

International Consultative Meeting on Expanding Waste Management Services in Developing Countries
18-19 March 2010, Tokyo, Japan

Aide-Memoire

1. Background

Management of solid wastes and sewage was the subject of Chapter 21 of Agenda 21, which recognized that “environmentally sound management of wastes was among the environmental issues of major concern in maintaining the quality of the Earth’s environment and especially in achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development in all countries.” Solid wastes, as referred to in Chapter 21, included all domestic refuse and non-hazardous wastes such as commercial and institutional waste, street sweepings and construction debris and, in some countries, human waste. Hazardous waste is frequently intermixed with other waste, posing particular management challenges.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, Governments reaffirmed the importance of solid waste management by calling for priority attention to be given to waste prevention and minimization, reuse, recycling, and the use of environmentally friendly alternative materials. They also called for the development of environmentally sound disposal facilities, including technology to convert waste into energy.

The issue of waste management, among others, will be considered by the Commission on Sustainable Development in its fourth implementation cycle, which will take place in 2010 (CSD 18) and 2011 (CSD 19).

Since reports from inter-sessional events are valuable contributions to enrich and support the debate and decisions of CSD sessions, the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), in close collaboration with UNCRD and the Ministry of the Environment/Government of Japan, will organize two complementary international events under the overall theme of “Collaborative Approaches and Solutions to Waste Management Challenge,” namely: (a) an International Consultative Meeting on Expanding Waste Management Services in Developing Countries, 18-19 March 2010; and (b) an International Conference on Building Partnerships for Moving Towards Zero Waste in January 2011, following the Inaugural Regional 3R (reduce, reuse, and recycle) Forum in Asia that was held on 11-12 November 2009 in Tokyo, which resulted in the *Tokyo 3R Statement* that aims to provide an important basis and framework for the promotion of 3R in Asia.

These international events will bring together relevant stakeholders (e.g, mayors of cities, heads of municipalities, representatives of the private sector, international institutions, local communities, key research and policy institutes, and civil society, among others) to discuss waste management challenges in developing countries and potential solutions and opportunities to address these challenges within the context of sustainable development.

The outcome of the 2010 Consultative Meeting would serve as a contribution to the deliberations on identifying constraints and obstacles in the implementation of waste management policies which, in turn, would further support the preparation of the Chair’s summary of CSD-18. The report of the Meeting would also contribute to the preparation of the Secretary-General’s report for the follow-up session (Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) of CSD-19) and to other related processes inside and outside the UN system scheduled for 2010.

Similarly, the outcome of the International Conference in 2011, which would emphasize the establishment and development of partnerships, would serve as a contribution to CSD-19 in

identifying practical actions and options by all implementation actors to overcome obstacles and constraints, address new challenges and opportunities as well as share lessons learned and best practices in waste management for sustainable development.

In this regard, the outcome of the 2010 Consultative Meeting will contribute to the overall designing and programming of the International Conference in 2011.

2. Rationale and Objectives

The rapid increase in volume and diversification of solid wastes generated mainly as a result of economic growth, urbanization, industrialization, and unsustainable production and consumption patterns has severe impacts on the global and local environment, natural resources, public health, local economy, and living conditions, and threatens the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, development of appropriate policy frameworks and institutional arrangements are essential for providing efficient waste management services to the local communities, as well as to overcome health- and environment-related challenges resulting from poor service provision and facilities.

In developing countries, a number of challenges and obstacles on the proper waste management and 3R could be pointed out, such as the lack of organizations, systems and institutions in national and local governments, the shortage of the human resources in the local governments and the operator and the manager of the private companies and the group on waste management, financial problems of waste management services and facilities, increase of the necessity of the management of hazardous waste, lack of capacity of the introduction and the operation of the recycling scheme and system, and the technology of the recycling, the lack of the capacity and the social problems on the workers on waste management, absence of the communication with the local communities and NGOs.

Especially when focused in the waste management services, solid waste management is conventionally thought as being the sole responsibility of municipalities (public utilities) to ensure that collection and disposal services are available across all communities, while ensuring the sustainability of these services. According to the World Bank, it is common for municipalities in developing countries to spend 20 per cent to 50 per cent of their available budget on solid waste management. In some developing countries, collection alone drains up 80 per cent to 90 per cent of municipal solid waste management budgets.

