

CSD INTERSESSIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR MOVING TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

(An intersessional event of CSD-19)

16-18 February 2011, Tokyo, Japan

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

1. BACKGROUND

The management of solid wastes and sewage was the subject of Chapter 21 of Agenda 21, which recognized that “environmentally sound management of wastes was among the environmental issues of major concern in maintaining the quality of the Earth’s environment and especially in achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development in all countries.” Solid wastes, as referred to in Chapter 21, included all domestic refuse and non-hazardous wastes such as commercial and institutional waste, street sweepings and construction debris and, in some countries, human waste. Hazardous waste is frequently intermixed with other waste, posing particular management challenges.

Solid waste management is considered an essential public good, and as such, it is the responsibility of municipalities (public utilities) to ensure that collection and disposal services are available across all communities, while ensuring the sustainability of these services. However, in developing countries, a number of challenges and obstacles pertaining to proper waste management can be pointed out such as the lack of organizations, systems, and institutions in national and local governments; the shortage of human resources in local governments as well as the operators and managers of private companies and groups involved in waste management; financial problems of waste management services and facilities; increased necessity to manage hazardous waste; lack of capacity to introduce and operate recycling schemes and systems, and the technology of the recycling; the lack of capacity and social problems of workers in waste management; and insufficient communication with the local communities and NGOs.

It is therefore important for developing countries to institute appropriate policy frameworks and governance mechanisms leading to waste prevention, waste minimization, and improved waste collection, processing, treatment, disposal, and recycling. Experience shows that integrating private, formal, and informal systems of solid waste management can significantly increase the efficiency and effectiveness of municipalities in delivering required services, and save municipalities valuable resources while also providing health and environment benefits.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, governments reaffirmed the importance of solid waste management by calling for priority attention to be given to waste prevention and minimization, reuse, recycling, and the use of environmentally friendly

alternative materials. They also called for the development of environmentally sound disposal facilities, including technology to convert waste into energy.

The issue of waste management, among others, has been addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in its fourth implementation cycle that includes a review year (CSD18) followed by a policy year (CSD 19). CSD18, which served as an evaluation year and aimed at identifying the constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation, as well as sharing the best practices and lessons learned took place in May 2010; and CSD 19 which aims to reach an intergovernmental agreement on practical measures, policy options, and concrete actions to expedite and strengthen the implementation of commitments will be held in May 2011.

The CSD-18 Chair's Summary highlighted a number of key concepts and issues, which should be addressed in order to move forward. In summary, the message centred on the following:

- a) **A need to move towards a zero waste economy**: Importance of recognizing waste as a resource, and of managing wastes in an integrated manner. Development of policy instruments that encourage waste prevention and minimization based on the public-private partnership (PPP) and extended producer responsibility (EPR) should be fostered.
- b) **Special attention required for particular types of wastes**: Wider ratification and implementation of the relevant instruments and protocols related to the transport of hazardous waste is called for. There is a need to assist developing countries in the full implementation of such instruments. Emerging new waste streams such as electronic waste, plastics in the marine environment, and oil and lubricants require special international and national action aimed at a high rate of recovery worldwide. There is a need to build local capacity in the developing countries to address the flow of e-wastes. Improvement in agricultural waste management requires reinforced support to farmers, particularly in developing countries, and access to knowledge on best practices in sustainable agriculture.
- c) **Finance**: New and additional financial resources are needed that are dedicated to sustainable waste management in developing countries. Investments are needed in low-cost options for waste management, recycling and reuse and disposal, as well as energy recovery from waste.
- d) **Partnership and International Cooperation**: A global platform on waste management to disseminate and exchange information, upscale good practices, and advance partnerships should be developed. Regional initiatives are also important in promoting 3Rs, and regional platforms such as the 3R Forum in Asia should be enhanced. International cooperation to promote capacity-building is required for all relevant stakeholders, including local policymakers.
- e) **Awareness**: Education and public awareness campaigns are vital for changing behavioural attitudes and promoting waste minimization and safe, environmentally-sound disposal.

Since reports from inter-sessional events are valuable contributions to enrich and support the debate and decisions of the CSD sessions, the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), in close collaboration with UNCRD and the Ministry of the Environment (MoE)-Government of Japan,

proposed to organize two complementary international events under the overall theme of “Collaborative Approaches and Solutions to Waste Management Challenge,” namely: (a) an Consultative Meeting on Expanding Waste Management Services in Developing Countries, March 2010; and (b) an Intersessional Conference on Building Partnerships for Moving towards Zero Waste in February 2011, following the Inaugural Regional 3R (reduce, reuse, and recycle) Forum in Asia that was held on 11-12 November 2009 in Tokyo, which resulted in the Tokyo 3R Statement that aimed to provide an important basis and framework for the promotion of 3R in Asia.

