



International Day of Zero Waste

Thursday, 27 March 2025

UN General Assembly Hall

3-6 pm

Theme: Towards zero waste in fashion and textiles

Background

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 77/161 entitled “*Promoting zero-waste initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” on 14 December 2022, which proclaims 30 March as the International Day of Zero Waste (hereafter Zero Waste Day), to be observed annually.

The resolution invites the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to facilitate the observance of Zero Waste Day. It further invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia, to observe Zero Waste Day appropriately, to raise awareness of national, subnational, regional, and local zero-waste initiatives and their contribution to achieving sustainable development.

Further, the International Day of Zero Waste promotes responsible production and consumption patterns and encourages a shift towards a lifecycle approach. This ensures that no materials or resources go to waste, enabling society to recognize waste as a resource.

The third annual International Day of Zero Waste will be observed in the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, on Thursday, 27 March 2025. UNEP and UN-Habitat are jointly facilitating the observance of the Day and organizing this event in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Türkiye to the United Nations, with the support of the Zero Waste Foundation.

Theme

This year’s International Day of Zero Waste focuses on the **theme of fashion and textile waste**, shedding light on the environmental and social challenges caused by the sector’s linear business model, which drives overproduction and overconsumption. Every year the textile sector is estimated to be responsible for 2-8% of global GHG emissions, the use of 215 trillion litres of water (the equivalent of 86 million Olympic-sized swimming pools), and 9% of annual microplastic pollution to oceans. These staggering figures highlight the unsustainable practices driving the industry, where every second, the equivalent of a garbage truck full of clothing is incinerated or sent to landfills around the world, causing significant environmental, economic and social impacts, especially in the global south.

Addressing the challenges of fashion and textile waste requires a shift towards sustainable and circular solutions. These may include the promotion of extended producer responsibility, fostering innovation in recycling technologies, and encouraging the adoption of sustainable materials. Initiatives like upcycling, repair, and reuse can reduce waste, while supporting zero-waste design principles can minimize waste generation at the production stage. Collaboration across governments, industries, and communities is essential to drive change and build a more equitable and environmentally friendly textile value chain.

Objectives

The New York observance of the International Day of Zero Waste is intended to increase knowledge about the environmental and social impacts of fashion and textile waste, and the potential of zero-waste solutions to promote sustainability and equity. By showcasing initiatives and success stories in waste management, particularly in textiles and fashion, from Member States, young entrepreneurs and communities, it can inspire policymakers, producers, and consumers to embrace sustainable and circular practices, rethink manufacturing and consumption, and reduce waste.

Draft Programme

15:00 – 15:45	OPENING SEGMENT <i>Visual Show</i> <i>Opening Remarks</i> H.E. Mr. Philémon Yang, President of the Seventy-Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly <i>Video on the International Day of Zero Waste</i> (produced by UNEP and UN-Habitat) <i>Remarks</i> Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations <i>Keynote Address:</i> H.E. Ms. Emine Erdoğan, First Lady of the Republic of Türkiye, Chair of the UN Secretary General’s Advisory Board of Eminent Persons on Zero Waste <i>Remarks:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) (PRV)- Ms. Anacláudia Rossbach, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (PRV)
15:45 – 16:20	PANEL DISCUSSION “Creating the enabling environment that incentivizes innovative product design and inspire consumers” <i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Jamil Ahmad, Director, UNEP New York <i>Panellists:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mr. Jose Manuel Moller, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, Algramo (Deputy Chair of the SG’s Advisory Board on Zero Waste)- Mr. Vijay Jagannathan, Secretary-General, CityNet Asia Pacific- Ms. Hakima El Haite, Founder of EauGlobe- Mr. Carlos Silva Filho, President, International Solid Waste Association (ISWA)
16:20- 18:00	GENERAL DEBATE Statements by Member States

Panelist Biographies

Mr. José Manuel Moller

José Manuel Moller is the Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Algramo, a Chilean start-up that focuses on reusing plastic to enable economic, social, and environment benefits. With his enterprise, he aims to change the world by encouraging customers to use reusable plastic containers for household products and reshape the waste management landscape in an innovative way. Moller received a Champion of the Earth for Entrepreneurial Vision award, granted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2023. He is the Deputy Chair of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste.



Mr. Vijay Jagannathan

Vijay Jagannathan is the Secretary-General of CityNet and Senior Fellow at the World Resources Institute (WRI) Ross Center for Sustainable Cities. He is also an Honorary Advisor to the Municipal Government of Chengdu. Jagannathan is a prominent figure in shaping sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, sharing his expertise to support and create low-carbon initiatives and develop modern urban planning. Additionally, he has worked at the World Bank where he focused on infrastructure and water management. He participates as a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste.



Ms. Hakima El Haité

Hakima El Haité is currently the President of the Private Sector Panafrican Alliance for Climate Transition. Hakima El Haité is the Founder of EauGlobe, the first environmental engineering firm in the Middle East and North Africa region. She served as the Minister of Environment of Morocco from 2013 to 2017. She was elected Vice-President of the United Nations Paris Climate Conference in 2015 and became the High-Level Climate Champion of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for COP22. El Haité has been listed multiple times in Apolitical's "100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy" overview. She previously served as an advisor to the Zero Waste Initiative of the President of Senegal and is participating as a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste.



Mr. Carlos Silva Filho

Carlos Silva Filho is a member of the UN SG's Advisory Board on Zero Waste and the Former President of the International Solid Waste Association - ISWA (2020-2024). He serves for more than 25 years as an active key player in projects addressing waste management challenges, for instance contributing to the United Nations Environment Programme's Global Waste Management Outlook, as well as the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Waste Outlook. More recently he was elected as President of the Center of Excellence on Climate Change and Circular Economy for Latin America and the Caribbean.

