

Seychelles bans single-use plastic straws to protect environment

The Indian Ocean Island of Seychelles is the latest destination to ban the use of single-use plastic straws to protect and conserve the environment. The ban, approved by the cabinet of ministers in early June, will include straws used in cocktails and other drinks. However, the ban will exempt plastic straws attached to juice packets.



Image Supplied.

A provisional study conducted in 2016 found that plastic waste makes up nearly 30% of all waste of Seychelles' landfills. Additionally, the Seychelles government reports it is spending hundreds of millions of rupees on solid waste management for de-littering rivers and marshes from all types of waste including plastics.

In September 2016, the cabinet announced that it will join the likes of Rwanda, Bangladesh and Madagascar in implementing a ban on the use and importation of items such plastic bags, cups, cutlery and styrofoam packaging in an effort to cut down on waste in the Seychelles, which will now be extended to single-use plastic straws.

"Retailers have been given to January 2019 to use their existing stock of plastic straws. We are going to start an intensive education programme as we also need to present importers with alternatives rather than just stating that we are imposing a ban," says Nanette Laure, director general at the waste enforcement and permit division of the Department of Environment.

Laure adds that there are alternatives such as those made with bamboo and paper which could be imported and that despite the alternatives being more expensive, it will have a long-term benefit, as it will cost less to remove it in the environment.

The waste enforcement and permit division of the Department of Environment will now draft regulations that will guide the ban just like the one imposed on plastic bags.

South Africa for the Seychelles Tourism Board director, Lena Horeau adds that while the Seychelles' drive to go plastic-free initially seemed like an impossible task, the Seychelles has been quick to come up with creative solutions with some even finding opportunity in the decision.

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