

Expert Group Meeting on Policies for Resource Circularity and Solid Waste Management to Accelerate National to Local Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals

21-23 November 2023

Oakroom, 37th floor, Oakwood Premier, Incheon, Republic of Korea

Concept Note

Background

With only seven years left to deliver the 2030 Agenda, resource circularity can ensure a more sustainable development pathway and reduce human impact while advancing economic opportunities and innovation. Yet, waste volumes continue to increase across the planet amid rapid urbanization and production and consumption trends focused on a take-make-waste model. Currently, humanity generates an estimated 2.24 billion tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) annually and waste generation rates could rise by more than 73% by the end of 2050.¹

One of the most significant problems in the mismanagement of waste is open waste dumping and burning often linked to informal and unregulated activities. Only 55% of MSW² generated is managed in controlled facilities across the world and developing countries discard approximately 90% of waste in large unregulated dumpsters which they then burn openly and uncontained creating poor air quality and actively spreading germs into the air.³ Informality in the waste sector increases the vulnerability of workers and their communities. It is estimated that over 400,000 people in developing countries die each year due to diseases from mismanaged waste systems requiring multi-level governance and multi-lateral action to address this challenge.

Advancing a circular economy around key resources presents co-benefits and synergies to accelerate progress across the SDGs and key social, economic and environmental targets. Effective, integrated waste management contributes to all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴ Therefore, this meeting will focus on engaging experts to advance key SDG targets, specifically, 11.6.1, 12.3.1, 12.4.1, 12.4.2, and 12.5.1 through evidence-based policy approaches to accelerate national-local progress.

Effective management of MSW needs to be based on integrated, circular and/or holistic management approaches, starting from source segregation, storage, collection/transport, treatment, and final disposal considering 3R principles (Reuse, Recycle, Restore). Although many governments have made progress on implementing a 3R approach in waste management, many local municipalities suffer from technical, financing and capacity gaps in implementing proper policies and strategies at national and sub-national levels to address growing waste volumes.

Among the several capacity barriers countries face, data and knowledge gaps are key barriers to effectively implementing targeted policies actions for more resource circularity. A recent report from the UN shows that SDG 11, which entails most of the performance indicators for SWM, has the most insufficient data available for the progress assessment among 17 SDGs. Equally, SDG 12.5 measured by data on national recycling rates and tons of material recycled, has amassed limited data for most

¹ [International Day of Zero Waste | United Nations](#)

² According to UN statistics on SDG 12.5, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) includes waste originating from households, commerce and trade, small businesses, office buildings and institutions. It also includes bulky waste and waste from selected municipal services if managed as waste. Further information on MSW is defined in the SDG indicator methodology for 11.6.1.

³ Ferronato N, Torretta V. Waste Mismanagement in Developing Countries: A Review of Global Issues. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2019 Mar 24;16(6):1060. doi: 10.3390/ijerph16061060. PMID: 30909625; PMCID: PMC6466021 and <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/waste-management-in-developing-countries/>

⁴ United Nations Environment Programme (2019). *Small Island Developing States Waste Management Outlook*. Nairobi. <https://www.unep.org/ietc/node/44>

developing countries. National Recycling Rate data is defined as the quantity of material recycled in the country plus quantities exported for recycling out of total waste generated in the country, minus material imported intended for recycling.⁵ This data is essential to compare global to national progress on shifting to a circular, less resource intensive economy. Closing data gaps on what is often an informal sector in developing countries is a key priority for the UN system considering the SDG Summit and beyond to ensure progress towards circular and sustainable consumption and production patterns well before 2030.⁶

In this context, the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), serving as a policy support arm of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), aims to develop a policy support system that can bridge data, technical and capacity gaps to advance resource circularity in solid waste management across developing countries. This work builds on the engagement of UN DESA on zero-waste through the International Partnership for Expanding Waste Management Services of Local Authorities (IPLA) from 2011-2015. These series of meetings and global agreements strengthened global awareness, knowledge and advanced a community of practice for zero-waste policymaking in the run up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This work also responds to resolution *A/RES/77/161 Promoting zero-waste initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, particularly regarding the importance of sharing Member State's experience in designing and implementing innovative waste management solutions.⁷ To strengthen national policy support in an era of acceleration to achieve the SDGs and address the triple planetary crisis through zero-waste societies, UN DESA through the Division for SDGs and UNOSD aims to develop a concerted policy support system through partnership, results-oriented and consultative strategies.

With the support of the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Environment and the Korea Environment Corporation (K-eco), this expert consultation will contribute to designing improved research and policy support on strengthening circular approaches and zero-waste societies in target countries through a multi-year process. This first meeting serves as a consultative platform to tailor future research and policy support according to the present needs, challenges and accelerated solutions that can measurably improve national to local solid waste management and resource circularity in developing countries.

