

## The Mexico City Declaration: support to the Waste Wise Cities campaign to transform Waste to Wealth

World Habitat Day 7 October 2019

The world's cities produce about 7-10 billion tons of waste per year. Most cities, particularly those in rapidly urbanizing parts of the world, struggle to manage the increasing quantities of waste resulting from population and per capita income growth.

Lack of adequate waste management results in air, soil and water pollution. This threatens public health, ecosystems and biodiversity in human settlements, and has significant impacts on the rural to urban continuum that will impair industrial and production processes. In addition, the accumulation of waste in the oceans endangers marine life, the population's health and related economic activities such as fishing and tourism. However, many cities have shown how waste management can be more sustainable and even create opportunities for economic development.

By **rethinking the entire waste management cycle**, cities can create employment, promote inclusive economic growth and improve public health and ecosystems. In other words – **create happier, greener, healthier and economically vibrant communities, capable of addressing environmental problems more equitably**. In addition, sustainable waste management can potentially reduce the production of greenhouse gas emissions by 15 - 20%.

The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, as well as the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda, all consider waste management as an urgent and critical issue that must be addressed to ensure the future prosperity and sustainability of our planet. Building on these global commitments, on the occasion of World Habitat Day 2019, **The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of Mexico City declare that:**

*They recognize and reaffirm the commitments in the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda for better waste management;*

*They are aware that in a business-as-usual scenario, waste management issues will pose significant challenges to sustainable urbanization, air and water quality and human health;*

**They are determined to support the “WASTE WISE CITIES” campaign by promoting the “5Rs”, consisting of:**

1. **RETHINK** – Promoting a shift in mindset of people from linear make-use-dispose model to a circular model that considers waste as a resource and recognizes the industrial processes around it.

2. *REFUSE*– Discard the consumption of disposable or single-use items, including plastic water bottles, plastic straws, plastic cutlery, as well as disposable products, among others.

3. *REDUCE* – Make efforts to cut back on the amount of waste being produced.

4. *REUSE* – Encourage reuse of waste.

5. *RECYCLE* – Segregate waste and support recycling to reduce the use of raw materials, protect the environment and create jobs.

**The Participants resolve** to support at least thirty (30) local governments of the United Mexican States to join the “Waste Wise Cities” campaign prior to the Tenth Session of the World Urban Forum to be held 8-13 February 2020, and will provide assistance for monitoring their waste management, which will contribute with inputs for the preparation of the report “Waste Management in the World’s Cities – 2020” that UN-Habitat will present.

**The Participants declare their comment to:**

-Take action to put in place policies, guidelines and capacity building frameworks to assist local governments in better waste management;

-Promote, from their respective field of competence, better waste management in different city areas;

-Call for cities and local governments to adopt and promote sustainable waste management systems in pursuit of:

- Assessing quantity and type of waste generated by residents, establishments and businesses;
- Improving collection and transportation of waste;
- Ensuring environmentally safe disposal of waste;
- Consider the role of supply chains in enabling sustainable waste management systems;
- Promoting the 5 Rs – Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Refuse the use of single-use items, to derive maximum value from waste;
- Empowering and working with civil society, NGOs, private and informal sectors;
- Establishing better working conditions for waste workers, whether in formal or informal employment;
- Carefully evaluating and implementing innovative technological alternatives, including waste-to-energy schemes and best practices from other cities;
- Making long-term strategic plans for urbanization, which fully consider waste generation and treatment;

- *Designing financial and other incentives to promote a transition to a more circular economy and reduce waste;*
- *Encouraging the key principle of “Rethinking on waste”, through public education and awareness efforts to change public attitudes towards waste;*
- *Regularly reviewing progress on waste management in cities and exchange experiences and success stories annually on the Waste Wise Cities Campaign website.*

***The Participants express their interest in:***

- *Appealing to industry and the private sector to join efforts to reduce the amount of waste produced and increase the quantity of materials that are reused or recycled;*
- *Appealing to schools and educational institutions to promote, within their field of competence, a culture to rethink, refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle waste;*
- *Appealing to development finance institutions and the climate funds, including the World Bank, the regional development banks, GCF and GEF to increase their financing portfolio on waste management;*
- *Appealing to innovators to find solutions that have the potential to transform waste to wealth.*

Signed in Mexico City, on October 7, 2019, in three original copies in English

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