

04 Globally less than 10% of plastic waste is recycled

Controlled waste management of plastics, encompassing recycling, landfill and incineration, accounts for approximately 6%* of overall plastics life cycle emissions.[1] Inadequate waste service leads to open burning, which not only emits greenhouse gasses but also black carbon with a global warming potential of up to 5,000 times greater than CO_2.[2] Currently, 16% of the world's total municipal waste is openly burned, significantly contributing to both greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.[3]

Annually thousands of tonnes of plastic waste go uncollected as an estimated 2.7 billion people currently lack access to waste collection systems.[4]

* This figure excludes emissions from unregulated disposal and open burning

1. Cabernard *et al*. 2022
2. Reyna-Bensusan *et al*. 2019; Cruz *et al*. 2022
3. Wiedinmyer, Yokelson and Gullett, 2014
4. Wilson 2023

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Photo by Muntaka Chasant: *A plastic waste picker/scavenger had traveled with the recyclable plastic he had recovered on his head to a dumpsite where middlemen would later come to buy them for recycling. Plastic waste pickers play a leading role in informal plastic waste recovery. They help to reduce waste, cost of cleanups and supply materials to industries.*