

Garbage

Every year we dump a massive 2.12 billion tons of waste. If all this waste was put on trucks they would go around the world 24 times. This stunning amount of waste is partly because 99 percent of the stuff we buy is trashed within 6 months.

Waste in many different forms are dumped on the planet. Wikipedia lists over 50 different types of waste—plastic, metals, chemicals, paper, etc. Annual global waste production will increase by 70% if current conditions persist, according to “What a Waste 2.0,” a newly published report from the World Bank that was multiple years in the making.

The World Bank estimates waste generation will increase to 3.40 billion metric tons by 2050. An estimated 13.5% of today's waste is recycled and 5.5% is composted. The report estimates that between one-third and 40% of waste worldwide is not managed properly and dumped or openly burned.

Rich countries (such as the United States, Canada and members of the European Union) represent just 16% of global population, but produce 34% of the world's waste. An estimated 93% of waste in low-income countries is mismanaged, as compared to 2% in high-income countries.

Daily per capita waste generation is estimated to be 4.87 pounds in North America, as compared to 1.01 pounds in Sub-Saharan Africa. Though the World Bank expects waste to triple in Sub-Saharan Africa and to double in South Asia, accounting for a full 35% of global output by 2050. [<https://www.wastedive.com/news/world-bank-global-waste-generation-2050/533031/>]

Which country produces the most solid waste? While the U.S. and China are recognized to be the world's largest emitters of green house gasses, they are not the biggest producers of solid waste per capita. (Solid waste refers to household garbage, non-hazardous trash, and litter.) Surprisingly, the largest waste producers per household are found in smaller geographic countries.

The tiny desert country of Kuwait! Kuwait is number one in the world at producing the most waste, generating 5.72 kilograms per capita per day of MSW. Its trash accumulation owes itself to the country lacking proper landfills to dispose of all the waste. [<http://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets-economy/090716/5-countries-produce-most-waste.asp>]

