

Towards Zero Waste

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A. Background: Programme Direction

Programme Objective:

To improve waste and wastewater management through, inter alia, minimizing material input and waste and wastewater generation, circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites.

Programme Outputs (key areas of work):

- Built human and institutional capacity on **municipal solid waste and wastewater management** through legislative & regulatory systems, transfer of best available techniques and technologies.
- Mainstreamed **circularity in impact sectors**, particularly electric and electronic sector, and textile/fashion industry as well as plastics.
- **Monitored progress** of national and local governments and private sector in achieving environmentally sound waste management.
- Increased & mobilized **financial resources** in waste sectors.
- Increased **awareness** and developed **partnership**.



Dandora Dumpsite, Nairobi, Kenya

A. Background: Envisaged Impact and Strategic Coherence

Envisaged impact of programme:

- *Municipal Solid Waste and Wastewater management policies and legislation/regulations are established at the national and local levels, resulting in reduction in waste generation and increase in recycling.*
- *Phasing out of harmful practices, e.g. Open-dumping.*
- *High impact sectors adopt circular economy approaches to reduce wastes.*
- *Investment and partnerships increased for sound management of waste and wastewater.*



Synergies with other programmes within MTS:

- *Circularity in sectors (plastic waste, e-waste, mining waste, textile waste, digital product passport).*
- *Chemicals and Health (wastewater, chemicals in wastestreams).*
- *Finance and Economic Transformations (Guidance documents for Development Banks, Insurance companies).*
- *Decarbonisation (net-zero waste sector).*
- *Science-to-policy (waste indicators and data).*
- *Environmental governance (waste legislation, waste trade/trafficking).*
- *Mainstreaming biodiversity (food loss and waste).*
- *Digital transformation (digital waste data, e-waste).*

A. Background: Contribution to MTS and PoW

Contribution to MTS Outcomes (PoW 2025 Outcomes):

3B: *Waste management is improved, including through circular processes, safe recovery of secondary raw materials and progressive reduction of open burning and dump sites burning.*

Contribution to PoW Direct Outcomes:

3.1 *Regional and national integrated policy has shifted towards the sound management of chemicals and waste.*

3.2 *Land-based sources of pollution in fresh water and oceans, including marine litter and nutrients, are reduced.*

3.3 *Global plastic pollution is reduced.*

3.6 *Resource efficiency and circularity in key sectors are improved.*

3.7 *Resilient waste and wastewater systems and infrastructure are upscaled.*

3.8 *“3R” waste management systems are mainstreamed.*

3.11 *Global advocacy catalyses the phase-out of most polluting products and practices.*

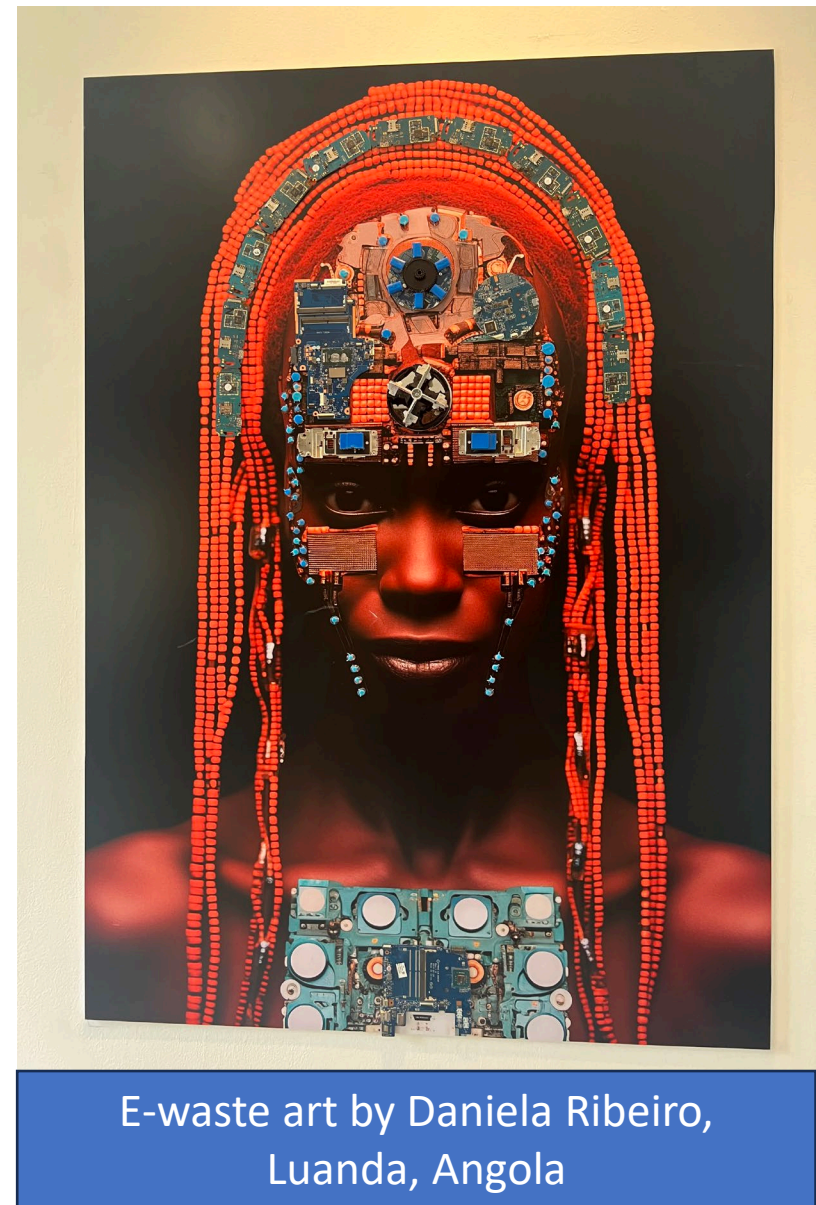
3.13 *Sound science, data and statistics, analysis, information and knowledge are generated and shared.*



