

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO WASTE 2026

ZERO WASTE STARTS ON YOUR PLATE

WRAP-UP REPORT

ZERO
WASTE
DAY

UN 
environment
programme


UN-HABITAT


ZERO WASTE
FOUNDATION

#ZEROWASTEDAY

ABOUT ZERO WASTE DAY

The International Day of Zero Waste, established by a 2022 UN General Assembly resolution, is jointly facilitated by the UN Environment Programme and the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and observed annually on 30 March. The Day brings together stakeholders worldwide to advance waste prevention, sustainable waste management, sustainable production and consumption and circular solutions that support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Themed “Zero Waste Starts on Your Plate”, the 2026 observance focused on food waste – one of the most urgent and solvable climate-related challenges. Responsible for up to 14 per cent of global methane emissions, food waste is both a climate imperative and a social paradox: 783 million people worldwide were facing hunger in 2022 alone, but still an estimated 1.05 billion tonnes of food were lost or wasted.

This year’s Zero Waste Day took place at a critical moment, as the lead-up to the UN Climate Change Conference 2026 (COP31) in Antalya, Türkiye was helping to focus global attention on waste, food systems and methane emissions.

Under Türkiye’s leadership and with strong engagement from the Zero Waste Foundation, Zero Waste Day 2026 positioned food waste reduction as a key climate and development priority, contributing to broader global momentum towards advancing circular solutions.

THE CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE

A snapshot of the global mobilization around the International Day of Zero Waste 2026 registered events, flagship moments, and the partners and audiences reached worldwide.

REACH	EVENTS	VISIBILITY	MEDIA IMPACT	LEADERSHIP	COMMITMENTS
25.8 M users reached through social media and digital platforms	176 registered events across 60 countries, including 9 flagship events	5.1 M reached through airport, metro, and outdoor banner placements	1008 news articles published by 795 media outlets in 71 countries	20 cities recognized as Cities Towards Zero Waste	14 leading global tourism companies committed to cutting food waste

LEADERSHIP DRIVING ACTION



UN Secretary-General,
António Guterres

“We cannot take food for granted. Together, let’s build the zero-waste food systems we need to nourish both people and planet.”

[Watch video message ↗](#)



UNEP Executive Director,
Inger Andersen

“Together, we can deliver real methane cuts, strengthen food systems, and build a circular, zero waste, zero emissions future. That transformation begins on our plates.”

[Watch video message ↗](#)



UN-Habitat Executive Director,
Anacláudia Rossbach

“Cities that integrate food systems, water services and waste management show what is possible. They recover surplus food, reduce water loss, and turn organic waste into compost or energy, creating circular systems that save money, cut emissions and generate jobs.”

[Watch video message ↗](#)



H.E Emine Erdoğan,
First Lady of Türkiye

“In every wasted bite lies the right of someone whose life depends on it. It also holds the echoes of the cries of those suffering from hunger and thirst in war zones. Let us not forget that all of humanity bears the cost of food loss and waste”

[Watch video message ↗](#)

RECOGNIZING ACTION AND COMMITMENT

The active engagement of both cities and businesses shows that zero waste is moving from awareness to implementation, accelerating the transition towards more circular systems.

Announcement of the selected 20 Cities Towards Zero Waste

The UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste recognized 20 cities worldwide for their leadership in reducing waste and advancing circular economy solutions. This recognition highlights innovative approaches to reducing waste, including prevention, recycling, reuse systems and community engagement.

It also aims to recognize city leadership and innovation, promote the exchange of good practices and lessons learned, inspire other cities to accelerate their transition toward zero waste, and support the implementation of circular economy approaches at the local level.

The private sector: taking a prominent seat at the table

UNEP and UN Tourism launched Recipe of Change, an initiative to cut food waste across the tourism sector. It was joined by 14 founding partners – major hotel and travel groups that collectively serve over 600 million guests annually and represent US\$56.5 billion in combined revenue.

These founding partners include Accor, Constance Hotels & Resorts, Club Med, easyJet holidays, Grupo Posadas, Hilton, Iberostar Hotels & Resorts, Minor Hotels, Meliá Hotels International, Radisson Hotel Group, Six Senses, TUI Group, LightBlue Consulting and Winnow. An online global roundtable to launch this platform convened over 360 participants on 30 March.

MOBILIZING THE PUBLIC

Cutting food waste is one of the most impactful climate actions an individual can take. But for this to happen, awareness must be turned into action.

