

**Introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General on  
Waste Management**

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The report before you reflects the full evolution of the theme of waste management from its original consideration in Chapter 21 of Agenda 21. Rather than merely an environmental challenge, waste is now seen as a valuable resource and a source of livelihoods and well-being. As such, waste management has economic, social and environmental facets. Drawing on the range of experiences worldwide since Agenda 21 first came out, the report highlights an integrated life-cycle approach to waste management and emphasizes the concepts of the 3Rs -reduce, recycle and reuse, as well as the ideal of zero-waste in consumption and production.

The report was jointly prepared by UNDESA and UNEP. It draws on inputs provided by Governments, major groups the United Nations system, in particular the Basel Convention on the Control of the Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In the nearly two decades since UNCED, waste management has evolved from its focus on collection and disposal to a more integrated approach including waste minimization material recycling and energy generation. In many countries, waste management already follows an integrated, life-cycle approach. In developing countries, the geometric growth of waste volumes burdens management capacities and strains infrastructure. Hazardous waste, whose management is governed by the Basel Convention, presents complex challenges particularly when it is intermixed with other waste streams. Developing countries, in particular, express concern with the shipment to their shores of hazardous wastes for disposal from more industrialized countries.

Priority objectives for waste management include promoting waste prevention and minimization, effective and efficient management of remaining solid and hazardous waste, and focusing on reuse and recycling and on recovery of useful materials and energy.

The report illustrates the range of experiences across the world with waste management and highlights the need for institutional capacity building, particularly in developing countries.

In both developing and developed countries, local authorities are often on the front line of solid waste management. However, they require institutional capacity building, the devolution of responsibilities, authority and finances from central governments.

Education and public awareness campaigns are vital for promoting waste minimization and safe, environmentally-sound disposal. Public private partnerships can also play a role in financing and developing waste infrastructure and management systems.

The report begins in Part II with an in-depth review of implementation of Chapter 21 of Agenda 21 on waste management, including an assessment of the current situation of waste management, a survey of national and local policies and strategies for waste management, a review of international and regional initiatives for waste management, and environmentally sound waste reuse and recycling, and radioactive waste. This constitutes the heart of the report. The report concludes in Part III with a consideration of international cooperation: the way forward. Part III offers a pathway to CSD -19, by indicating areas for policy and operations.

I would like in particular to bring to your attention the seven elements identified in Part III as being indicative of the way forward.

**First**, comprehensive and national and local policies on waste management covering all types of waste and all types of waste management need to be formulated and rigorously enforced.

**Second**, urgent investment is required in the development of low-cost options for waste management, recycling and reuse and disposal, but that are suitable for poor communities, which could be upgraded as incomes rise.

**Third**, transferring and spreading appropriate technologies and know-how for waste management, recycling and reuse and disposal. Accordingly, current international partnerships promoting cleaner production and lifecycle management need to be strengthened.

**Fourth**, intensive capacity building is required for the relevant stakeholders, including for developing and implementing integrated solid waste management act local level and providing policymakers in developing countries and transition economies with tools for financing waste management.

**Fifth**, it is vital to engage communities and NGOs and other partners in the development of public awareness campaigns and education on waste prevention and waste treatment and health hazards from waste.

**Six**, emerging waste streams such as electronic waste, waste plastics, and used oils and chemicals require special attention aiming at a higher rate of recovery worldwide. A comprehensive program for the transfer of know-how and technologies has to be developed.

**Seventh**, the quality of global data needs to be improved, not only with respect to the current amount of different types of waste generated, but also with respect to the expected future amounts, in order to develop projections that will allow adequate planning for resource recovery and substitution of virgin materials.

These seven concluding elements for a way forward, which flow naturally from the in-depth review conducted in Part II of the report, are offered for consideration to the Commission as the basis for discussions. The Secretariat urges delegations to comment and build on them as a way of constructing a bridge between the discussion of experiences and good practices and problems in this review year and the concrete policy recommendations of next year.