Waste classification centre,
Montevideo, Uruguay

B. Project Portfolio: Overview

- Integrated solid waste management towards zero waste (including addressing open dumping and open burning and conflict/disaster debris).
- Integrated wastewater management (a component of the source-to-sea project under the Chemicals and Health Programme).
- Reducing and recycling plastic waste (a component of the plastic high impact sector project under the Circularity in Sector Programme).
- Reducing and recycling e-waste (to be a component of the electronic and electric high impact sector project under the Circularity in Sector Programme).
- Waste data and indicators (a component of the environmental statistics project under the Science-to-Policy Programme).

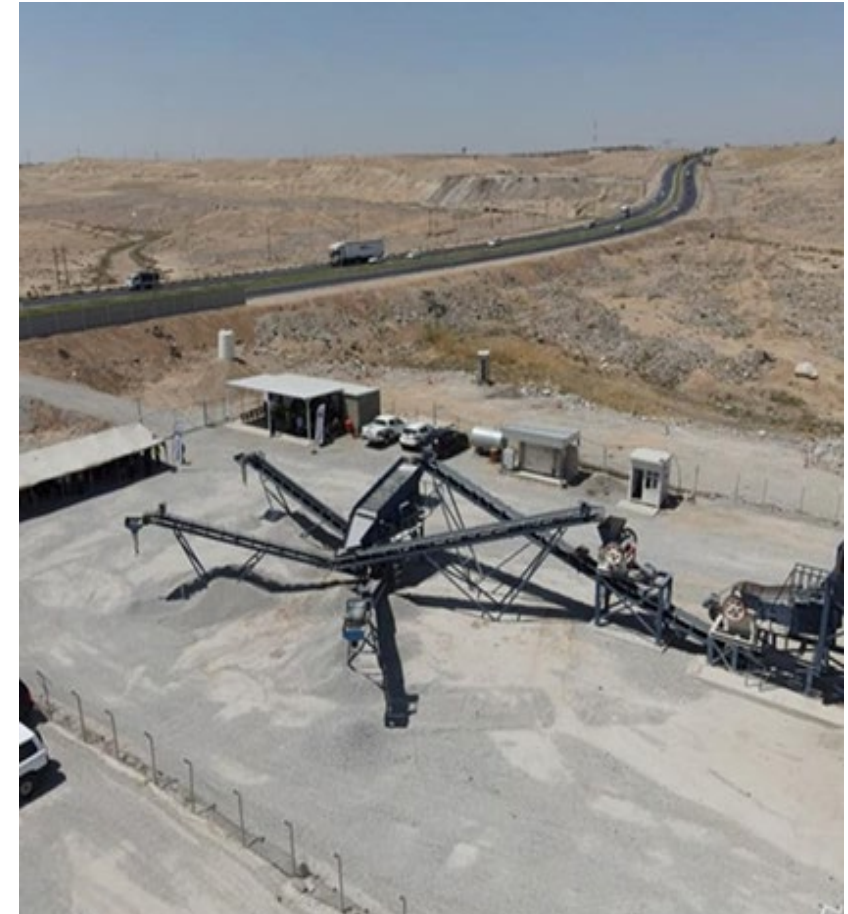


E-waste art by Daniela Ribeiro,
Luanda, Angola

C. Results Achieved

Improved solid waste management systems

- *Initial support for the implementation of national solid waste management strategies (Comoros, Cambodia, Pakistan)*
- *Support the national waste and plastic management law (Lesotho)*
- *Designing financial mechanism for organic waste management (Peru)*
- *Organic waste management to reduce greenhouse gas emission (Bhutan, Nepal and Mongolia)*
- *Conflict debris management (Iraq, Azerbaijan)*



