

Declaration by the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA)

Better Waste and Resource Management – a key enabler for climate mitigation

The International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), alongside its dedicated members and partner organizations, is proud to bring the waste and resource management sector's voice to UNFCCC's COP 29. Our mission is straightforward: **we urge member-states to incorporate integrated waste and resource management strategies and initiatives into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to combat climate change.**

Improved waste and resource management presents a unique opportunity to mitigate climate change

According to the [Global Waste Management Outlook 2024](#) (GWMO 2024), the world generates approximately 2.1 billion tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) annually. Alarming, waste generation is projected to increase by over 77% by 2050ⁱ. Only 62% of the MSW generated in the world is managed adequately and only half of it is effectively recovered as a resource. On the other hand, in low-income countries around 90% of the waste generated is discarded in unregulated dumps or openly burned. This stark reality highlights the pressing need for sustainable and integrated waste and resource management worldwide

By improving waste management, we can prevent up to 20%^{ii,iii} of the total anthropogenic GHG emissions in the world—one of the most significant opportunities for climate mitigation available today. However, despite its potential, the waste and resource management sector remains a largely untapped source of mitigation in global climate strategies.

ISWA's Call to Action at COP 29 (to be considered for the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs))

1. **Circular waste and resources management address the triple planetary crisis**

Reducing waste generation by adopting a waste-to-resource approach that addresses design and business models will help mitigate GHG emissions and address the triple planetary crisis by curbing pollution and protecting biodiversity.

Circular waste management approaches to mitigate GHG emissions include waste prevention, sorting at source, materials recovery, including organic matter and nutrients from sorted biowaste,



replacing virgin raw materials by recyclables, providing pathways for energy recovery and ensuring safe final disposal for waste that cannot be recycled. The transition towards a circular economy is key to ensure a sustainable, equitable and low-carbon future, being a crucial way to make waste management affordable^{iv}.

2. Organic waste management towards a low-carbon future

Organic waste management holds significant potential for climate change mitigation and adaptation and is a low-hanging fruit for reducing methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas.

By diverting organic waste from disposal sites and enabling its transformation into a resource, countries can significantly and immediately curb methane generation while increasing the value created from this waste stream that contributes to a low-carbon transition pathway, a sustainable bioeconomy, and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

3. Set Global Waste and Resource Management Goals

ISWA advocates for a global waste management strategy aligned with the circular scenario outlined in the GWMO 2024. This strategy includes:

- Ensuring 100% waste collection coverage as a precursor to more advanced and sustainable waste management, as well as protecting human and environmental health.
- Transitioning from open dumping and open burning to sound and sustainable waste treatment methods to enable the reduction and capture of excess GHG emissions
- Improving recycling markets to allow significantly larger amounts of secondary resources to replace virgin materials both in terms of quantity and quality, thus avoiding production emissions.
- Decoupling waste generation from economic growth by implementing waste reduction measures, to revert global waste generation to 2020 levels by 2050.

These goals, while complex, are necessary to address the waste problem. They are also instrumental in reducing GHG emissions, pollution, and adverse effects on ecosystems and biodiversity.

4. Structure financing models and funding mechanisms

A circular economy in the waste and resource management sector depends on making secondary raw materials competitive through effective product standards and pricing them at or below primary raw materials. Aligning economics will make waste collection viable, while proper standards and pricing will boost demand, driving the shift to a circular economy. The global community must foster a transition in economic models to enable the decoupling of growth from waste generation and scale funding mechanisms that can provide resources to transform the waste sector and so prevent waste mismanagement. Climate finance has a legitimate role in this, and thus member states should adopt and implement the existing provisions of the [Paris Agreement](#) with a focus on waste-related solutions.

ISWA's Commitment for COP29

ISWA is committed to leading in this area and pursuing a transformative movement with global mobilisation throughout society, industries and governments. With unity and determination, ISWA calls on nations to act now to incorporate comprehensive waste and resource management strategies into their NDCs to secure a sustainable future and address climate change as one of the greatest challenges of the current and future generations.

International Solid Waste Association (ISWA)
September 2024, Cape Town, South Africa

This statement is endorsed by the following ISWA National Members as country representatives:

- **Argentina** Asociación para el Estudio de Residuos Sólidos
- **Belgium** Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG)
- **China** China Association of Urban Environmental Sanitation
- **Croatia** Croatian Waste Management Association
- **Ecuador** Alianza de Profesionales Ambientales del Ecuador Apramec S.A.S. B.I.C.
- **Germany** ISWA Germany
- **Hungary** Hungarian Association of Environmental Enterprises
- **Iceland** Fagráð um endurnýtingu og úrgang
- **India** Institute of Chartered Waste Managers
- **Jordan** Future Pioneers for Empowering Communities
- **Malaysia** Waste Management Association Malaysia
- **Nigeria** Waste Management Association Nigeria
- **North Macedonia** Macedonian Solid Waste Association
- **Norway** Avfall Norge
- **Oman** Oman Environmental Services Holding
- **Portugal** Associação Portuguesa de Engenharia Sanitária e Ambiental
- **South Africa** Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa
- **Spain** Asociación Técnica para la Gestión de Residuos y Medio Ambiente
- **Sweden** Avfall Sverige
- **Turkey** Turkish National Committee on Solid Wastes
- **Uganda** Uganda Waste Management Association
- **United Kingdom** The Chartered Institution of Waste Management
- **United States** Solid Waste Association North America

ⁱ United Nations Environment Programme and ISWA (2024). Global Waste Management Outlook 2024: Beyond an age of waste – Turning rubbish into a resource. Nairobi. <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/44939>

ⁱⁱ Learning from the past to plan for the future: An historical review of the evolution of waste and resource management 1970–2020 and reflections on priorities 2020–2030 – The perspective of an involved witness, David C Wilson, 2023

ⁱⁱⁱ Wilson DC, Paul J, Ramola A, Filho CS. Unlocking the significant worldwide potential of better waste and resource management for climate mitigation: with particular focus on the Global South. Waste Management & Research. 2024;0(0). doi:10.1177/0734242X241262717

^{iv} United Nations Environment Programme and ISWA (2024)