

# Levels of e-waste soar in Asia as gadgets become affordable, UN says

Amount of electronic waste up 63% in five years, with China's more than doubling, United Nations University report finds



A man sorts through electronic waste at a scrapyards in Guiyu, China's largest site for e-waste. Photograph: Kai Loeffelbein/Laif

**Agence France-Presse**

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Levels of electronic waste are rising sharply across Asia, as higher incomes mean hundreds of millions of people can afford smartphones and other gadgets, according to a UN study.

The amount of e-waste in Asia has risen by 63% in five years, a report by United Nations University said, warning of the need to improve recycling and disposal methods across the region to prevent serious environmental and health consequences.

Ruediger Kuehr, the report's co-author and head of UNU's sustainable cycles programme, said: "For many countries that already lack infrastructure for environmentally sound e-waste management, the increasing volumes are a cause for concern."

For many years, China and other Asian countries have recycled discarded electronics from wealthier countries in rudimentary and often unsafe factories.

But the report said Asia has become a major source of e-waste due to increasingly affluent consumers buying electronic items including phones, tablets, refrigerators, computers and televisions.

China's generation of e-waste more than doubled between 2010 and 2015, the period of the study, according to the report.

Hong Kong generated the highest amount of e-waste in Asia in 2015, an average of 21.7kg (3.4st) per person.

Singapore and Taiwan created just over 19kg per person in 2015.

Cambodia, Vietnam and the Philippines were among the lowest e-waste generators, with an average of about 1kg per person.

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