Mosul Conflict debris recycling centre,
Iraq

C. Results Achieved

*Zero Waste partnership
the Government of Türkiye
and UN-Habitat*

- *Secretariat function for the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste with 13 members.*
- *Facilitation of the observance of the 1st and 2nd observances of the International Day of Zero Waste, 30th March.*

MEMBER STATES MAKE COMMITMENTS TO IMPLEMENT ZERO WASTE

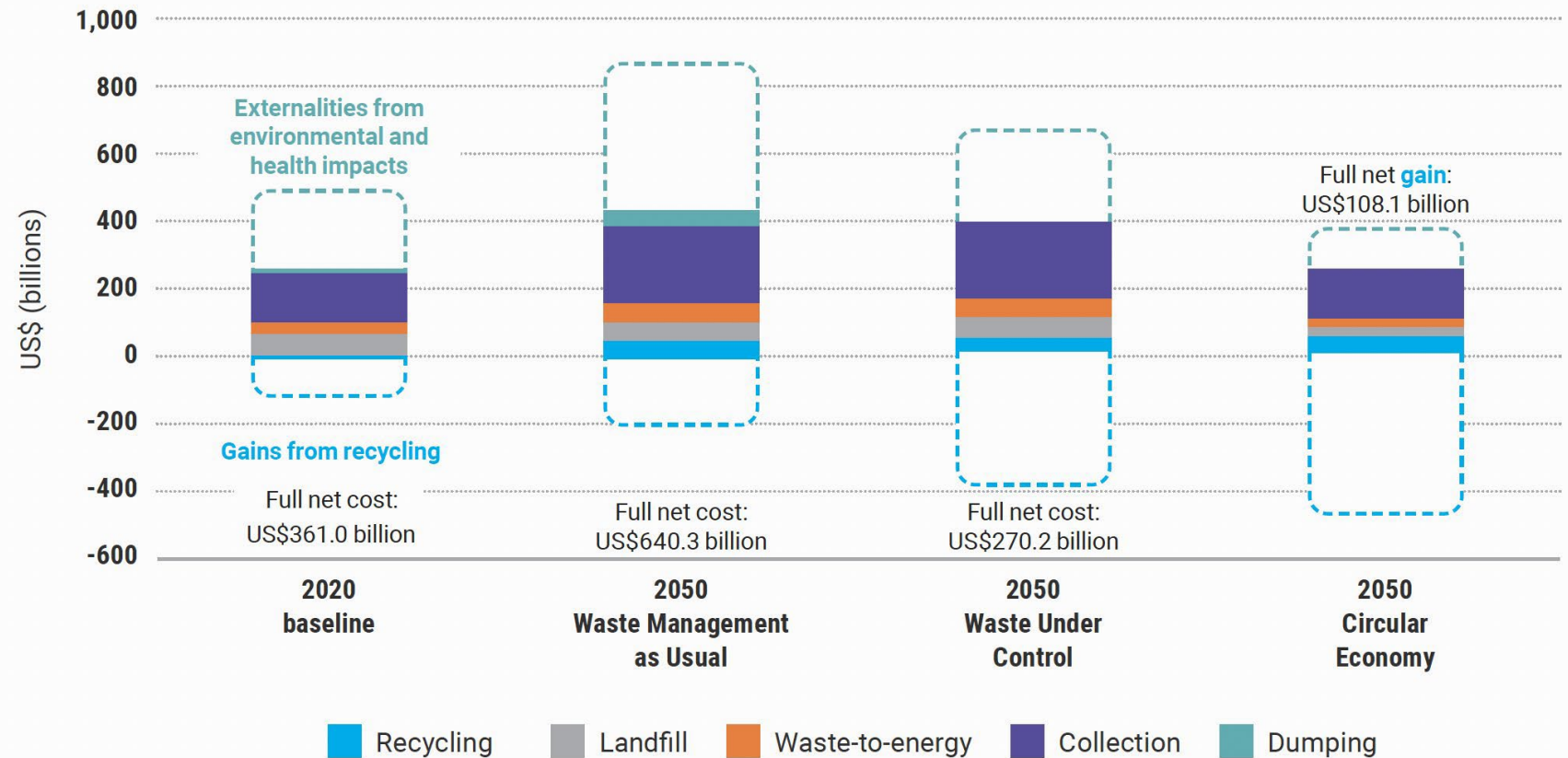


C. Results Achieved

This report shows that the direct cost of waste management was US\$252 billion in 2020, which rises to US\$361 billion when externalities are included.



