

Chinese recycling ban to support virgin polymer demand: CEOs

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The upcoming ban on imports of waste plastics in China will support demand for virgin polymers, a number of petrochemical company heads said at the GPCA conference in Dubai this week.

"It is helping virgin demand," Equate CEO Ramesh Ramachandran said Tuesday on the sidelines of the conference. Equate expected its global polyethylene sales "growth of 5-6% next year, [compared with] 5% in 2017."

Borouge PTE's CEO Wim Roels shared the sentiment, adding that it would lead to a reshuffling of the horizon.

"Regional rebalancing will fuel growth in the longer term. China will process less plastics waste, other regions more -- it's an opportunity over the long term," Wim said.

Meanwhile, Yousef Al-Benyan, the CEO of Sabic, said that China will contribute 50% of the global incremental petrochemical demand growth till 2025.

However, the Chinese push for plastics self-sufficiency "is a threat, only ethylene will be insufficient in China, but we don't know for how long," he added.

Ethylene is the feedstock for making polyethylene, the most widely used plastic.

China is set to ban imports of waste plastics from 2018; it was previously the largest importer of waste plastic bales globally.