

ISWA: working for a better World

ISWA's vision is an Earth where no waste exists. Waste should be reused and reduced to a minimum, then collected, recycled and treated properly. Residual matter should be disposed of in a safely engineered way, ensuring a clean and healthy environment. All people on earth should have the right to enjoy an environment with clean air, water, seas and soils. To be able to achieve this, we need to work together.

Our current situation is acute

The fast growth of population in urban areas all over the world, together with rising consumption in developing countries, creates a huge increase in the amount of waste worldwide. Every year more than four billion tons of waste is produced and in the year 2025 the amount of waste is predicted to increase by 72 percent (*World Bank Group, 2012*), mostly in the lower middle-income countries.

Today half of the world's population has no organized collection of waste; seventy percent of the waste collected is not recycled or used as fuel. Seven million tons of plastic ends up in the seas. Plastic waste, along with electric and electronic waste, is the single most rapidly growing waste stream.

Every week two million people move from rural to urban areas. Cities must be able to provide basic hygiene services and infrastructure, otherwise the consequences are manifold: the spread of diseases and health problems, waste dumped in peri-urban areas increasing the emissions of methane gas which affect the climate negatively, the amount of ocean litter increases and waste that could be used as resources is being wasted.

Also developed countries with mature waste management systems and infrastructure are facing difficulties. For example, finding the balance between energy recovery and material recycling, decoupling of economic growth from waste production and finding solutions for new waste streams such as electronic waste and tackling, in some cases, falling waste production and population decline.

Political decisions and financing necessary

These dilemmas are working their ways through the political process in many nations, and few can boast today to have the perfect waste management system for the next decades to come.

Technologies exist and new are under development, to compost, digest, convert, sort, select, destroy, and store waste in final sinks. Yet the spread of these is limited by public opposition in many countries, or by the lack of financial instruments to attract investors.

To develop and build up functional waste management infrastructure, financing, especially in developing countries must become an international priority. Just to cover collection of waste The World Bank estimates the gap to be 40 billion US dollar per year (2012) which will treble in the next 15 years. It is increasingly important that fast growing cities need to be proactive in long term planning with good expertise and enough capacity to build

infrastructure, instead of simply trying to overcome short term emergencies such as epidemics.

ISWAs contribution to the World

A sound waste management system needs strategies for prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, but also technical, financial, planning and communications capacities. ISWAs role is to

- Provide a comprehensive and continually updated body of knowledge on waste management of value to members, practitioners, researchers, governments and other entities worldwide
- Interpret trends and provide insights to members
- Provide experience in capacity building activities aiming to improve planning and regulatory structures
- Offer opportunities for public and private waste sector operators, to network and share knowledge
- Encourage research from academia to improve scientific knowledge
- Communicate with stakeholders globally and spread knowledge about development, solutions, technologies and success stories about sustainability, about reducing greenhouse gases, and about improving economies and creating employment
- Encourage investments in waste infrastructure where it is lacking, especially creating financial models and assisting planning in developing nations
- Promote ethical standards in sustainable waste management

ISWA gives added value

ISWA is a non-political organization providing services and activities to encourage innovation in waste management worldwide. We offer professional assistance to provide high quality intervention in an honest, transparent way. We work with partners to promote the need for investments and capacity building in the waste sector. Alliances with entities like national and local governments, the World Bank, UNEP, UNCD, ADB, IDB, CCAC, LEADS, UN Habitat, EU, GIZ, are essential. The task is so huge that we need to work together.

ISWA is the catalyst for positive change, to make the world a healthier, better place to live, for millions. Because the world needs this, now.