Overall cost of global waste management under the three scenarios (US\$ 2020).

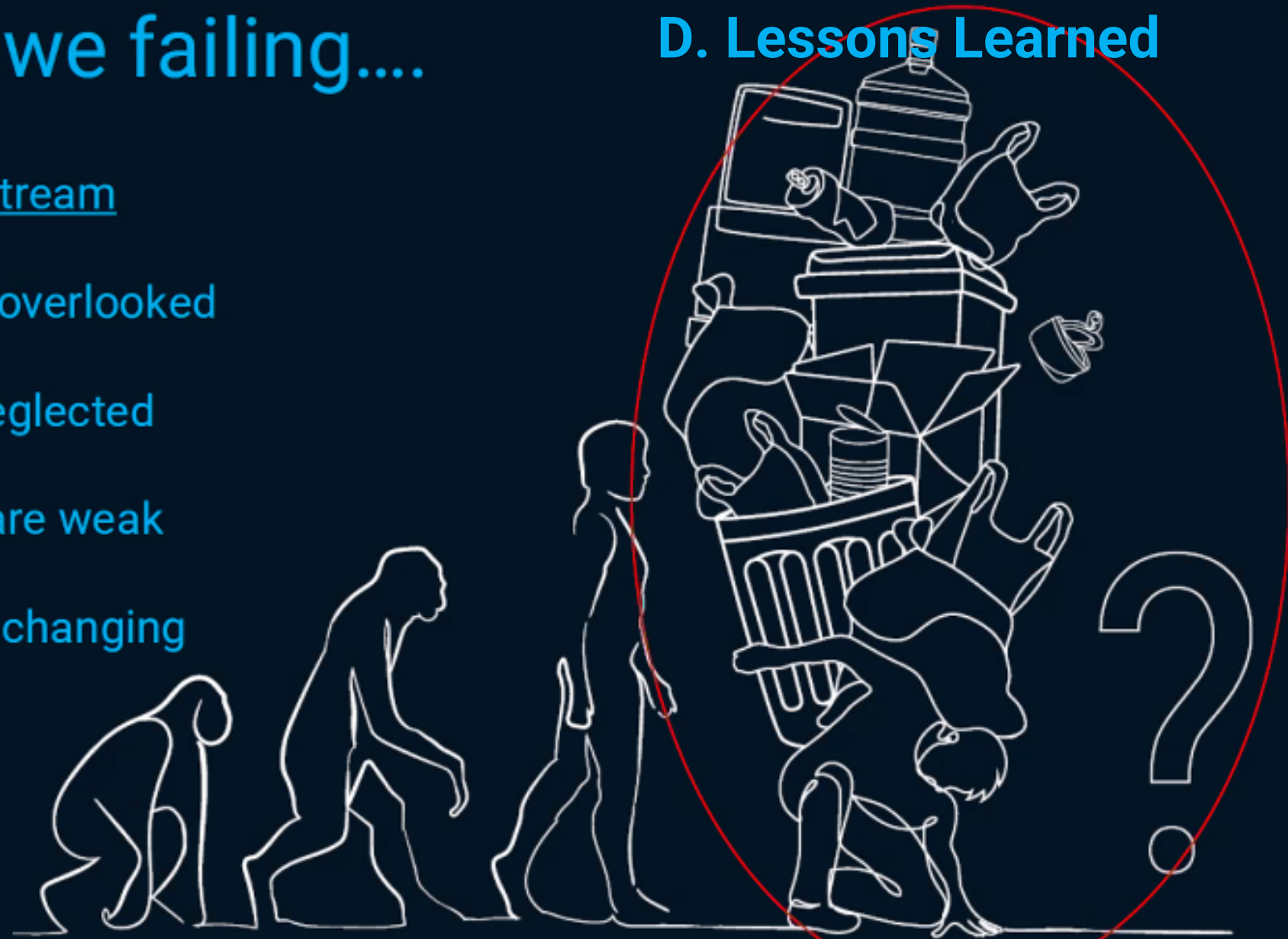


A shift to zero-waste practices could yield an annual net gain of US\$108.5 billion over the current cost of waste management.

Why, where are we failing....

