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Coca Cola named as the world's worst polluter

Coca Cola has been given the dubious title of world's worst polluter for the second year in a row in a global audit conducted by the Break Free From Plastic global movement.

**Jon Cherry**

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Coca Cola has been given the dubious title of world's worst polluter for the second year in a row in a global audit conducted by the Break Free From Plastic global movement.

The audit showed that Coca Cola was responsible for more plastic litter than the next top three polluters combined.

'The coalition's volunteers collected nearly half a million pieces of plastic waste during a coordinated "World Clean Up Day" in 51 countries a month ago, of which 43% were marked with a clear consumer brand.

For the second year in a row, it said, Coca-Cola came out on top, with 11 732 pieces of plastic collected from 37 countries across four continents — more than the next three top global polluters combined.

"Many of them have made commitments that they claim will make their products more sustainable, but largely protect the outdated throwaway busin got us into this mess in the first place," said the report, released in

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Last night I chaired a panel discussion, hosted by South African craft gin brand Sugarbird Gin, launching their brand new sustainability initiative called [#onedayforchange](#).

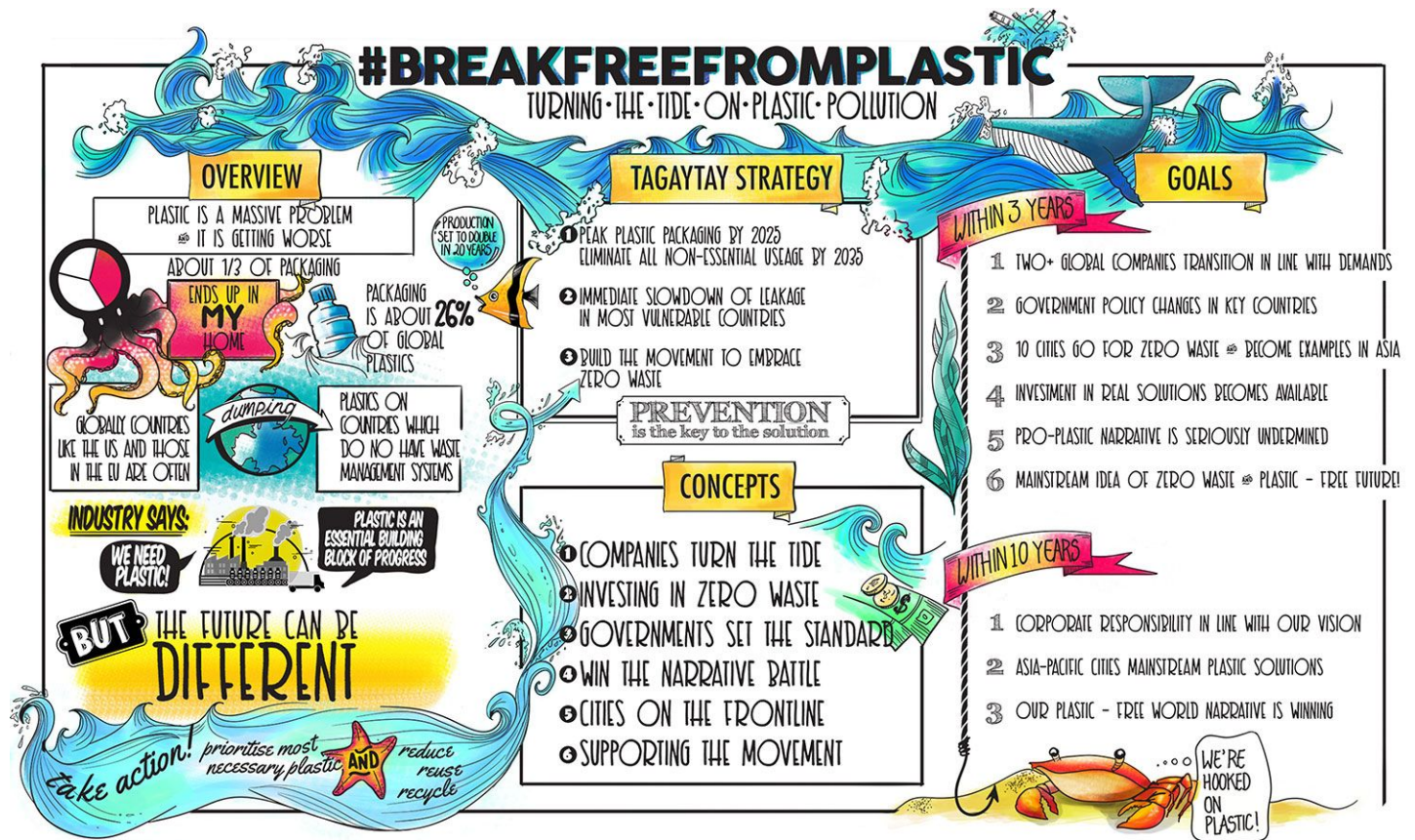
[Sugarbird Gin](#) - together with their partners [PETCO](#) and [ExtruPET](#), are pioneering a new closed loop value chain design for their Sugarbird Minis. The initiative uses PET as the material out of which their mini bottles are now available and encourages customers to return the bottles to retail outlets for recycling.

In collaboration with three local artists - the recycled bottles will, in part, be turned into PET yarn which will be used to create fashionable bags; creating new businesses and items of value.



What I came to realise while listening to the experts on the panel last night is that the plastic problem is a design problem. The reason that Coca Cola is #1 in the world for creating the most plastic pollution is because Coca Cola haven't done a good enough job of the design on their value chain.

Perhaps it is then time to incentivise Coca Cola to get themselves back into the design studio to rectify this issue by withdrawing our support of their products. If being the world's worst polluter affects their financial bottom line - I can assure you that this situation will receive their highest priority.



If small South African craft gin companies can start to rethink and redesign their value chains to be more in line with the principles of the circular economy, then big companies like Coca Cola, who have access to far more resources, should be able to do something about their business model fairly quickly too.

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