

Summary of official Side Event in Stockholm+50

Title of the event

Waste Management – An urgent issue to be addressed at the local and municipal level to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and to fight climate change. **Mayors' dialogue on targeting Zero Waste**

2 June 2022



Organizers:

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
Avfall Sverige – the Swedish Waste Management Association
The International Solid Waste Association (ISWA)

Introduction

Waste management has been a longstanding public concern due to its impact on human health, the environment and socio-economic development. The linear economy paradigm has resulted in increasing consumption of products made of virgin material and low level of recycling or reuse of important resources. The World Bank estimates that waste generation will increase by 70% in 2050. At least 33% of this waste is mismanaged globally through open dumping or burning. More than two billion people lack access to waste collection and less than 2% of plastics used in packaging applications is reusable.

Local authorities, municipalities, cities, and regions play a pivotal role for waste management. Municipal waste management is a service of general interest; thus, all citizens should have equal access to waste management.

This event supports the aspiration of the leadership dialogue 1 of the Stockholm+50 conference through promoting systemic change toward zero-pollution and zero-waste societies to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all.

The event brought together mayors of several cities and representatives of international and local organizations active on municipal waste management to discuss the issues faced, outline solutions, and forge new partnerships to tackle the issue.

Agenda of the side event (75 minutes)

Moderator: Mr. Tony Clark (Swedish Waste Management Association)

First session: Visions and actions in tackling solid waste issues globally

- Welcome by Ms. Katarina Luhr, Vice Mayor of Stockholm, Sweden
- Our responsibility and opportunity, Mr. Tony Clark, Managing Director at Avfall Sverige.
- Present global situation on waste, Mr. Carlos Silva, President ISWA, the International Solid Waste Association.
- Introduction of UNDP Zero Waste Offer, Ms. Xiaofang Zhou, Principal Technical Advisor, Chemicals and Waste, UNDP.
- Innovative Solutions to Reduce Plastic Waste and Marine Litter: Opportunities and Challenges, Dr. Mary Matthews, Ocean Advisor and Manager of Ocean Innovation Challenge (OIC)

Second session: Roundtable Panel Discussion on challenges and opportunities

Panelists

- Dr. Abdulla Naseer, Minister of State, Maldives
- Ms. Yvonne Denise Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone
- Ms. Ana Lucia Ferrero, Vice-mayor of Curridabat, San Jose, Costa Rica
- Mr. Sarto Nogueira, Mayor of Fortaleza, Brazil
- Ms. Maria van Berlekom, Head, Unit for Global Cooperation on Environment, Sida

During the panel discussion, the questions addressed were:

- What are the present status and challenges with respect to local waste management?
- What are the measures, targets and plan of the solid waste management of the city? Would the efforts in this aspect be significant in terms of its impact on the climate change, health, creation of jobs and a more equitable society?
- What are the key challenges to achieve a Zero Waste vision in the long run? What kind of policies, incentives, instruments, and support that are needed to make sure such a vision can be embraced by the stakeholders and citizens and be implemented effectively?

Key points of the event

Session1: Introductory remarks

The health, environment, climate and social impacts of the current global waste management system are immense. 33% of waste is mismanaged globally through open dumping or burning. Three billion people lack access to the sound system. The most vulnerable strata of population take the brunt of the negative impacts. Waste sector contributes to 5% of the emissions and is likely to be more. Challenges of waste management are most prominent in low-medium income countries and SIDS.

Zero waste initiatives have been experimented, particularly in Europe, in the past two decades. 27 cities in the C40 network and more than 100 cities in China declared actions towards zero waste in recent years. UNDP elaborated its zero-waste offer and the vision. UNDP, Avfall Sverige are working together to advance this vision in municipalities of developing countries. They encourage all governments and cities to embrace this vision for SDGs. Mayors' role is pivotal for success.

Session 2: Exchange of views

The panel discussion highlighted the challenges faced and solutions being developed, tested, and implemented. All speakers underlined the importance of additional support and exchange of technology and experience to reduce environmental and human impact of waste mismanagement.

The Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone, stated that “waste is not about plastics or materials, it is about people, especially the most vulnerable ones.” She then outlined the efforts including changing people’s behavior toward waste management and creating jobs through engagement of young people in waste collection.