D. Lessons Learned

- Attention remains on downstream
- Health and climate impacts overlooked
- Women, informal workers neglected
- Enforcement and penalties are weak
- Polluters are not paying... or changing



E. Way Forward

1. Promotion of waste management connection with upstream through Circularity in sectors for waste reduction across the value chains.

2. Learning on Extended Producer Responsibility among the Member States.

3. Support for the full implementation of national/city waste management strategies, involving producers and consumers.

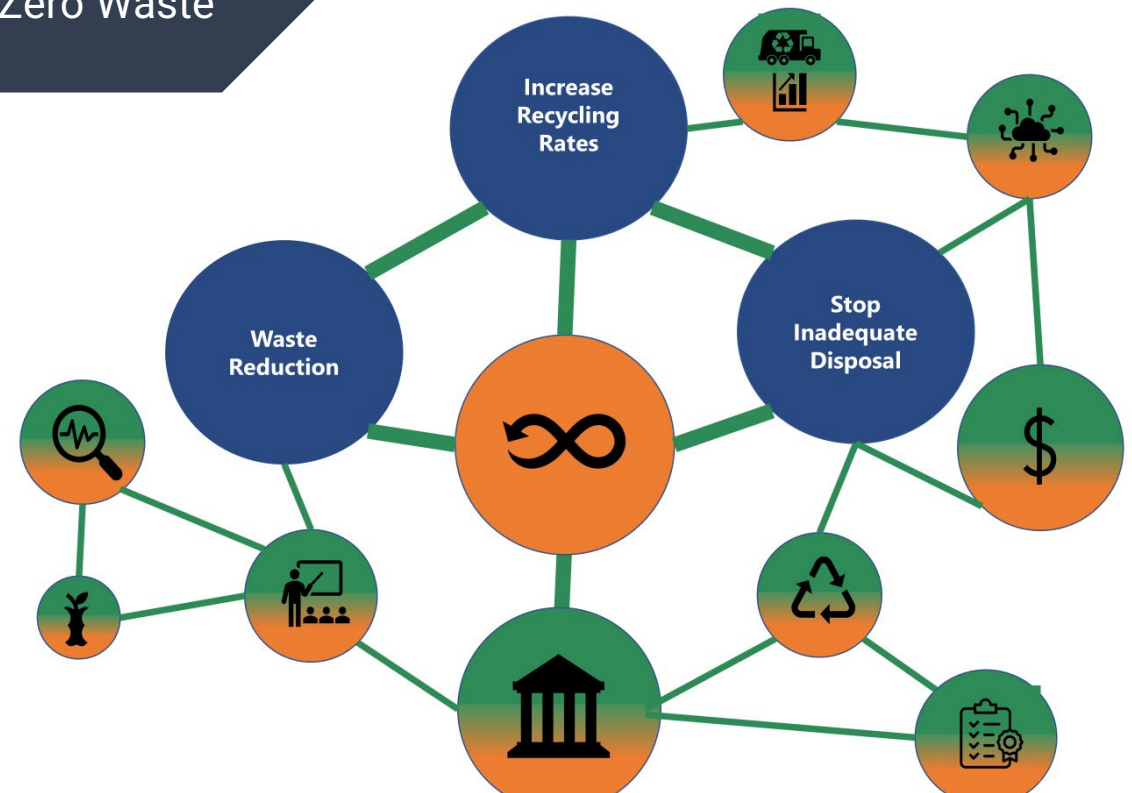
4. Development of a **waste management knowledge framework** and a **waste data acquisition and sharing system**.

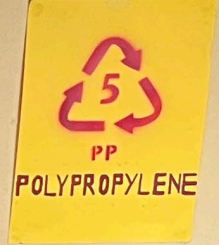
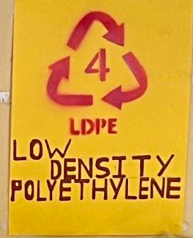
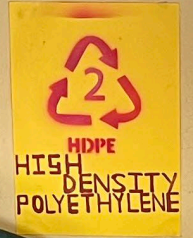
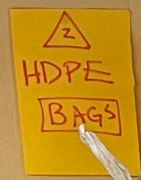
5. Promotion of good practices - technological and social innovation with the Zero Waste Advisory Board.

6. Support for the **regional-level effort**, e.g.

- Multi-partnership platform to ban open burning in Africa (based on the AMCEN decision).
- Coalition for the closure of dumpsites in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The South-East European Platform to beat Pollution (SEEPP)

7. Reconfiguration and strengthening of UNEP institutional capacity to deliver on waste.





Taka taka ni mali.

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