The complexity and daunting nature of waste management challenges require a deeper collaboration among different stakeholders – governments, civil society, private sector, local communities, and the UN system. Governments/public utilities facing enormous resource challenges in providing quality public services are increasingly looking towards collaboration with the private sector to help deliver their public service mandate. However, in practice, by and large, the policy environment in developing countries had not been very conducive to private sector participation in provision of waste management services and investing in waste management infrastructure.

In practice, such collaboration or partnerships could create win-win solutions for both the public utilities and private sector—if duly supported by appropriate policy frameworks. For example, such partnerships could lead to savings in municipal budgets, of which a large portion is often used for waste management. The private sector, on the other hand, may use this opportunity to convert waste into valuable resources and environmentally friendly products that would not only contribute towards achieving resource efficiency, but could also provide income-generating opportunities.

It is therefore important for developing countries to institute appropriate policy frameworks and governance mechanisms leading to waste prevention and minimization and improving waste collection, processing, treatment, disposal, and recycling. Experience shows that integrating private, formal, and informal systems of solid waste management can significantly increase the efficiency and

effectiveness of municipalities in delivering required services, and enable to municipalities to save valuable resources while also providing health and environment benefits, including co-benefits.

In this regard, the 2010 International Consultative Meeting will have the following objectives:

- a) Facilitate an in-depth review of barriers and constraints in the proper waste management and promotion of 3R;
- b) Strengthening the capacities of waste management utilities in developing countries in addressing waste management challenges (through sharing of lessons learned and experiences gained; having a better understanding of institutional and policy frameworks requirements; identifying gaps in policies and practices, etc.);
- c) Identifying opportunities for building partnerships for expanding waste management services; addressing economic benefits of integrated waste management and 3Rs.
- d) Developing communities of practice for scaling up of best practices (over the years, a number of good practices in sustainable waste management have emerged. Actions leading to scaling up of these practices are required. These actions could range from policy reforms to infrastructure development to raising public awareness); and

3. Expected Outputs/Outcomes

Overall, the International Consultative Meeting will have the following broad outputs/outcomes:

- Enhanced awareness about options (policy and institutions, technology, and finance mechanism) available to address waste management challenges;
- Framework for building partnerships to enhance technical and financial cooperation and developing communities of practice.

Other specific outcomes include:

- Identification of waste management policy options and concrete measures for municipalities and local authorities in developing countries;
- Comprehensive assessment of trends in waste management (policy, institutional, technological, and financial capacities for integrated waste management);
- Emerging problems in e-waste management;
- Documented case studies on local, national, and private sector experiences and good practices/innovative approaches in waste management;
- Provision of background information and other input to the Chair's summary of CSD-18, Secretary-General's report for the follow-up session (Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) of CSD-19) and to other related processes inside and outside the UN system scheduled for 2010.

4. Co-Organizers

The International Consultative Meeting will be co-organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), Ministry of the Environment/Government of Japan, and United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD).

The international community values Japan's internationally recognized leadership in promoting innovative waste management practices and 3Rs, and would benefit immensely from Japan's successful experiences in developing more environmentally friendly practices for waste management as well as implementing policies to minimize waste and maximize recycling. The success of these policies and practices has been due to the high-level leadership of the Government of Japan as well as the committed participation of the Japanese private sector and citizens (consumers).

The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of UN/DESA), *inter-alia*, facilitates advancing the implementation of a sustainable development agenda by regularly organizing conferences, capacity-building workshops, and expert group meetings with emphasis on building national capacities through sharing of lessons learned, promoting scaling up of best practices, and creating opportunities for building partnerships. These conferences/workshops are usually organized around the issues/themes to be considered by the CSD in that particular year/cycle.

5. Participants

Participation in the International Consultative Meeting is by invitation only. It is expected that some 40 to 50 managers/experts/participants from around the world and from the host country will attend the event, including:

- Senior managers of public waste management utilities (municipalities)
- Private service providers
- Community-managed waste management programmes
- Mayors of selected cities
- Selected national government officials and policymakers
- Representatives of UN and international institutions, including international financial institutions/donors
- Distinguished waste management experts