

'Stop polluting oceans'

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United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday urged governments, communities and individuals to celebrate World Oceans Day by helping clear the oceans of pollution and ensure they remain vibrant for generations to come.

This came as the Philippines faces a gargantuan task of managing its own garbage problem, having been ranked as third in the list of countries with biggest volume of ocean plastic pollution, according to a 2015 study conducted by the University of Georgia.

“We must work individually and collectively to stop this preventable tragedy and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, including plastic. Action starts at home, and speaks louder than words,” the UN chief said in a statement intended for the celebration of the World Oceans Day on Friday, June 8.

The UN official reminded that the ability of the oceans to provide essential services is being threatened by climate change, pollution and unsustainable use.

He noted that 80 percent of all pollution in the sea comes from land, including some 8 million tons of plastic waste each year.

The UN chief warned that unless the world changes the course, “plastic waste could soon outweigh all the fish in the oceans.”

“It chokes waterways, harms communities that depend on fishing and tourism, kills turtles and birds, whales and dolphins, and finds its way to the most remote areas of the planet and throughout the food chain on which we ultimately rely,” he said.

Guterres further said the UN aims to lead by example, with more than 30 of its agencies have begun working to end the use of single-use plastic.

“But everyone needs to play a part. You can make a difference today – and every day – by doing simple things like carrying your own water bottle, coffee cup and shopping bags, recycling the plastic you buy, avoiding products that contain microplastics and volunteering for a local clean-up,” he said.