxics, Philippines, published an investigative report that exposes a disturbing pattern of systemic contamination in plastic toys available in the Bangladeshi market. The findings reveal that many toys, especially those manufactured informally or imported from low-regulation regions, contain dangerously high levels of heavy metals such as lead (Pb), cadmium (Cd), chromium (Cr), mercury (Hg), arsenic (As), etc. This report is both a scientific exposé and a public health warning. It advocates for urgent policy reform through the establishment of legally binding national toy safety standards, mandatory chemical testing, manufacturer accountability, and public awareness campaigns.



Uncovering Heavy Metals in Children's Plastic Toys



Toys or Toxins?

The Silent Threat in Plastic Playthings



Background

Toys, though vital for child development, pose a serious public health risk in Bangladesh due to widespread contamination with toxic heavy metals like lead, cadmium, chromium, mercury, and antimony. ESDO's 2024-2025 investigation found that over 70% of toys sampled from Dhaka markets exceeded international safety limits, some by up to 70 times. This alarming situation stems from unregulated manufacturing with recycled plastics, a lack of binding safety standards, and weak enforcement. As a result, millions of children are exposed to harmful substances that can cause irreversible neurodevelopmental and hormonal damage, violating their right to a safe, toxin-free environment.

Why this Study?

Toys sold in Bangladesh often contain toxic heavy metals.

Children are highly vulnerable to chemical exposure.

No legally binding toy safety standards exist in Bangladesh

The study aims to raise awareness and push for strong regulations.

Over 70% of tested toys exceeded international safety limits

Harmful Impacts of Toxic Toys

Brain Development Damage

Exposure to lead and mercury can impair IQ, memory, and learning ability.

Behavioral Disorders

Linked to attention issues, hyperactivity, and mood swings.

Speech and Language Delays

Neurotoxins interfere with early communication skills.

Hormonal Disruption

Chemicals like phthalates affect growth and endocrine function.

Weakened Immune System

Toxic metals reduce resistance to illness and infection.

Long-Term Health Risks

Increased chances of kidney damage, cancer, and chronic illness.

Skin Irritation and Allergies

Direct contact can lead to rashes, eczema, or allergic reactions.

Regulatory Gaps in Bangladesh

Toys Not Included in Market Surveillance

Limited Testing Capacity

Low Public Awareness

No Mandatory Labeling Requirements

Why Are Heavy Metals Used in Children's Toys?

- Lead, cadmium, chromium are used as pigments for colors.
- Lead, cadmium are added to stabilize and soften plastic.
- Chromium, antimony are used in dyes and flame retardants.
- Mercury is found in colorants and small batteries inside toys.
- Recycled plastic contains residual heavy metals.



ESDO Study on Children Toys in Bangladesh

- 2013** ESDO detected hazardous levels of lead and cadmium in toys sold in Bangladesh
- 2024** A follow-up analysis confirmed continued non-compliance with international toy safety standards.
- 2025** Over 70% of tested plastic toys exceeded heavy metal limits & Over 20% had high Cl and Br

Key Findings from the Study

- 70% of plastic toys tested contained toxic heavy metals beyond international safety limits.
- Detected chemicals included lead (up to 2,350 ppm), chromium (4,300 ppm), cadmium (640 ppm), and mercury (1,080 ppm).
- 20% of toys showed high levels of chlorine (Cl) and bromine (Br) which indicates the use of PVC and brominated flame retardants.
- Most hazardous toys were locally produced, particularly by informal manufacturers using recycled plastic from e-waste and PVC scrap.
- Toys marketed to infants and toddlers, such as soft rattles and brightly colored blocks, were the most contaminated.
- No toy in the market was found to comply fully with international chemical safety standards like EU EN 71-3 or US CPSIA



Environment and Social Development Organization-ESDO
Address: House 6/2, Level 5, Block C, Lalmatia, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.
Email: info@esdo.org, Website: esdo.org, Phone: +880 1726-053420
Copyright © Environment & Social Development Organization-ESDO