Objectives

This Expert Group Meeting will focus on

- (1) Generating evidence and data on current needs, challenges and barriers for advancing resource circularity and a circular economy in solid waste management policy and governance
- (2) Examining policy support tools, proven solutions and methods to bridge the data and information gaps on waste management and facilitate evidence-based policymaking in the waste sector
- (3) Sharing and discussing feedback, comments, suggestions, and recommendations on designing and operating circular waste management systems from national to local level
- (4) Strengthening cooperation for more concerted actions on resource circularity in solid waste management for coherent and impact-oriented policy support

Organizers

This Expert Group Meeting is co-organized by United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals under the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs with the support of the Ministry of Environment's Korea Environment Corporation (K-eco).

Participants

The Expert Group Meeting includes global and regional experts from the United Nations, international organizations and civil society representatives and others focused on resource circularity, circular economy and materials flows management, as well as national to local policies and practices for MSW.

⁵ UN Statistics <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal> and <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/sustainable-development-goals/why-do-sustainable-development-goals-matter/goal-12-6>

⁶ Retrieved from: [SDG Progress Report Special Edition \(May 2023\)](#)

⁷ A/RES/77/161 Promoting zero waste initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/756/33/PDF/N2275633.pdf?OpenElement>

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Agenda

Day 1 Tuesday, 21 November 2023	
Time	Sessions
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:30	<p>Opening remarks and welcome Moderator: Ms. Sara Castro De Hallgren, Sustainable Development Officer, UNOSD, DSDG, UN DESA</p> <p>Mr. Chun Kyoo Park, Head, UN Office for Sustainable Development, Division for SDGs, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)</p>
9:30 – 10:10	<p>Introductory session Moderator: Ms. Sara Castro de Hallgren, UNOSD</p> <p>Introduction of the participants</p> <p>Presentation on background paper - Ms. Emily Carroll, UNOSD, DSDG, UNDESA</p> <p>Plenary discussion</p>
10:10 – 10:30	Coffee and Networking Break
10:30 – 11:20	<p>Session I: The Sustainable Development Goals and solid waste management – Achieving a zero-waste society – Progress and challenges Moderator: Ms. Maya Valcheva, Programme Officer, Green and Circular Economy Learning, UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)</p> <p>SDG Indicator 11.6.1 on Municipal Solid Waste Monitoring and Progress Towards Zero Waste - Ms. Francesca Calisesi, Associate Officer of Solid Waste, Urban Basic Services Section, Global Solutions Division, Urban Practices Branch, UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)</p> <p>Lessons learned from multilateral engagement for zero-waste - IPLA and Asia-Pacific 3R Forum - Mr. Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), DSDG, UN DESA</p> <p>Regional progress on Zero-waste and Circular Economy - Ms. Maria Hughes, Associate Expert on Circular Economy, UN Environment Regional</p>

	Office for Asia and the Pacific
11:20 – 12:00	<p>Session II: Governance and policy structures for solid waste management (Country presentations / 10 mins per country)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morocco <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Bouchra Fari, Head of Foresight Service, Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco • Ethiopia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Kassahun Tsegaye Demessa, Senior Environmental Compliance Expert, Federal Environment Protection Authority of Ethiopia <p>Questions & answers</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What key governance and policy structures focus on waste management from national to local levels? • What is the role of national to local governance in achieving zero-waste in the country context? • What are the gaps and challenges among planning and policy for achieving zero-waste and more circular and integrated solid waste management? • What national advancements or plans are in place to remedy these challenges and gaps if any?
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 – 15:00	<p>(Cont.) Session II: Governance and policy structures for Solid waste management (5 Country presentations / 10 mins per country)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Godfred Fiifi Boadi, Senior Programmes Manager, Solid Waste Unit, Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana <p>Q&A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Medrilzam, Director of Environment, Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) of Indonesia - Ms. Asri Hadiyanti Giastuti, Planner, Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) of Indonesia • Cambodia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Sokun Meas, Chief of Office, Ministry of Environment of Cambodia - Ms. Sansreypov Ngan, Chief Officer, Department of Solid Waste Management, General Directorate of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Environment of Cambodia <p>Q&A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Chinh Nguyen The, Institute for Strategy and Policy on Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment - Ms. Hoang Thi Hien, Researcher on Environment and Sustainable Development, ISPONRE, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