As a small island nation, the Maldives faces considerable challenges. The Maldives is taking steps to reduce waste generation. The example of such approach is the governmental policy to phase out single-use plastic by 2023. The Maldives is working with development banks to establish infrastructures in its 189 inhabited islands.

Fortaleza is one of the largest cities in Brazil. The city is aiming to increase the recycling rate to 50% in next five years. The mayor emphasized that “inequality, lack of alternatives, and incorrect behavior result in improper waste disposal and lead to health and environmental issues”.

4,000 tons of waste are generated in Costa Rica annually. Five municipalities in San Jose, including Curridabat, joined efforts in a partnership to address the needs of combined 800,000 citizens. They aim to reduce 100,000 tons of CO₂-eq emissions through avoidance of waste incineration.

The vice-mayor of Stockholm stated their efforts to achieve zero waste goal including addressing plastic pollutions. The representative from Sida said in her summary of the event that systemic solutions are needed for multiple benefits.

Main conclusions

Waste management is complex and challenging. Waste is not only about resources, it is about people. Waste management is a powerful tool to transition to circular economy, to improve livelihoods of tens of millions of poor, especially women and children, and contribute to all SDGs. Zero-waste is an ambitious target, but is achievable through cooperation, innovation, partnership, and leadership by champion cities.

Municipalities can be driving these transformative changes with additional support from the international society. Mayors underlined the needs of improving infrastructures, coordination, and technical and financial supports. While plastic wastes are worrisome, mayors and panelists highlighted the importance of addressing all waste streams. Substantial progress could be achieved in short term on organic wastes. Waste management could help address plastic pollutions. Consumption patterns must be addressed as well as upstream solutions by producers for green design of products. Education and activities at community level are critical for culture and behavioral change.

Specific Outcome

- Creation of a partnership between UN agencies, global, regional and local financial institutions, bilateral agencies, national and local governments, to act together to address waste management challenges in nations and municipalities especially in Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and Middle-Income Countries.
- Support countries, pilot municipalities and local governments to develop concrete plans and activities to achieve zero waste by 2030.
- UNDP, Avfall Sverige and partners will, from 2022, establish a clearing house for communication of the zero-waste vision and delivery of supportive actions to municipalities. The partnership will include countries, cities, financial institutions, UN agencies, academia, Civil Society Organisations and private sector. The partners will strive to address technical, financial and governance challenges to advancing the zero-waste vision at the municipal level in a gender responsive approach, including supporting sustainable infrastructure and circular business models, while contributing to climate action and poverty reduction.

Snapshot of the event

Action Towards Zero Waste Vision to respond to the needs of cities and vulnerable community for achieving 2030 agenda

Waste management is a key challenge for the achievement of the 2030 agenda and requires bold commitment and planning efforts from key stakeholders such as local and national governments. This was strongly affirmed during the side event of UNDP, Avfall Sverige and the International Solid Waste Association at the Stockholm+50 conference. Mayors, development agencies, civil society organisations and government representatives affirmed their support to a long-term Zero waste vision and to key short-term steps towards achieving it.

The mismanagement of waste is a current reality with major impact on our communities, contributing to pollution, poverty and climate change, and thus endangering the global environment. At least 33% of solid waste is mismanaged globally through open dumping or burning and waste generation may increase by 70% in 2050. UNDP and Avfall Sverige have embraced the Zero Waste approach for municipalities and local governments to respond to numerous and massive challenges related to solid waste management. During the side event, and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the conference on Human Environment, the launch of the zero-waste offer was announced, for communication of the zero-waste vision and delivery of supportive actions to municipalities.



Mr. Tony Clark, Managing Director at Avfall Sverige



Mr. Carlos Silva, President of ISWA

Mr. Tony Clark, Managing Director of Avfall Sverige, facilitated the side event. He also outlined the linkages of waste management with all SDGs. Mr. Carlos Silva, president of ISWA, indicated that ISWA is working on an updated publication on the global waste outlook which will come out later this year.