A global digital campaign was launched to inform, inspire and support behaviour change. By equipping people with practical tools and reaching audiences through multiple channels and languages, the Zero Waste Day campaign helped translate climate ambition into everyday action on food waste reduction.

Shared Asset Library

Social media assets and key messages produced and distributed in all six UN official languages, reaching audiences across regions.

Social media assets [↗](#)

Key messages [↗](#)

25.8 M

users were reached by UNEP’s Zero Waste Day campaign on UNEP and UN-Habitat social media platforms.

81.1 K

pageviews to the campaign web platforms (From January to June, 2026)

Web-based Experiences

Providing a campaign platform: [Zero Waste Day Campaign website ↗](#)

Making knowledge count: [Zero waste 101 ↗](#)

Inspiring action: [Zero Waste Action Pack ↗](#)



Multimedia Materials



Public Service Announcement · [#ZeroWasteDay 2026](#)

Zero waste starts on your plate

Full length [↗](#)

Short [↗](#)



Explainer · [#ZeroWasteDay 2026](#)

While 9% go hungry, billions of meals are wasted daily

Watch [↗](#)

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Partners and actors across the United Nations system, governments, the private sector and civil society all mobilized around a shared call to halve food waste.

This year’s digital campaign engagement showed that Zero Waste Day is increasingly becoming a platform to showcase solutions and scale action, indicating that circularity is becoming more embedded in mainstream markets and supply chains.

30+

growing partner and private sector engagement

15+

Government & Institutional Partners

15+

companies

25+

Civil Society Organizations

The Zero Waste Day digital campaign proved to be an effective platform to highlight progress in the private sector and civil society. Businesses worldwide – from multinational companies to small and medium-sized enterprises – used the day to showcase their own zero-waste actions, helping expand the campaign’s global reach across sectors.



Barilla Group @barillagroup · Mar 30

Our recipes for a better future start with what we save.

By designing packaging for circularity and treating water as a shared resource, we work every day to cut waste and protect the places where our ingredients grow.

barillagroup.com/en/press-room/press-releases/packaging-water/

#ZeroWasteDay #TheJoyOfFood



Turkish Airlines @TurkishAirlines · Mar 30

On March 30, International Day of Zero Waste, we continue to reduce waste and use resources more efficiently. With the solutions we bring to life across our operations, we move this transformation forward, step by step.

#TurkishAirlines
#TomorrowOnBoard



UEFA @UEFA · Mar 30
It's #ZeroWasteDay!

Did you know? PreZero, an international circular economy company, will support us in implementing scalable circular economy solutions across our competitions, stadiums and organisational operations.

Read more: uefa.com/news-media/news/02a3-202a8f624e95-645f8d48f865-1000--uefa-announces-first-strategic-corporate-partnership-with-c/



MOBILIZING INFLUENTIAL VOICES

Trusted voices help translate complex sustainability goals into practical behaviours, accelerating the adoption and normalization of low-waste lifestyles.



Massimo Bottura
Chef and Food Systems Activist,
Goodwill Ambassador

Day of Zero Waste:
International Chef Massimo Bottura speaks to France 24



UNEP webstory:
Chef Massimo Bottura’s philosophy on food waste – and a recipe that embodies it



Grace Fu
Minister for Sustainability and the Environment and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, driving sustainable development and trade relations in and for Singapore.



Eugenia on Instagram
(@Eugreenia)
Environmental educator



Visit ↗

BRINGING ZERO WASTE STORIES TO THE WORLD

3 press releases

UN Advisory Board names 20 city leaders in zero waste

[UNEP / UN-HABITAT](#)



Food waste in focus as the world marks the International Day of Zero Waste

[UNEP / UN-HABITAT](#)



4 storytelling pieces



Behind food waste: The city and business solutions gaining ground

[UNEP.ORG](#)



Reaping the digital dividend: the AI solutions helping cut food waste in half

[UNEP.ORG](#)



Tourism Leaders Convene on Zero Waste Day to Launch Global “Recipe of Change”

[UN TOURISM](#)



Chef Massimo Bottura's philosophy on food waste — and a recipe that embodies it

[UNEP.ORG](#)



Seven ways to cut your food waste and support the planet

[UNEP.ORG](#)



ZERO WASTE MAKING HEADLINES

30 MARCH - 30 APRIL 2026

1008
Articles

795
Outlets

71
Countries

22
Languages

Erdoğan marks Zero Waste Day with 90M tons of recovered waste
YENİ ŞAFAK

Türkiye observes Zero Waste Day, driving global action on food waste
DAILY SABAH

Na Türkiye lead as First Lady Emine Erdogan, di world mark International Day of Zero Waste
TRT AFRICA

