



GAIA submission on UNEA4 draft resolution: Promoting Innovative Solutions for Solid Waste Management Challenges

Summary

The Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) welcomes the draft resolution "Promoting Innovative Solutions for Solid Waste Management Challenges" submitted by the League of Arab States, Chile, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

The draft resolution acknowledges the paramount importance of solid waste management as an issue of environmental and human health concern, as well as the compound impacts of waste management on plastic pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and on human health.

The draft resolution promotes and calls for the implementation of innovative Zero Waste initiatives and policies, as well as bans on single-use plastics; policies which appropriately focus on waste prevention.

The draft resolution also courageously emphasizes the need for extended producer and trader responsibility in order to effectively resolve the challenge of sound waste management respectful of environmental and human health.

GAIA believes the draft resolution could be strengthened by:

- clearly reaffirming the **waste hierarchy with priority emphasis on waste prevention**, including through bold action on single-use plastics and microbeads, as well as composting and biogas systems for organic waste management. In relation to packaging, this means shifting from current packaging practices to novel **distribution systems that facilitate the reuse of materials**;
- further highlighting the **links between unsound waste management and unsustainable production and consumption**, in order to achieve sound waste management;
- recognizing the **crucial contribution of waste pickers and recyclers** in the sound management of solid waste and committing to formally integrating them in green jobs generated in sound, circular waste management systems;
- **excluding unsafe waste management technologies** such as the incineration of plastic and other wastes, which generates hazardous emissions and by-products implicated in

air, water and soil pollution, and competes with plastic recycling; and guaranteeing the safety of technology options through regular and context-specific assessments of environmental and human health impacts; and ensure that any institutions given a central role in technological support and capacity building promote sound waste management and safe technologies focused on prevention and respecting the waste hierarchy;

- refraining from giving blanket support to market-based mechanisms, given some market-based mechanisms such as offsets can result in rewards to polluters in practice.

On this basis, GAIA calls on Member States to consider the following changes (deletions in ~~strikethrough~~ and additions in underlined bold):

DRAFT Resolution 12 February 2019

4/XXX: Promoting Innovative Solutions for Solid Waste Management Challenges

(League of Arab States, Chile, Sri Lanka, Turkey)

Appreciating the UNEA 4 focuses on Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

[...]

Realizing that challenges associated with solid waste include, but is not limited to, **prioritizing waste prevention and the return of organic matter to the soil** adopting or selecting relevant technologies, establishing local institutional and/or regulatory frameworks, developing and managing information and tracking systems and needs of special countries, in particular countries in post conflict situations or countries affected by conflicts; and

Acknowledging the success stories of member states in developing and implementing innovative solid waste management solutions, technologies and engagement of local constituents. Including innovative projects/programmes such as “Zero Waste” at the **local/national/regional level** with a view to **prioritizing waste prevention**, more effectively manage waste, to provide for a healthier and clean environment, to continue environmental-friendly production and consumption activities, to reduce exploitation and consumption of natural resources, to minimise carbon footprint, to contribute human and industrial development of the member states in accordance with their national capacities, to prevent wasting of food by changing **production and** consumption habits and to manage food waste and to transform production and consumption culture through integrated education and training programmes

- 1. Invites Governments, considering differing national circumstances, and in cooperation with national, regional and international relevant organizations and institutes to:**

a) Promote the integrated approaches of solid waste management through the implementation of 3Rs (**reduce, reuse and recycle, alongside composting and biogas systems for organic waste management**, reuse and reduction) and circular economy principles in the context of waste management as well as other innovative means, giving special attention on the **reduction, reuse and** recycling of plastic and to the **phasing out** of single-use plastic and develop environmentally friendly **distribution systems** ~~packaging methodologies~~ to minimize usage of plastic packaging;

b) Prevent and reduce waste at source through, inter alia, the minimisation of packaging materials and the discouragement of planned obsolescence of products, as well as improving products reusability and recyclability and resource efficiency through, inter alia, better design and use of secondary raw material, **and fostering change in production and consumption patterns to move away from throwaway economies**;

c) Effectively engage the private sector, civil society, waste producers, **waste-pickers and recyclers**, local authorities and the public, and promote public private initiatives and alliances, in the sound management of solid waste maximize outcomes of relevant programs;

[...]

e) Conduct on **a** regular basis **context-specific** assessments of **the** impacts of selecting and implementing technological options to address waste management along the value chain with the objective of protection of health and environment;

f) Utilizing **safe** modern technologies, innovations and innovative policy alternatives to support management of solid waste including tracking waste streams, transport, treatments, **safe** disposals, development of economic instruments for waste management, green entrepreneurship and generation of green jobs; **and facilitating a just transition in the sector by integrating waste-pickers in sound waste management systems**;

e) Support innovative waste **prevention and** management initiatives such as Zero Waste **systems** Project/Concept **that aim to** minimize **waste generation and residual waste**, and develop adequate infrastructure and other facilities for waste management, **with the engagement of all sectors involved**;

f) Promote public and private sector waste management financing solutions through:

- i. Development of innovative financial models and creation of enabling environment for investment and market-based schemes

[...]

g) Implement and support extended producer/trader responsibility principle/schemes, such as **payments for the treatment of waste derived from producer's products, reuse and**

alternative delivery systems including container deposit and return schemes, as well as economic incentives for sound waste management, recycling incentives, payments for the production of waste, prohibition of the free delivery of waste products such as plastic bags, EPS foodware and other single-use plastics, container deposit schemes, and other alternatives;

[...]

j) **Promote package-free retail of food and short supply chains, and** Standardize food grade plastics, to avoid toxins getting in to food;

[...]

l) Manage microplastics in wastewater treatment plants, and ~~encourage producers to use alternatives for~~ **ban** microbeads; and

m) Strengthen legislation to avoid burning of plastics in open places **as well as the incineration of plastic waste**, to avoid air, **soil and water** pollution and support the plastic recycling industry.

2. Requests UN Environment, within its programme of work and available resources, and in cooperation with relevant international partners to:

a) **Assess technical support needs and capabilities and strengthen bodies with a track-record of technological advice and capacity-building on waste prevention and management, in line with the waste hierarchy;** ~~Strengthen UNEP's International Environment Technology Centre (IETC) and its role in provision of technological advice and capacity building on waste management;~~

b) Maintain inventories of sound waste management technologies and practices **that respect the waste hierarchy and encourage investment in strategies that support action at the top of the pyramid first**, to share with member states;

g) Assist countries, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in their efforts to strengthen and enhance national, subregional and regional implementation of environmentally sound management of waste, through the **participatory** preparation of regional waste management outlooks, improving information and access of environmental sound technologies to integrate waste management.

3. Call upon member states in a position to do so, international organizations and international financial institutions to provide stable and predictable finance, capacity building and safe technology transfer for the purposes of implementation of this resolution.