Ms. Katarina Luhr, Vice Mayor of Stockholm, Sweden

Ms. Katarina Luhr, Vice mayor of Stockholm, welcomed the participants to the side event and stated the city's continued efforts on waste management. Dr Abdulla Naseer, Minister of State of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, explained the challenges particularly faced by Small Islands Developing States and the necessity to strengthen infrastructure and regulation to respond to these, noting the new regulation in his country on sorting waste at the household level. Yvonne Denise Aki-Sawyerr, mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone, a Least Developed Country, stated that "waste is not about plastics or materials, it is about people, especially the most vulnerable ones". She explained her city's structured stepwise approach to address municipal waste management challenges, addressing behavioral changes at the community level, creating green jobs, transforming dumpsites into controlled landfills. She explained how, by opening a biodigester facility, she intends to take 80% of the organic waste out of the mainstream waste flows.



Ms. Yvonne Denise Aki-Sawyers, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone



Dr. Abdulla Naseer Minister of State, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Maldives

Ms. Ana Lucia Ferrero, Vice-mayor of Curridabat, San Jose, Costa Rica also focused on organic waste, presenting the platform on composting that five municipalities jointly launched for local communities. The mayor of Fortaleza in Brazil, Mr. Sarto Nogueira, explained the city's

ambitious target to bring its recycling from the current 9% to 50% within the next 5 years. Organizers also received a message from Mr. Yong Yang, vice-mayor of Tianjin Eco-City, indicating that Tianjin is “fully working on the ‘upgraded version of ecological city’ [...] to accelerate the high-quality development, which will also provide more powerful support for the construction of a ‘zero-waste city’ in the future”.

“Waste management should be a systemic approach and include all waste streams”, Ms. Maria van Berlekom, from the Swedish development agency, Sida, summarized.



Ms. Ana Lucia Ferrero (Vice-mayor of Curridabat, San Jose, Costa Rica)



Panel discussion and final reflections: Mr. Tony Clark, Managing Director at Avfall Sverige, Ms. Maria van Berlekom, Head of unit for global cooperation on environment, Sida, Sweden Mr. Sarto Nogueira (Mayor of Fortaleza, Brazil) and Dr. Abdulla Naseer Minister of State, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Maldives

“Zero waste is an ambitious goal, but is achievable by cooperation, innovation, partnership and leadership by champion cities.” Ms. Xiaofang Zhou from UNDP encouraged governments and cities to embrace this vision. In addition to political will, innovation and the recognition of producer’s responsibility are also essential. UNDP’s Ocean Innovation Challenge (OIC), supported by Norway and Sweden, pilots innovative solutions, such as Extended Producer’s Responsibility schemes in Costa Rica and Maldives. OIC’s goal is to “accelerate progress on SDG14 (Life below water) by piloting technological, policy and regulatory innovations that are replicable and scalable” indicated Dr. Mary Matthews, UNDP Ocean Advisor & Ocean Innovation Challenge Manager.



Zero Waste Vision

- Near 100% waste collection coverage in municipalities
- Waste ending in uncontrolled landfill (without gas capture) below 1%
- Mandatory sorting by citizens for all types of wastes
- Materials recycled at optimum level
- Circularity principle integrated in the value chain and business model
- BAT/BEP applied for all types of waste conversion, recovery process and disposal infrastructure
- Extended Producer Responsibility implemented
- Effective Public and Private Partnership established



Ms. Xiaofang Zhou, Principal Technical Advisor, Chemicals and Waste, UNDP



Dr. Mary Matthews, Ocean Advisor and Manager of Ocean Innovation Challenge (OIC)

Developed and developing countries have specific challenges but a joint responsibility and resolve towards achieving better waste management and can exchange best practices and concrete solutions, through partnerships facilitated at the global level. The Zero waste vision and framework can help achieve Agenda 2030.

Relevant hyperlinks and additional information:

Stockholm+50 website: <https://www.stockholm50.global/events/waste-management-urgent-issue-be-addressed-local-and-municipal-level-achieve-sustainable>

SparkBlue: <https://www.sparkblue.org/event/waste-management-urgent-issue-be-addressed-local-and-municipal-level-achieve-sustainable>

Publication [Transitioning To A Circular Economy Through Chemical and Waste Management](#)

Recording of the event on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHV7JknLRSE&feature=emb_imp_woyt

Recording of the event on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/OceanActionHub/videos/3197699653883551>

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The audience at the side event