

MINISTERIAL-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE MEETING ON ZERO WASTE

Hilton Bomonti İstanbul, Türkiye
October 18, 2025, 11:00 a.m.



National Strategies: Implementing Zero Waste Policies in Our Cities and Human Settlements for a Sustainable Urban Future

OVERVIEW

United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/77/161 invites member states to celebrate International Zero Waste Day on March 30 each year and also defines the mandate of the High-Level Advisory Council on Zero Waste.

The first session of 2025 is being jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye and the Zero Waste Foundation.

GLOBAL WASTE PROBLEM

Households, small businesses, and public service providers generate between 2.1 and 2.3 billion tons of municipal solid waste each year. However, global waste management services are inadequate to manage this amount; 2.7 billion people lack access to regular waste collection services, and only 61-62% of municipal waste is managed in controlled facilities.

Humanity must take urgent action against this global waste crisis.

A significant portion of this waste consists of single-use plastics, threatening oceans, soil, and human health. Therefore, the 2025 meeting will place special emphasis on reducing plastic waste, encouraging reuse, and strengthening recycling infrastructure.

This year's International Zero Waste Day draws attention to the need to reduce waste and develop circular solutions, particularly in the fashion and textile sectors, with the theme "Towards Zero Waste in Fashion and Textiles."

The rapid increase in textile production and consumption is outpacing sustainability efforts, deepening environmental, economic, and social impacts, particularly in the Global South.

While clothing production doubled between 2000 and 2015, 92 million tons of textile waste are generated each year. This means that every second, a truckload of clothes is incinerated or sent to landfills.

This challenge can only be overcome through systemic transformation via sustainable production and consumption and circular economy solutions. The zero-waste approach is the key to this transition.

- Consumers can significantly reduce environmental harm by adopting practices such as reuse, repair, and recycling.
- The private sector should adopt circular business models that design durable, repairable, and recyclable products, reduce production volumes, decrease chemical pollution, use sustainable materials, and support biodiversity.
- Governments should accelerate the transition to a circular economy by establishing extended producer responsibility (EPR) systems, regulating harmful chemicals, investing in recycling infrastructure, and promoting sustainable business models.

1. Stakeholders Contributing to the Session

- Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye
- Zero Waste Foundation
- Regional political structures and platforms: Organization of Turkic States, European Union, ASEAN, MINURVI, and other regional ministerial-level conferences

2. Keywords

International Zero Waste Day; New Urban Agenda; Accelerating Zero Waste Practices

3. Session Objectives

- To bring together ministers, national government representatives, and regional organizations to strengthen the role of Zero Waste policies and plastic waste in global agendas and raise public awareness.
- To encourage regular national waste management reporting in line with the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.
- Identify global trends in Zero Waste policies and practices and ensure their inclusion in national contributions to climate action.
- Ensure the reduction of plastic waste, increased recycling, and the widespread implementation of producer responsibility practices.
- Strengthen concrete collective efforts to promote Zero Waste policies at the national, regional, and local levels.

4. Summary

This roundtable meeting brings together ministers and senior government representatives with the aim of accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and developing Zero Waste policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The meeting will address global trends that will inform policy approaches to transforming cities and evaluate concrete collective actions that will increase the active participation of local and regional governments in the process.

The İstanbul Zero Waste Ministerial Meeting will serve as a platform for sharing innovative waste management policies. Member states will be encouraged to present successfully implemented and scaled models.

The meeting will also lay the groundwork for discussions that will form the basis for local action against the triple planetary crisis of pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

The meeting calls for support for the following priorities:

- Maintaining political momentum for the global zero waste movement,
- Sustaining institutional expertise and alignment,
- Accelerating the implementation of SDGs 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15,
- Establishing a timeline for a renewed joint action plan.

This session will also serve as a forum for announcing new commitments and partnerships to accelerate the implementation of the New Urban Agenda at the local, national, and regional levels.

Section 1: Trends and Applications of the Zero Waste Initiative, presented by the Co-Chair of the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste

Section 2 : National updates and commitments

NOTE: Ministers attending the meeting in person will be prioritized as speakers, taking into account geographical and gender balance.

SESSION FLOW

1. Opening Remarks

- 11:00 Mr. Samed Ağırbaş, President of the Zero Waste Foundation
- 11:05 Mr. Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye
- 11:10 Ms. Emine Erdoğan, Honorary President of the Zero Waste Foundation

2. Presentation on Global Zero Waste Best Practices (11:20-11:45)

- Mr. Jose Manuel Moller, Deputy Chair of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Council on Zero Waste

3 Ministerial Statements (by Level and Alphabetical Order) (11:50-15:00)

- All Country Statements (5 minutes per country)

4. Approval of the İstanbul Zero Waste Initiative Declaration

5. Closing Remarks

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE 6TH DISCUSSION

1. Since the first International Zero Waste Day in 2022, how have zero waste policies been integrated into waste management in your country?
2. What legal frameworks have been developed to integrate the Zero Waste approach into national waste management policies?
3. How does your government or regional mechanisms encourage investments that support zero waste practices in cities?
4. What steps have been taken to empower local and subnational authorities?
5. What new steps are planned to increase political momentum for the implementation of the zero waste policy over the next two years?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- The creation of forward-looking zero waste policy proposals that can be adapted to different contexts.
- Development of new commitments, announcements, and alliances at the national and regional levels.

STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION

The session format will be 1 + 2, and simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the 6 languages recognized as official languages of the United Nations.

Section 1: Opening and Presentations

Duration: 11:00 – 11:45

Chair: Minister of the host country

Co-Chair: UN-Habitat Executive Director

Following the opening remarks, the Vice-Chair of the UN High-Level Advisory Board on Zero Waste will present their observations, findings, and recommendations regarding the session.

Section 2: National Updates and Commitments

Duration: 11:50 – 15:00

Member states will present examples of zero waste policies, programs, and projects being implemented in their countries; they will share **concrete examples** of ongoing or planned initiatives.