The first of the two events mentioned above, namely, the “International Consultative Meeting on Expanding Waste Management Services in Developing Countries,” was successfully organized on 18-19 March 2010, co-organized by DSD/UN-DESA, UNCRD, and MoE-Japan. This inter-sessional event provided valuable input to the CSD-18 in May 2010.

As a follow up to the CSD-18 outcome and in support of CSD-19 deliberations, DSD/UN-DESA, in close collaboration with UN-Habitat, UNEP, the "Institut International de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement," Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Interior, both Government of Morocco, is organizing a CSD Inter-sessional Meeting on "Expanding Waste Management Services in Africa" on 25-26 November 2010. This meeting will bring together relevant stakeholders to discuss waste management challenges in Africa and potential solutions and opportunities to address these challenges within the context of sustainable development.

More specifically, the Africa Meeting will discuss the role of local authorities in solid waste management, and identify critical implementation barriers to integrated solid waste management and capacity-building needs in Africa with the objective of expanding and improving sustainable waste management in Africa, particularly in the context of improving health and working conditions of the informal sector, job creation, and reducing pressure on natural environment. Deliberations will also be conducted on strengthening and creating partnerships and establishing an institutional network for expanding waste management in Africa.

Building on the outcome and recommendations of CSD-18 as well as the two intersessional regional events (Asia and Africa), and to contribute to CSD-19 in 2011, an international event will be organized from 16 to 18 February 2011 in Tokyo, Japan, with the theme of ***“Intersessional Conference on Building Partnerships for Moving towards Zero Waste.”***

The Intersessional Conference will bring together relevant stakeholders (e.g, representatives from cities, private sector, research and policy institutes, civil society, and international organizations, among others) to discuss and come up with policy recommendations that would contribute to expanding waste management services in developing countries, and to identify how best these stakeholders could partnership with each other to strengthen their efforts in moving towards zero waste.

The outcome of the 2011 Intersessional Conference would serve as a contribution to the deliberations on identifying practical actions and options by all implementation actors to overcome obstacles and constraints, address new challenges and opportunities as well as

share lessons learned and best practices in waste management for sustainable development, which, in turn, would further support the preparation of the Chair's Summary of CSD-19.

2. RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

The rapid increase in volume and diversification of solid wastes generated mainly as a result of economic growth, urbanization, industrialization, and unsustainable production and consumption patterns has had a severe impact on the global and local environment, natural resources, public health, local economy, and living conditions, and threatens the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thus, development of appropriate policy frameworks and institutional arrangements are essential for providing efficient waste management services to local communities, as well as to overcome health- and environment-related challenges resulting from poor service provision and facilities.

Also, the fundamental issue is that solid waste management is conventionally thought of as being the sole responsibility of municipalities (public utilities). That often leads to a situation where local government policies do not effectively promote or favour partnership options. According to the new data collected for UN-Habitat's 2010 book 'Solid Waste Management in the World's Cities', cities often spend between 5 to 15 per cent of their total budget on solid waste management. In low-income countries, 90 per cent or more of that budget is spent on waste collection alone, while only 45 to 60 per cent of the waste is actually collected. Providing waste collection to all the people, while raising the environmental standards of waste disposal, is a major challenge for municipalities.

With the diversification of waste streams worldwide as well as the growing presence of chemicals and hazardous and toxic elements in the general waste stream, the complexity and daunting nature of waste management challenges therefore require a more extensive collaboration among the different stakeholders – governments, civil society, private sector, local communities, and the UN system. Governments/public utilities, which face enormous resource challenges in providing quality public services, are increasingly looking towards collaborating with the private sector for help to deliver their public service mandate. However, in practice, by and large, the policy environment in developing countries had not been very conducive to private sector participation in the provision of waste management services and investment in waste management infrastructure.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 gave formal recognition to the important contribution of partnerships to the implementation of internationally agreed sustainable development commitments and designated the CSD as the focal point for the discussion, promotion, and facilitation of voluntary, multi-stakeholder partnerships. Subsequent CSD sessions and General Assembly resolutions have realized that partnerships can improve the quality of implementation by involving those relevant stakeholders whose activities have a direct impact on sustainable development. The CSD-11 decision on partnerships called for activities aimed at strengthening partnerships in the context of the WSSD process and its follow up as well as facilitating new ones.

