Team Project Part 1 – Team 8

**Background and Description of Topic**

Plastic Waste Reduction and Reuse

How much do you know about plastic? Plastics are a synthetic or semi-synthetic materials that use polymers as a main ingredient. Plastics have been used all around the world for numerous benefits such as it’s light weight, easy to process, cost-effective, durable, and resistant to corrosion and moisture; but what attracted consumers and producers in the use of plastics was the fact that plastics are extremely cheap to produce and the idea of it’s “recyclability”.

Plastic’s cheap cost and the concept of recyclable goods plastic promotes resulted in industries mass producing and consuming plastic. Truth is that only 9% of the plastics produced are recycled and when not recycled, it takes up to one thousand years for plastic to degrade in a landfill. After degrading, plastic does not break down completely and becomes micro plastics that pollute the environment. Plastics harm Ocean life, terrestrial wildlife, takes up space due to long degrading, produces chemical pollution, and creates micro plastics.

An estimate of 13 million metric tons of plastic ends up in the ocean every year. That is equivalent to two garbage truck’s full load worth of plastic dumped into the ocean every minute. Fish, seabirds, and marine mammals can be put in danger from becoming entangled in or intaking plastic debris which can cause suffocation, starvation, and drowning.

Plastic can also affect terrestrial life when it degrades. When plastic degrades can becomes a micro plastic, they can carry disease-causing organisms and act as a plague that carries diseases for the environment. These micro plastics can be found anywhere even in tap water, in the soil, and in the air we breath.

Unlike how plastic is promoted or advertised, most plastics are not recyclable and does not biodegrade. These non-recyclable plastics can cause serious problems and is a threat to our land as of the 8.3 billion tons of plastic that is produced, 6.3 billion ton of plastic ends up on land. It is projected that the ocean’s surface will be covered by plastics by 2040 and not too far beyond that time for our land.

One of the methods of degrading plastic is burning them. Plastic releases dangerous substances such as heavy metals and POP (Persistent organic pollutants) into the air which can develop asthma and cancer on human beings. Plastic is also responsible for estimate of 3.4 % of total green house emissions.

Use of plastic needs immediate attention from everyone around the globe to avoid catastrophic damage on earth and raise awareness on the impact of plastic use. Plastic’s “recyclable” promotion is overexaggerated and the world needs to address the issues plastic usage is raising.