UNEP IETC Global Dialogue Youth Day - Driving Change: Youth Leadership in the Circular Economy and Zero Waste

Wednesday 19th February 2025

Waste management stands as one of the most urgent environmental challenges of our time, demanding solutions that span the entire lifecycle of products—from production and consumption to disposal and recovery. As a substantial segment of the global population, youth are pivotal in addressing this issue through innovation, advocacy, education, and action.

Co-organized with the Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP, the session titled *"Youth Leadership in Zero Waste: Global Approaches and Solutions"* seeks to amplify youth voices, highlight innovative practices, and promote intergenerational collaboration to achieve a zero-waste future.

Building on insights from earlier discussions and global governance efforts in waste and pollution management, participants will collaboratively draft the *Global Youth Declaration on the Circular Economy Model of Waste Management*. This declaration will identify youth priorities, enhance capacity, and integrate diverse perspectives from youth and youth-led organizations worldwide, serving as a roadmap for sustainable change.

The resulting policy paper will be shared with policymakers, practitioners, and experts, ensuring that youth-driven insights are incorporated into actionable strategies for a sustainable and circular economy.

Agenda

9:00-9:30	**Registration**
9:30-9:35	**Opening Remarks** Takehiro Nakamura (Head of UNEP-IETC)
9:35-9:50	**Presentation on UNEP, IETC, GEC, and CYMG** Brief explanation of the work of UNEP, IETC, GEC, IGES, and CYMG Lei Wang (UNEP, IETC)

9:50-10:10	**Keynote speech- Waste Stream and Life Cycle Initiatives** This session will introduce youth participants to the issue of waste pollution and explore its environmental impacts, underlying causes, and effective strategies for addressing it. Drawing on data from the *Global Waste Management Outlook 2024*, it will provide insights into the scale of the problem and empower youth with actionable approaches to reduce waste and mitigate pollution. Additionally, the session provides an in-depth exploration of waste streams and the life cycle approach, which examines the entire lifespan of materials and products. Lecture (10 min) Felipe Dall Q&A (10min)
10:10-11:00	**Student Presentations** Students from each university presents on their research topics and/or initiatives • Zhejiang University: *Green Island Project - Open up a New Era of Activated Carbon Regeneration* • Tsinghua University: *Green circular economy leads industrial transformation* • Ulsan College: *Zerowaste in Ulsan Metropolitan City and Solution towards Better Environment* • Kyoto University • Curtin University
11:00-12:00	**Workshop 1: Youth Perspectives on Advancing Circularity in Waste Management** Collaborative discussions on advancing circular waste management through youth-led innovations, inclusive approaches, and actionable solutions. • Activity: Participants are divided into groups of 5–8, with each group assigned one of the themes below. Using the guiding questions, discuss the topic, and each group shares 2–3 key insights or proposed solutions at the end. Use visual aids (e.g., flipcharts, sticky notes, or digital platforms) to organize and present ideas. o Advancing Circularity in Waste Management o Integrating the Informal Sector and Gender Mainstreaming o Public-Private Partnerships and EPR Schemes o Circular Waste Management Policies o Youth Leadership and Education
12:00-13:15	**Group Photo & Lunch**

13:15-13:45	**Keynote speech- UNICEF's Report on Plastics and Children including Plastics Waste** Lecturer (15 min) Desiree Raquel Narvaez, Environmental Health Specialist UNICEF. Q&A (5 min)
13:45-15:00	**Panel and Open Discussion -Innovating for Impact: Youth-Driven Solutions in Waste Management** This panel will highlight waste management innovations led by young people, showcasing how youth are rethinking traditional practices through new technologies, business models, and community initiatives. Discussions will focus on practical solutions such as waste-to-resource technologies, creative recycling methods, and community engagement strategies. Panelists will share their experiences in turning ideas into impactful projects, emphasizing the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in tackling waste pollution and building a sustainable future. Facilitator: Janna Radi (CYMG) Speakers: • Katrin Miyazawa (Social Entrepreneur) • Shiina Tsuyuki (Climate Activist&Social Entrepreneur) • Lauren Creary (Jamaica Environment Trust) / Virtual • Ashish Khanal (Solid Waste Management Association of Nepal) / Virtual Speaker introductions (30min) Panel discussion (40min) Q&A (10min)
15:00-15:30	**Coffee Break**
15:30-17:15	**Workshop 2: Drafting the Global Youth Statement** Building on discussions from the preceding sessions and global governance processes in the field of waste and pollution, the Youth Statement will serve as a framework for participants to contribute their perspectives and solutions. This policy paper will be shared and presented to policymakers, practitioners, and experts, ensuring youth-driven insights are incorporated into actionable strategies. Facilitator: Aseel Abotaleb, Janna Radi

17:15-17:30	**Closing** Makiko Yashiro (Programme Officer, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific) Takehiro Nakamura (Head of UNEP-IETC)

Pre-online event: Virtual Youth Consultations

Tuesday 4th February 2025

17:00 (Japan & South Korea) 16:00 (China)

In preparation for this event, the Virtual Youth Consultations will be held as a pre-event initiative. These consultations aim to gather global youth perspectives and identify priority actions, which will feed into the creation of a Global Youth Declaration on Circular Economy Model of Waste Management. The Declaration will articulate youth-driven solutions and policy recommendations, forming a cornerstone of discussions during the Youth Day at the Dialogue.

Contact

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