15:00 – 15:15	Coffee and Networking Break
15:15 – 16:15	<p>Session III: Measuring what we waste (a) - Reviewing Data Gaps for Solid Waste Management Moderator: Ms. Emily Carroll, Policy Development and Coordination Expert, UNOSD, DSDG, UN DESA</p> <p>A review of data gaps for ISWM – Mr. Jeff Seadon</p> <p>WaCT Tool and data gaps – Ms. Francesca Calisesi, UN HABITAT</p> <p>Ms. Aditi Ramola, Technical Director, International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) (<i>virtual</i>)</p> <p>Mr. Kabir Arora, Asia Pacific Coordinator and Advocacy Lead, International Alliance of Waste Pickers</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data gaps exist on solid waste management in the context of SDGs and to advance zero-waste on a global scale? • Are there data gaps on socioeconomic or demographic factors that influence waste generation patterns? • Are there specific types of waste that are currently not being accurately measured or accounted for? • What data gaps exist particularly with informal waste sector and what proxy indicators can be used to estimate the informal sector's role?
16:15 – 16:45	<p>Session IV: Measuring what we waste (b) - Generating evidence and challenges at national to local level Moderator: Ms. Chaela Shin, Associate Research and Policy Development Expert, UNOSD, UN DESA</p> <p>Outcomes of K-Eco research: Data collection for evidence-based solid waste management, Mr. Jung-Mok Yang, policy research consultant, K-eco</p> <p>Division into groups for Policy Support Questionnaire Review Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the questionnaire cover all data gaps and key areas for national to local level policy design? • What are other methods of capturing data gaps for policy on ISWM? • Do you foresee any specific challenges in providing the information requested in the questionnaire?
16:45 – 17:30	<p>Session V: Dialogue – Taking stock of evidence-base and data gaps Moderator: Ms. Maya Valcheva, UNITAR</p> <p>Group discussion</p> <p>Reporting back to plenary</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What patterns can be observed from the country presentations in the previous sessions on the relationship between national to local governance, policy and data for solid waste management? • How can national governments ensure that waste data collected from

	<p>different localities is standardized and comparable?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other policy support tools could strengthen national to local data for zero-waste and key SDG targets?
18:00 – 20:00	Welcome reception
Day 2	
Wednesday, 22 November 2023	
Time	Sessions
8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:10	Recap of Day 1 and Introduction of Day 2 Sessions
9:10 – 10:00	<p>Session VI: Crafting success cases in policy and practice for zero-waste society Facilitator: Ms. Maria Hughes, UNEP</p> <p>Presentation – Designing Zero-Waste Success Cases: Challenges, Opportunities, and Sustainable Financing Schemes Mr. Dukwoo Jun, Circular Economy Lead, Global Green Growth Institute</p> <p>Q&A</p> <p>Plenary discussion – lessons learned Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What success factors determine zero-waste in practice? • What is the role of policy in ensuring zero-waste in practice?
10:00-10:45	<p>Session VII: Examining policy support tools and capacity development to facilitate evidence-based policymaking in the waste sector Facilitator: Ms. Maya Valcheva, UNITAR</p> <p>Barriers for effective solid waste management – summary presentation by Ms. Aditi Ramola, Technical Director, International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) (<i>virtual</i>)</p> <p>Technology transfer for zero-waste and barriers for adoption - Mr. Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)</p> <p>The challenges of incineration and viable alternatives for zero-waste in a developing country context, Ms. Doun Moon, Global Lead, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA)</p> <p>Q&A</p> <p>Takeaways for capacity development</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What barriers can be observed in designing and implementing effective solid waste management? • What are some examples of how these barriers can be overcome in practice?
10:45-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-12:00	Session VIII: Group session on barriers for zero-waste policy implementation

	<p>Facilitator: UNOSD and UNITAR</p> <p>Introduction to the policy cycle and zero-waste goals</p> <p>Group exercises – identifying barriers for policy effective policy design on zero-waste</p> <p>Reporting back to plenary</p> <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the previous sessions, what barriers can be observed in designing and implementing effective solid waste management policies? • What country-specific barriers exist and how to do these differ according to stakeholders, government levels, and rural vs. urban areas?
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch Break
13:00 – 14:30	<p>Session IX: Policy support in practice and policy design tools for resource circularity from national to local level Facilitator: Ms. Sara Castro Hallgren, UNOSD</p> <p>Introduction to exercise - i) systems thinking, ii) design thinking and iii) behavioral informed methods for solid waste policy design</p> <p>Group exercise on “Applying systems thinking, design thinking and behavioral informed policy design”</p> <p>Division into groups i) systems ii) design iii) behavior</p> <p>Reporting back</p>
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee and Networking Break
15:00 – 16:00	<p>Session X: Open discussion and feedback on designing and operating circular waste management systems from national to local level Facilitator: Ms. Maya Valcheva, UNITAR</p> <p>Country representatives dialogue</p> <p>Feedback and brainstorming in plenary</p>
16:00 – 16:45	<p>Closing Session - Collective impact for resource circularity and next steps Facilitator: Ms. Sara Castro Hallgren, UNOSD</p> <p>Plenary on next steps for global to national policy support for accelerating a zero-waste society – towards a roadmap</p>
16:45 – 17:00	Concluding remarks

Day 3 Thursday, 23 November 2023	
Time	Program
9:00 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 12:00	Field trip to SUDOKWON Landfill Site
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 15:00	Field trip to the National Institute of Biological Resources
15:00 – 16:00	Return to the Oakwood Premier Incheon Hotel

Contact

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Venue

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