

Addressing Plastic Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean

**Regional Workshop on Tackling Plastic Pollution:
Cooperation, Best Practices and Sustainable Solutions**

March 12-13, 2025

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1. Introduction
2. Status of plastic pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)
3. Environmental and societal impacts
4. Addressing plastic pollution in LAC
5. Conclusions



Latin America and the Caribbean: overview

LAC:

33 Member states

670 Million people



LAC's natural wealth

+ 2,400 Key Biodiversity Areas

+700 marine protected areas

40% all known plant and animal species

LAC in the World

8% of global population

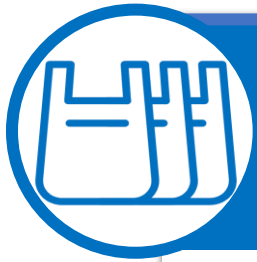
6% of global GDP

5% of global plastic production

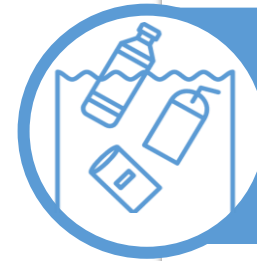
8% of global plastic consumption

11% of global waste generation

2. Status of plastic pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean



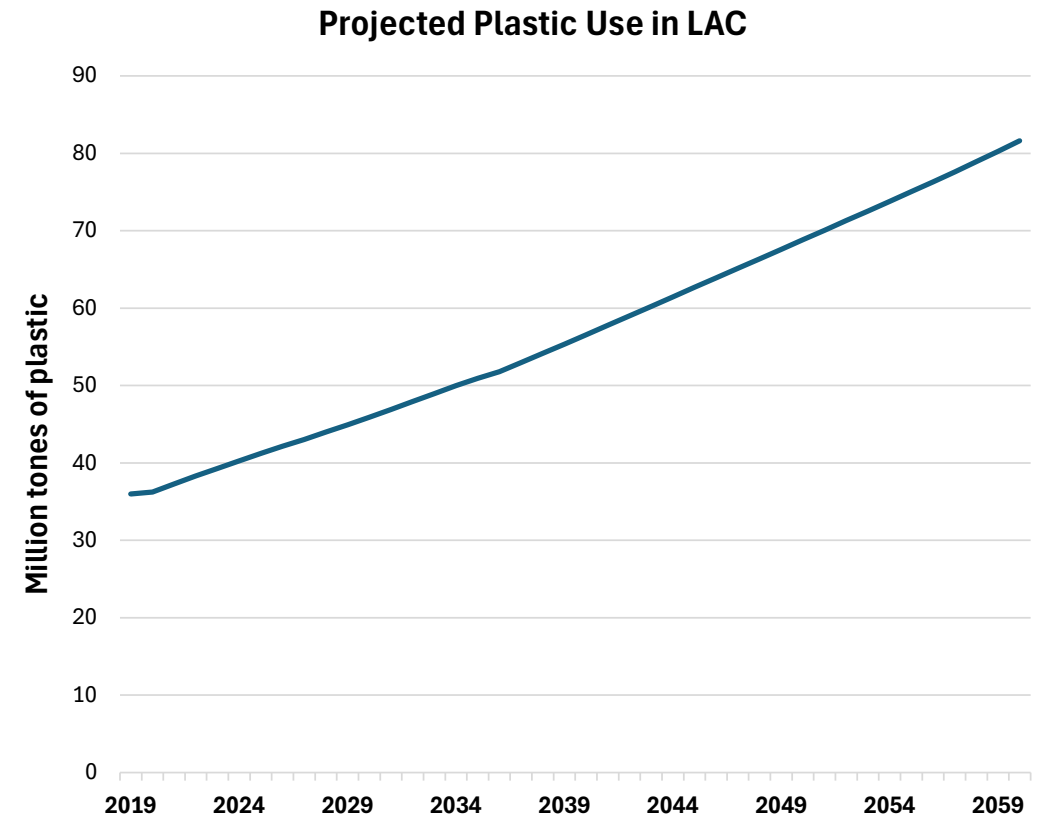
- **36 million** tonnes/year of plastic are used in LAC (**2019**)



