

The International Day of Zero Waste

Towards Zero Waste in Fashion and Textiles

30 March 2025

A call for sustainable fashion and circular textile solutions

Humanity's unsustainable consumption and production practices are driving the planet towards destruction. Every year, the world generates between **2.1 billion** and **2.3 billion** tonnes of municipal solid waste – from textiles and packaging to electronics, plastics and food. Global waste management services are ill-equipped to handle this landslide of waste. Worldwide **2.7 billion** people lack access to solid waste collection and rely on open dumpsites for disposal.

Waste pollution threatens human health, costs the global economy hundreds of billions of dollars a year, and aggravates the triple planetary crisis: the **crisis of climate change**, the **crisis of nature, land and biodiversity loss**, and the **crisis of pollution and waste**. This year, International Day of Zero Waste draws attention to the importance of action in **the fashion and textile sector to reduce waste and promote circularity**.

Every year, **92 million tonnes** of textile waste is produced globally. This equates to a **garbage truck full of clothing** incinerated or sent to landfill every second. Clothing production doubled from **2000 to 2015**, while the **duration of garment use decreased 36 per cent**.

The fashion and textiles sector relies heavily on synthetic fibers produced from fossil fuels, which are shed into microplastics. Discarded clothing often ends up in the Global South, where inadequate waste management leads to dumping, burning, and severe environmental and social consequences. Poor communities bear the brunt, facing pollution and declining quality of life.

Addressing this requires systemic change through sustainable production, reuse, repair, and circular solutions. A zero-waste approach is key to this transition.

Maintaining momentum in the journey towards zero waste

The third annual **International Day of Zero Waste** is observed on 30 March 2025.

Last year, the Day saw widespread social media engagement, **reaching millions of people** and highlighting the need for collaboration and innovative solutions in the transition to a zero-waste future.

The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and the **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**, call on stakeholders – including governments, civil society, businesses, academia, communities, women and youth – to participate in national, subnational, regional and local zero-waste initiatives.

Shared platform and flagship events to promote zero waste

UNEP and UN-Habitat are launching a digital communication campaign to highlight the problems associated with textiles and fashion production, consumption and disposal, and the benefits and opportunities of a zero-waste approach in the build-up to the 2025 International Day of Zero Waste. In addition, flagship events will be held in various cities around the world to observe the Day, fostering dialogue, innovation and collaboration on zero-waste practices.



Governments at all levels must build circular economies that address resource depletion and management, and invest in modern waste-management programmes anchored in reuse, remanufacturing, recovery and waste prevention.

António Guterres
Secretary-General, United Nations

Join the zero-waste movement



Register Now

UNEP and UN-Habitat encourage partners and stakeholders to register zero-waste initiatives, commitments to sustainable production and consumption, and innovative solutions to fast fashion and textile waste. **Visit the registration page now.**

UNEP, as the global environmental authority, is well-positioned to guide the shift to zero waste through its regional and global programmes, which address all forms of waste across their entire lifecycles. The expertise of the **International Environmental Technology Centre** and the **Life Cycle Initiative** can help inform best practices. The One Planet network – a global community of practitioners, policymakers and experts – has a **database** of the resources on sustainable production and consumption.

UN-Habitat is the focal point for all urbanization and human settlement matters in the United Nations, guiding cities towards sustainable urbanization, including addressing and improving their municipal solid waste management. It is well-positioned to provide the expertise needed to help cities incorporate zero-waste principles into waste management strategies, including through **Waste Wise Cities** and the **African Clean Cities Platform** programmes. It offers **data and monitoring, sharing of knowledge, advocacy and education**, and support for tangible project development.

Atif Ikram Butt
atif.butt@un.org
Chief, Public Advocacy and
Communication, UNEP

Katerina Bezgachina
ekaterina.bezgachina@un.org
Senior Public Information Officer, UN-Habitat

#BeatWastePollution

UN 
environment
programme


UN-HABITAT

unep.org | unhabitat.org

With support from

 **ZERO WASTE
FOUNDATION**