

## SINGLE-USE PLASTICS (PROHIBITION) REGULATIONS, 2023

Ministry of Climate Change and Environment Coordination (MCC&EC), Islamabad has taken an important step for restricting the menace of plastics through Single Use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulation 2023. In order to curb the menace of Plastic Pollution, MCC&EC had imposed a complete ban on polythene bags (manufacture, import, sale, purchase, storage and usage in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) under polythene Bags Regulations on 14<sup>th</sup> Aug, 2019. Brief of the subject regulations are appended below

### BRIEF ON SINGLE-USE PLASTICS (PROHIBITION) REGULATIONS, 2023

Plastics have catastrophic effects on human health, environment and endanger marine life. Plastic pollution has become more visible both on land and in waterways around the world. Annually 459.75 Million Tons plastic is produced globally. Till 2019 accumulatively 9.5 Billion Tons plastic has been produced. Annually 350 Million Tons of waste is generated globally, out of which, 35% from single-use plastics. Pakistan alone produces 3.3 Million Tons of plastic waste that is equivalent to height of two K2 mountains. The crisis prompted 175 nations to adopt a resolution at UNEA in 2022 to develop an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution from source to sea by 2024.

2. To effectively address the plastic issues particularly excessive use of single-use polythene bags in the country, as a first step, the then Ministry of Climate Change imposed a complete ban on polythene bags (manufacture, import, sale, purchase, storage and usage) in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) under Polythene Bags Regulations on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

3. Afterwards, Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination initiated an exhaustive consultative process with the line Ministries, provincial environment departments, ICT administration, industries and other relevant stakeholders for developing Single-Use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulations, 2023 as well as restriction on use of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottles in Federal Ministries/Divisions.

4. Recently, Federal Cabinet approved Single-Use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulations, 2023 on 04-06-2023. It is pertinent to mention that the Theme of World Environment Day on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 was "Solutions to Plastic Pollution" with campaign # BeatPlasticPollution.

5. The aim of Single-Use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulations 2023 is to fight littering and prevent carcinogenic and problematic plastic items from entering the market to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Reduce adverse impacts on human health and environment
- ii. Transition to a circular economy
- iii. Make solid waste systems more efficient by reducing burden
- iv. Shifting responsibility of waste collection on polluters
- v. Encourage engagement of private sector and community in combating plastic pollution

6. The salient features of Single-Use Plastics (Prohibition) Regulations 2023 are as under:

- a) Recycled Plastic Bottles: Due to lack of alternatives and need for transition to a circular economy, single-use plastic beverage containers shall contain at least 50% recycled plastic from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2028.
- b) Extended Producer Responsibility: Based on 'polluter pays principle' plastic waste may be collected by producers, importers and beverage companies.
- c) Data Inventory: Record keeping and disclosure of data by producers and importers of single-use plastics.
- d) Awareness Campaign: Producers, importers, distributors, suppliers and beverage companies may be directed to initiate awareness campaigns.
- e) Penalties: For enforcement of these Regulations, fines may be imposed by the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency for violations.

7. The prohibition of single-use plastic items under these Regulations with timelines are as under:

- a) Single-use polythene bags including but not limited to carrier bags and flat bags upon commencement of these regulations;
- b) Single-use plastic drinking straw within two years of commencement of these regulations;
- c) Single-use plastic crockery including plates, bowls, cups, glasses from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023;
- d) Single-use plastic cutlery designed for eating or serving food including forks, knives, spoons, chopsticks from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023;
- e) Single-use plastic foodservice ware designed or used for serving or transporting food or beverage ready to be consumed including lidded container, box, cup, plate, bowl from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023;
- f) Single-use plastic stirrers including any plastic item designed to stir or mix beverages or to prevent a beverage from spilling from the lid of its containers from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023.