- By **2060**, plastic use in LAC is projected to **increase 126% (2.3X)**



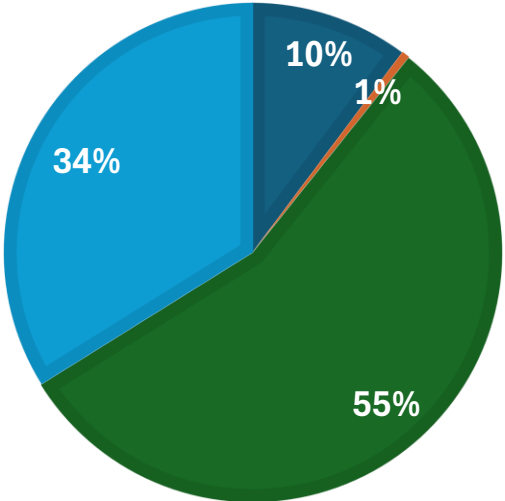
- **Packaging** accounts for **43%** of plastic use in LAC



2. Status of plastic pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean

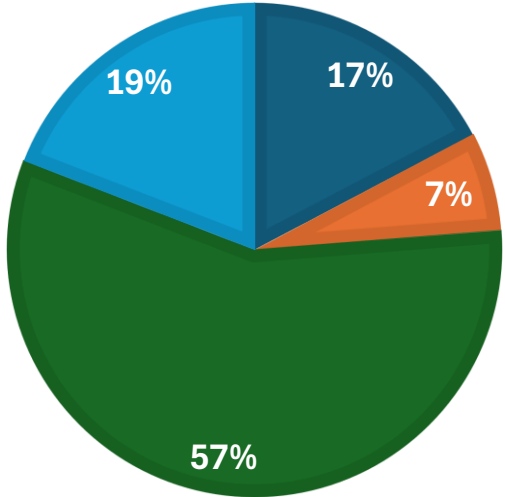
Plastic End-of-Life Fate in LAC

■ Recycled ■ Incinerated ■ Landfilled ■ Mismanged



2019

■ Recycled ■ Incinerated ■ Landfilled ■ Mismanged



2060

Source of data: OECD

2. Status of plastic pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean

Mismanaged plastic waste (tonnes/year)



Largest countries release more plastic waste...

Status of plastic pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean



... but per capita rates of mismanaged plastic waste is higher in Central America and Caribbean

2. Status of plastic pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean

By 2050:

Microplastic leakage to the environment in LAC will increase **60%** from OECD's projected 2025 levels.

Plastic leakage to oceans in LAC will increase **160% (2.5X)** compared to 2025 projections.

Plastic leakage to freshwater bodies in LAC will increase **93% (2X)** to double from 2025 projected levels.



