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'Need action to reduce marine plastic pollution'

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Ahmedabad: Experts from India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka participating in a two-day event in Ahmedabad echoed concerns over the rampant use of plastic in coastal regions that is choking marine life and damaging ecology. They were speaking at the orientation and training workshop on May 1 and 2 hosted by the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) for the Tide Turners Plastic Challenge supported by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

Organizers said that this is the fifth round of the global event where youths join the challenge as individuals and parts of organizations. The challenge entails activities to reduce

consumption of plastic and promote greener alternatives. The event takes place at three levels – knowledge, action and advocacy.

Madhavi Joshi, director of CEE Academy, said that there are several successful implementations of ideas generated from previous challenges. “One of the projects in coastal Gujarat is to make cloth bags from throwaway textile waste. Women are distributing these bags to shopkeepers in their villages to give to customers and encourage them to bring it for their next purchase. The idea floated was simple. Single-use plastic is often seen as jellyfish-like food by marine creatures and they choke on the plastic. The consumption of plastic has reduced significantly,” she said.

During this round, Probha Aurora from Bangladesh and the Young Biologist’s Association from Sri Lanka will work with other organizations in respective countries, said officials. Gayatri Raghwa, senior consultant

(education), UNEP India and Kartikeya Sarabhai, director of CEE, interacted with participants. They stressed the critical role of youth engagement for these countries with large coastlines and cross-border partnerships.

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