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Petition Campaign to the Kingdom of Jordan

Ban single use plastic bags and single use disposables

1. Background

Single-use plastic shopping bags, commonly made from low-density polyethylene (LDPE) plastic, have traditionally been given for free to customers by stores when purchasing goods: the bags have long been considered a convenient, cheap, and hygienic way of transporting items. Problems associated with plastic bags include use of non-renewable resources (such as crude oil, gas and coal), difficulties during disposal, and environmental impacts. Concurrently with the reduction in lightweight plastic bags, shops have introduced reusable shopping bags.

Governments all over the world have taken action to ban the sale of lightweight bags, charge customers for lightweight bags, or generate taxes from the stores that sell them. The Bangladesh government was the first to do so in 2002, imposing a total ban on lightweight plastic bags. As of January 2020, such bans have been introduced in 74 countries, with varying degrees of enforcement, and 37 countries instead impose a charge per bag. Bans and charges have also been enacted by some local jurisdictions such as states, counties, territories and cities.

The two most popular methods of phasing out lightweight plastic bags are charges and bans.

- a. The charge strategy is said to have all of the same results in plastic bag reduction as a plastic bag ban, with the additional benefit of creating a new revenue source.
- b. The plastic bag charge method also protects consumer choice, which the ban does not.

According to a 2018 study in the American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, a five-cent tax on disposable bags reduced disposable bag usage by 40 percentage points. According to a 2019 review of existing studies, levies and taxes led to a 66% reduction in usage in Denmark, more than 90% in Ireland, between 74-90% in South Africa, Belgium, Hong Kong, Washington D.C., Santa Barbara, the UK and Portugal, and around 50% in Botswana and China.

Example Israel: Since January 2017, large retailers are required to charge consumers for plastic bags with handles, at NIS 0.10 for each bag. The tax revenues will be used to fund public waste-management programs. The average use of plastic bags in Israel in 2014 was 275 per person per year. Four months after the law came into force, the number of disposable plastic bags distributed by retailers subject to the law had dropped by 80%.

2. Possible Roadmap Steps

1. Agree within tzw about this roadmap and attached signature campaign (see attached draft for signature campaign.....this has to be translated to Arabic and better designed!)
2. Investigate about possible forms of petition acc. to Constitution of Jordan (Para 72?)
3. Search for strategic partners and a “honorary patron” (see chapter 4 below)
4. Discuss the possibility of publishing it under www.change.org (as Amal suggested) or to establish a separate website.
5. To spread the signature list all over...in our private areas: family, friends, work.....our shops, internet , contact TV and Radio.
6. Permanent update about status of campaign on website? FB, ?

7. Focus on a pilot area, eg : Regional Ban in Red Sea Governorate Aqaba.
8. Focus on sectors, where plastic bags are absolutely not required: paper bags for pharmacies,
9. Approach manufacturer of plastic bags and disposables and their association, what alternatives are on the market.....and if they are ready and willing to convert the production to biodegradable products and for what costs. (Banana leaves from Jordan Valley for packing fruits and vegetable?, ...)
10. Prepare alternatives as awareness media: Paper Bags, Recycling Bags, T-Shirts, etc....
11. Approach all big supermarket chains and offer them alternatives as under above 7.& 8.
12. Approach all big consumers of single use disposables: Fast Food Chains, Starbucks,
13. Approach "RunJordan" to stop plastic bottles during Marathons.
14. Approach RSS for possible certification of biodegradable bags and disposables.
15.
16.

3. What can be achieved at minimum?

- Maybe our petition will never reach the government, at least we will have mobilized and raised awareness.
- In any case, it will be one pushing impulse for the government to ban plastic bags asap.
- The idea of "towardszerowaste" will be spread.
- People will use more and more multiple use bags and come with their own shopping bags to markets.
- Maybe some big supermarket chains, such as Carrefour, Safeway, Cozmo, etc. will take the lead and start as pioneers.

4. Possible Partners to be approached:

- King of Jordan as honorable Patron?
- Min. of Environment
- RSCM
- JREDS
- Environmental Engineers Association
- Aqaba Free Development Zone
- GAM
- All Universities
- All Embassies
- All donors (USAID,.....)
- All environmental oriented NGO's in Jordan: EcoHikers, EcoDivers, Himweh, WWF, UN,.....
- Political foundations: Heinrich Boell Stiftung,.....

5. Conflicts and constraints

- Plastic bag bans can lead to larger black markets in plastic bags. Other countries imposed therefore penalties between 20,000 - 50,000 JOD and up to 4 years prison.
- The production of some non-plastic bags (e.g. paper, cotton, using virgin plastic such as plastic having thickness of 50 micron) can produce more greenhouse gas emissions than plastic bags, which means that greenhouse gas emissions may increase on net following plastic bag bans.
- Biodegradable or compostable plastic bags might be fake-classified. The RSS (Royal Society Sciences of Jordan) has to certify all referring materials on the market, based on products tested according to ASTM D6954 or UAE 5009:2009
- The manufacturers of the referring products have to be certified. By existing acknowledged Institute, such as "European Bioplastics," or "SPI Bioplastics Council", etc.