2. Status of plastic pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean

Scientific production on microplastics in LAC

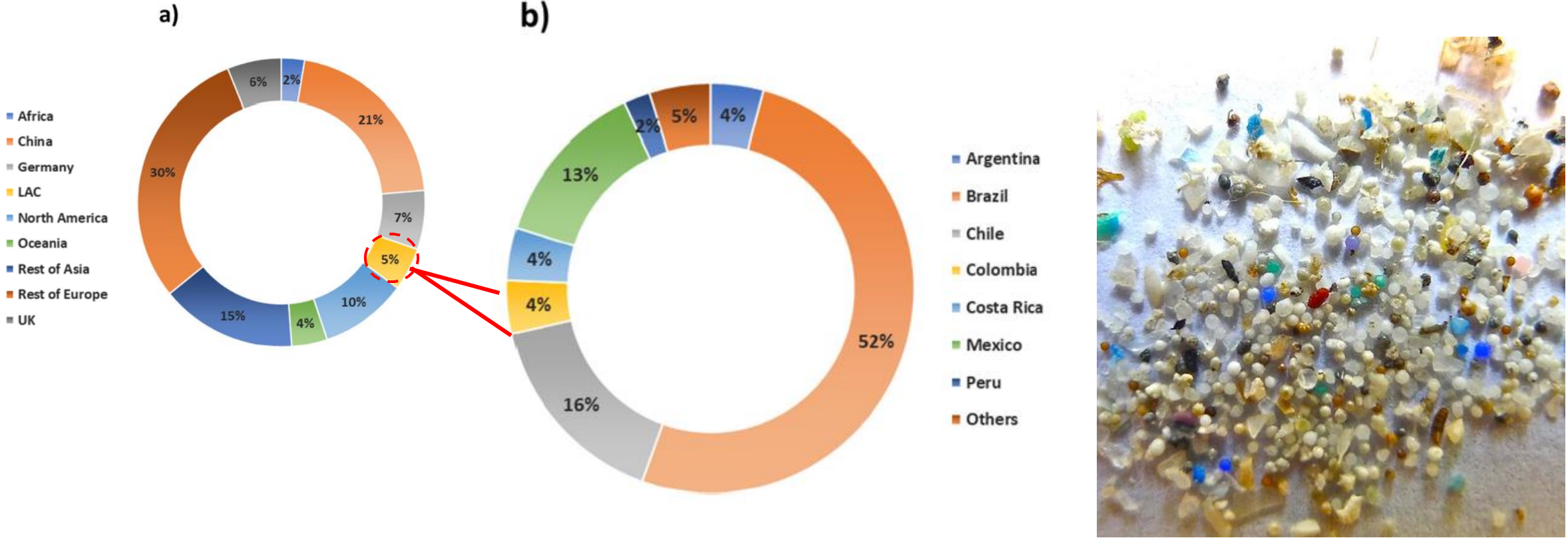


Fig. 1. a) Global distribution of scientific production on microplastics (4757 studies in total). b) Distribution of scientific production of the LAC region by country (233 articles in total) (retrieved from Scopus in december 2021).

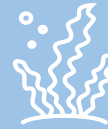
Source: Orona-Návar et al (2022)

3. Environmental and societal impacts

Plastic pollution present a serious threat to all marine life, while also influencing the climate.



Decrease in the population of fish and marine species caused by **entanglement** or **ingestion** of plastic waste.



Affecting the health of marine soils.



Introduction of **invasive** or **exotic species** in other ecosystems.



Degradation of beaches, coral reefs and mangroves; flooding from plastic bottles, bags and Styrofoam.

3. Environmental and societal impacts

Plastic pollution affects the global economy

Costs to different sectors

- The **costs** incurred by plastic pollution in tourism, fisheries, aquaculture and other activities, such as cleanups, were estimated at **US\$6-19 billion in 2018**.



Financial Risks

- By 2040, companies could face an **annual financial risk of US\$ 100 billion** if governments require them to cover the costs of managing waste at the projected volumes.



Financial Risks

- In 2019, the lifetime cost of plastic to society, the environment, and the economy was estimated at **\$3.7 trillion**. Without urgent action, this cost will rise to **\$7.1 trillion by 2040**.



3. Environmental and societal impacts

Microplastics in humans: growing evidence, health impact under study

Microplastics found in human stools for the first time

Study suggests the tiny particles may be widespread in the human food chain



October 2018

Microplastics revealed in the placentas of unborn babies

Health impact is unknown but scientists say particles may cause long-term damage to foetuses



December 2020

Microplastics found in human blood for first time

Exclusive: The discovery shows the particles can travel around the body and may lodge in organs



March 2022

3. Addressing plastic pollution: regulations

More than **130** regulations on plastics and Waste management identified in LAC

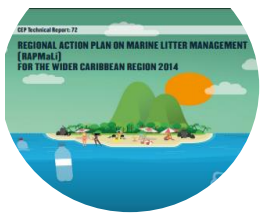
National or local regulations on Single-use plastics adopted in at least **27** countries

About **1/3** of countries have developed EPR regulations, including for packaging



3. Addressing plastic pollution: action plans

>13 national and regional action plans



Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter (RAPMaLi) for the **Wider Caribbean Region** 2014.



National Strategy on Marine Litter and Microplastics, **Chile**



Panama Marine Litter Action Plan 2022 – 2027



National Marine Litter Action Plan, **El Salvador** 2022 – 2032



Saint Lucia Marine Litter Management Action Plan



Guatemala National Marine Litter Action Plan (2023 - 2032)



National Action Plan to address sea-based marine plastic litter 2023-2025, **Brazil**



National Marine Litter Plan, **Costa Rica**



Marine Litter Action Plan for the **Northeast Pacific** 2022-2026.



