



PRESS RELEASE

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On the occasion of the 2nd anniversary of the law banning plastic bags in Morocco **Publication of survey results on the use of plastic bags and their alternatives in Morocco**

The 1st of July 2018 marks the second anniversary of the 77-15 law prohibiting plastic bags in Morocco, and the 3rd of July will be the "World Plastic Bag Free Day".

On this occasion, the Zero Zbel NGO is publishing the results of a survey conducted between March and April 2018 around the use of plastic bags in Morocco and their alternatives. This survey aims to evaluate the application of the 77-15 law two years after its enactment, and to better understand consumer habits of Moroccans with regards to plastic bags.

About the survey:

The volunteers of Zero Zbel conducted this investigation, on a duration of 5 days, with customers and merchants in 8 markets located in Casablanca, Agadir and Tétouan. In total, 235 people were surveyed. The population surveyed was composed of 40% customers and 60% merchants, 69% of them men and 31% women.

This survey was part of a project sponsored by UN Environment Program (UNEP-MAP), The Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP/RAC) and SwitchMed, with funding from the European Union.

The report presenting the full results of the survey is available (in French) on the web site of Zero Zbel: <http://www.zerobel.ma/?p=17079>

About Zero Zbel:

Zero Zbel is an environmental association whose objective is, among other things, to encourage the collection and dissemination of information on environmental issues, and contribute to the evolution of regulatory frameworks in Morocco around the subject.

Zero Zbel is a core member of Break Free From Plastic movement and a member GAIA network.

Main results of the survey :

The 77-15 law has clearly had a very limited effect on the consumption of plastic bags, as 8% of those surveyed consider that the consumption of plastic bags has increased since the law came into effect, and 41% consider that it has remained at the same level.

In fact, **the results of the survey clearly show that plastic bags are still commonly used** in markets. The bags are distributed free of charge by a large majority of merchants and customers continue to request them to pack their purchases: 60% of merchants say that over 80% of their customers request plastic bags, and 65% of customers claim to use between 5 and 15 plastic bags each time they shop.



Moroccans surveyed were in majority aware of the existence of the law and the impact of plastic bags: more than 90% of those interviewed know that the 77-15 law exists, and 59% consider that plastic bags have a strong impact on our environment and health.

So, why do Moroccans continue to use plastic bags?

To the question "Why are plastic bags still being used?", 68% of customers surveyed answered that the main reason they continue to use plastic bags is because they are distributed free of charge.

In the same way, we find that **the use of alternatives to plastic bags is very limited**. 66% of merchants surveyed say they "rarely" or "never" have customers who use alternatives to plastic bags. According to the interviewees, the 3 main barriers to using alternatives are their high price, the difficulty for consumers to change their habits, and the fact that the available alternatives are not practical enough. Wet products (fish, meat, poultry, olives, oil ...) are mostly sold in bulk in Morocco and are the main products for which practical alternatives are lacking.

How has the price of plastic bags evolved since the application of the ban ?

88% of merchants say that the **price of plastic bags has increased**. As the bags are still distributed free of charge to customers, these additional cost fall on the merchants. Merchants also feel that they are caught between a rock and a hard place, because as long as the illegal plastic bags will be easily available, customers will continue to request them, but on the other hand they may be penalized by the authorities.

What should be done for a better application of the 77-15 law?

Zero Zbel advocates to act in priority on the upper value chain: it is necessary to strengthen controls and sanctions against illegal plastic bag producers and wholesalers.

For a better governance of the application of the 77-15 law, it is also necessary to annually conduct an impact assessment of this legislation at the national level, and to publish an official report communicating on the efforts made, the difficulties encountered and the results obtained.

It is essential to work on the development, promotion and placement of suitable green alternatives on the market at affordable prices. It is necessary to:

- develop reusable alternatives that are truly respectful of the environment, which would not be made of plastic (unlike the nonwoven polypropylene bags currently sold on the market).
- Develop suitable containers adaptable to the purchase of wet products sold by the kilo and in bulk (meat, poultry, fish, olives, oil...)

In addition, it is essential to communicate, educate and sensitize widely on the use of alternatives to plastic bags; emphasizing on the existence of inexpensive alternatives (including the re-using or recycling of items often available at home). Small businesses are a crucial target to reach through this effort of communication and capacity building, in order to encourage them to refuse the distribution of plastic bags and to play a role of prescribers of reusable alternatives to their customers.

Contact :

Mamoun Ghallab

President of Association Zero Zbel

0671834733 – asso.zerobel@gmail.com

www.zerobel.ma