Advancing Towards Zero Waste Declaration

Cities on every continent are rising to the challenge of delivering on the highest ambition of the Paris Agreement. The sustainable, prosperous and liveable cities of the future will ultimately need to be zero-waste cities.

Waste management is one of the primary services that city governments provide and is a sector over which mayors exercise significant authority. The mayors of the world's great cities recognize that bold action on waste management is key to making our urban centres cleaner, healthier, more resilient and inclusive.

Global waste generation is increasing faster than any other environmental pollutant. Therefore, action in this sector can have a much greater impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) than the current emission inventories suggest. The International Solid Waste Association estimates that when all waste management actions, including disposal, recycling, composting and treatment, are considered, the waste sector could cut 10 to 15% of GHG emissions globally. When actions to reduce waste generation are also taken into account, the sector could reduce up to 20% of the global emissions.

Food waste is a particularly critical issue. Currently, one-third of all the food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted, amounting to 1.3 billion tonnes every year. When food waste decays in landfills, it produces methane, a greenhouse gas 87 times more potent than CO_2 at retaining heat in the atmosphere over a 20-year period and already causing 25% of current global warming. Yet when food scraps are separated and treated rather than sent to landfills, they can produce compost to grow new food and enhance the soil's carbon capture capacity to pull CO_2 from the atmosphere. and recover energy through anaerobic digestion and biogas utilization.

For other types of waste, reuse and recycle schemes will not only reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill or incinerators but can create jobs and economic opportunities for social entrepreneurs and vulnerable communities.

Cities are also embracing the concept of the circular economy, by not just reducing the amount of waste disposed of in landfills and incinerators but also working to decouple economic activity from the consumption of finite resources. These cities are taking action to keep resources in the economic system for as long as possible and phase waste out of the system. Circular economy initiatives can protect natural resources, clean the air that citizens breathe and the water they drink, whilst also making cities more efficient, prosperous and competitive.

To deliver our ambitious climate goals, we know that by 2030 we must have transformed our solid waste and material management systems to put us on track for a climate-safe future. That is why, as mayors of world leading cities, we are accelerating the transition towards a zero waste and more regenerative future by taking ambitious, measurable and inclusive actions to reduce municipal solid waste generation and improve materials management in our cities.

> **We pledge to advance towards zero waste cities by: 1) reducing the municipal solid waste generation per capita by at least 15% by 2030 compared to 2015; and 2) reducing the amount of municipal solid waste disposed to landfill and incineration by at least 50% by 2030 compared to 2015, and increase the diversion rate away from landfill and incineration to at least 70% by 2030.**

To achieve these bold targets, we commit to implement actions such as:

- Reduce food losses and wasting of food at the retail and consumer levels by decreasing losses along production and supply chains, minimising the production of surplus food, and facilitating safe food donation and by-products for feed production.
- Implement source separated collection for food scraps and other organics and treatment infrastructure that recovers nutrients, energy and contributes to the restoration of carbon storage capacity in soils.
- Support the implementation of local and regional policies, such as extended producer responsibility and sustainable procurement, to reduce or ban single-use and non-recyclable plastics and other materials, while also improving goods reparability and recyclability.
- Increase reduction, reuse, recovery and recycling of construction and demolition materials.
- Increase accessibility, awareness, scale and inclusivity of reduction, reutilization and recycling programmes and policies for all communities and neighbourhoods, investing in city wide communication and engagement efforts, offering resources in multiple languages, and ensuring benefits are distributed equitably across the city population.
- Publicly report every two years on the progress the cities are making towards these goals.