Belize Marine Debris Action Plan, 2019



National Plan for Marine Litter Management, **Dominican Republic**



National Action Plan, **Barbados**



National Plan for Single Use Plastic, **Colombia**



Estrategia nacional Economía Circular **Colombia**

3. Addressing plastic pollution: political will

>13 countries adhered to global commitments



NEW
PLASTICS
ECONOMY

Global
Commitment



clean
seas

turn the tide
on plastic



HIGH AMBITION COALITION
TO END PLASTIC POLLUTION



Global Tourism
Plastics Initiative

XXIII Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean

San José Declaration and Decision 1 on Pollution

- States concern on plastic pollution and disproportionate effects in the region
- Call for further efforts through a full life cycle approach
- Commitment with global action
- Establish regional cooperation and coordination mechanism



Panama, October 2023

Working Group on Plastic and Microplastic Pollution, including the marine environment



Working Group on **Plastic Pollution**
In Latin America and the Caribbean

Co-chairs:



Ecuador
Guatemala

22 Member states

54 Non-govt



ONU programa para el medio ambiente

Programa de Trabajo Anual 2025

Grupo de Trabajo sobre Basura Marina y Microplásticos, incluido el medio marino, en América Latina y el Caribe

Preparado con el apoyo de la Secretaría del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente, Oficina para América Latina y el Caribe

PLASTIC POLLUTION NEWS
NEWSLETTER OF THE WORKING GROUP ON PLASTIC AND MICROPLASTIC POLLUTION, INCLUDING IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT, IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
ISSUE NO. 1, MAY 2024

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESS

INC. ROAD TO BUSAN CLEAR AS NEGOTIATIONS ON A GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY CLOSE IN OTTAWA

The INC-4 concluded in Ottawa with an advanced draft text of the instrument and agreement on intersessional work ahead of the INC-5 in November. More than 2,500 delegates participated in INC-4, representing 170 Member States and over 480 Observer organizations including NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, and UN entities. Find more information about the outcomes of the INC, [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS

POLLUTION: CIRCULAR PLASTIC PRODUCTS

to be a tool for delegates and its objective is to provide on potential approaches to a set of criteria for circular plastics is a key, secure way to enabling necessary change in production and management.

POLICY BRIEFS ON PLASTIC POLLUTION: EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

This policy paper summarizes the current understanding of the EPR approach and guiding principles for its successful implementation. This paper makes a valuable contribution to the increasing number of policy debates and papers are ongoing, both at national and international areas such as plastics, electric and electronic waste, and textiles. Read it [here](#).

Taller Online

Responsabilidad Extendida del Productor: Oportunidades para LAC

23 de mayo de 2024
9am - 11am ET / 3pm - 5pm CET

Unirse a la reunión de Zoom:
<https://zoom.us/join/zoom/98805021318>
ID de reunión: 988 0502 1318

ONU programa para el medio ambiente 50 años 1972-2022

INFORME

RECURSOS O MECANISMOS TÉCNICOS Y FINANCIEROS EXISTENTES PARA ABORDAR LA BASURA MARINA Y LOS MICROPLÁSTICOS EN AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE

GRUPO DE TRABAJO SOBRE BASURA MARINA Y MICROPLÁSTICOS EN AMÉRICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE

El Grupo de Trabajo sobre Contaminación por Plásticos y Microplásticos, incluyendo el medio marino, en América Latina y el Caribe, tienen el agrado de invitarle a una serie de seminarios web en el ámbito de la contaminación por plásticos y la basura marina:

Sesión I: Octubre 3, 2023
Sesión II: Octubre 10, 2023
9 a.m. (GMT-5)

En el curso de dos sesiones compartiremos experiencias relacionadas con marcos normativos y promoción de política, monitoreo e investigación, educación y sensibilización, y lineamientos hacia una economía circular asociadas con la contaminación por plásticos en América Latina y el Caribe.

REGÍSTRESE AQUÍ PARA LA SESIÓN I

participación de:

faico **cegesti** **FlyingTree** **AMIGOS DEL OCEANO** **ONU** programa para el medio ambiente

The UNEP Plastics Initiative



UNEP PLASTICS INITIATIVE

UNEP'S PROGRAMME
TO ACTIVATE AND SCALE UP
GLOBAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL ACTIONS
TO TACKLE PLASTIC POLLUTION



unep-plastics-initiative@un.org

All UNEP's plastic-related projects, activities, actions, and results into a unified programme.

Intervention Areas



More than **11 projects**
implemented in **46 countries**



5. Conclusions

- The region of Latin America and the Caribbean is notably **affected by plastic pollution**
- Under a business-as-usual scenario, plastic use and leakage to environment will continue to rise: need to accelerate **upstream and midstream solutions**
- LAC countries have adopted significant **regulatory and national planning** measures
- **Enforcement** and actual implementation is still a challenge: strengthen financial and technical capacity
- Plastic pollution has been stated as a **political priority** in the LAC region; active engagement in global action
- **Cooperation and coordination** platforms and mechanisms available

Thank you



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