Over the years, governments, civil society, and the private sector have developed a more supportive role, which reveals an intrinsic overlapping of interests among these actors in tackling difficult economic, social, and environmental challenges. As mentioned above, governments are increasingly looking towards collaborating with the private sector for help to deliver their public service mandate. On the other hand, businesses are becoming much more sophisticated and strategic in their understanding of how their relationship with the rest of society can impact their profitability.

Partnerships may offer alternatives to full privatization in which governments and private companies assume co-responsibility and co-ownership for the delivery of solid waste management services. Through these partnerships, the advantages of the private sector – dynamism, access to financial resources and latest technologies, managerial efficiency, and entrepreneurial spirit – are combined with social responsibility, environmental awareness, local knowledge, and job creation concerns of the public sector. Civil society may also propose practical ideas in reference to waste disposal and reutilization.

In practice, such collaboration or partnerships could create win-win solutions both for the public utilities and private sector — if duly supported by appropriate policy frameworks. For example, such partnerships could lead to savings in municipal budgets where waste management usually consumes a large proportion. The private sector, on the other hand, may use this opportunity to convert waste into environmentally friendly products and energy that could also serve as income-generating opportunities.

Thus, it is envisioned that facilitating the establishment and development of concrete and effective partnerships for solid waste management in developing countries would be one of the major outcomes of the Intersessional Conference on Building Partnerships for Moving towards Zero Waste in February 2011. The Conference, in particular, would aim at finding concrete solutions to challenges in sustainable waste management by using partnerships as an effective mechanism for collaboration and investment as well as launching an international partnership to cater and address the needs of public waste utilities and municipalities in terms of facilitating various partnership options (at the national and international level), technology and experience sharing, and accessing various financial mechanisms, including provision of guidelines to support local action plans and strategies for sustainable waste management.

The main objectives of the Intersessional Conference will be to:

- Expand waste management services in developing countries;
- Raise awareness about win-win opportunities for public-private partnerships (e.g., converting waste into energy and economic opportunities);
- Facilitate dialogue on building partnerships for waste management, including presentation of best models and practices of partnerships in waste management in developing countries;
- Identify and/or establish concrete collaborative initiatives to match needs with appropriate solutions;
- Identify the necessary enabling conditions for ‘successful’ PPPs, specially regarding quality service that is demand-responsive, cost-effective, and sustainable; and

- Discuss and finalize the scope of the international partnership with the objective of fostering PPPs and investment options.

3. EXPECTED OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

Overall, the Intersessional Conference will have the following outputs/outcomes:

- Identify practical actions and options by all implementation actors to overcome obstacles and constraints faced by public waste utilities and municipalities;
- Assess win-win opportunities for PPPs towards sustainable waste management (e.g., converting waste into energy and economic opportunities);
- Provision of background information and other input to the Chair's summary of CSD-19 and to other related processes inside and outside the UN system scheduled for 2011; and
- White paper on international partnership with the objective of addressing the needs of public waste utilities and municipalities.

4. CO-ORGANIZERS

The Intersessional Conference will be co-organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), Ministry of the Environment (MoE)-Japan, and United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD).

The international community values Japan's internationally recognized leadership in promoting innovative waste management practices and 3Rs, and would benefit immensely from Japan's successful experiences in developing more environmentally friendly practices for waste management as well as implementing policies to minimize waste and maximize recycling. The success of these policies and practices has been due to the outstanding leadership of the Government of Japan as well as the committed participation of the Japanese private sector and its citizens (consumers).

The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of UN/DESA, inter-alia, facilitates advancing the implementation of a sustainable development agenda by regularly organizing conferences, capacity-building workshops, and expert group meetings with an emphasis on building national capacities through sharing of lessons learned, promoting scaling up of best practices, and creating opportunities for building partnerships. These conferences/workshops are usually organized around the issues/themes to be considered by CSD in that particular year/cycle.

5. PARTICIPANTS

Participation in the Intersessional Conference is by invitation only. It is expected that some 150 to 180 managers/experts/participants from around the world and from the host country will attend the event, including:

- Senior managers of public waste management utilities (municipalities)
- Mayors of selected cities (targeting major cities facing serious waste management problems)

- Private service providers (CEOs of leading private sector service providers/waste management companies from both developed and developing countries)
- Community-managed waste management programmes
- Selected national government officials and policymakers
- Representatives of UN and international institutions, including international financial institutions/donors
- Distinguished waste management experts