Day of Zero Waste: International Chef Massimo Bottura speaks to France 24
FRANCE 24

Cutting food waste for a zero-waste future
CGTN

International Day of Zero Waste Warns of Double Threats of Food Waste, Insecurity
MOROCCO WORLD NEWS

Food waste harms environment and leaves millions hungry
CHINA DAILY



Food waste drags on the Thai economy.
Interview with Sudhir Sharma, Regional Coordinator Finance and Economic Transformation at UNEP
AMARIN TV



Global co-operation is essential if we are to curb throwaway culture
Interview with Jacqueline Alvarez, Chief, Chemicals and Health Branch, UNEP
THE SUNDAY POST

AMPLIFYING GLOBAL REACH AND VISIBILITY

Outdoor & Transit Banner Placements

High-impact and creative messages targeting travelers and commuters were displayed in major high-traffic locations, including airports in Istanbul, Beijing and Osaka, the Mexico City subway, and public spaces in Bangkok.



Mexico City

3.4M users / day
Subway network



Beijing

190K – 230K users / day
Beijing Airport



Osaka

7,300 – 8,000 users / day
Kansai Airport

5.1 M+

PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH ZERO WASTE
DAY BANNERS DISPLAYED IN STRATEGIC
LOCATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.

FLAGSHIP MOMENTS AROUND THE WORLD

NEW YORK CITY

The Zero Food Waste Challenge – Breakthroughs and Innovative Approaches

Organizers: UNEP, UN-Habitat, Republic of Türkiye, Zero Waste Foundation

High-level representatives from governments, UN entities, the private sector and civil society gathered at the UN Headquarters to advocate for solutions to food waste. The event included leadership from UNEP, UN-Habitat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and Walmart.

Discussions highlighted food waste as a major driver of climate change, resource loss and food insecurity, and emphasized the need for stronger policies, better data, innovation and cross-sectoral collaboration. Participants recognized food waste reduction as a key opportunity to cut methane emissions, advance circular economy approaches and support more sustainable and resilient food systems.



NAIROBI

Second Life Table: A Communal Experience on Waste and Possibility

Organizers: UNEP, UN-Habitat, Republic of Türkiye

Under the patronage of the Permanent Mission of Türkiye to UNEP, the “Second Life Table” in Nairobi combined art, live culinary performances and a fireside chat conversation on food waste prevention, framing food waste as a cultural, behavioural and systems challenge.

The activation brought together local chefs, restaurants, artists and food system innovators to showcase creative approaches to reducing food waste.



ISTANBUL

Zero Waste Starts on Your Plate

Organizers: UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNDP, Zero Waste Foundation

The Istanbul flagship event demonstrated a growing shift from awareness to system-level urban implementation of food waste prevention strategies. It brought together government representatives, cities and businesses from Türkiye, highlighting food waste reduction as a key climate, urban and economic priority in the lead up to COP31.

Discussions underscored the central role public-private partnerships play in addressing food waste through prevention, redistribution, source separation and organic waste recovery, while emphasizing the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration.



CHINA

Mobilizing Urban Action for Global Goals Towards Zero Food Waste

Organizers: UNEP, UN-Habitat, the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific, government partners from Hainan, Jiangxi and Shandong provinces, and Government Offices Administration of Shandong Province.

An international webinar and three provincial events took place in Hainan, Jiangxi and Shandong, engaging over 3,200 participants through a two-day national programme with the main celebration held in Sanya city.

The events highlighted the global “20 Cities Towards Zero Waste” initiative led by the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board, which recognized three Chinese cities, including Sanya. UNEP's China Office further ensured strong national visibility through media coverage by China Central Television.



CIVIL SOCIETY POWERING ZERO WASTE SOLUTIONS

Towards Zero Food Waste Through Multistakeholder Action

Organizers: UNEP, UN-Habitat, Geneva Environment Network, Türkiye

Unlocking Climate and Investment Opportunities: Environmentally Sound Management of Food Waste

Organizers: Household Waste Partnership (HWP) of the Basel Convention, French Solid Waste Partnership (FSWP), International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions

Zero Waste Starts on Your Plate: Beating Pollution of Food Waste led by Youth

Organizers: Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP, Youth Advisory Board (YAB) to UN-Habitat, Food and Agriculture Organization - Office of Sustainable Development Goals, UNEP One Planet Network



Youth Workshop: Less Waste, More Life

Organizers: UNEP, Swissnex



“Zero-Waste Living Guide” to Inspire Sustainable Action

Organizers: Vanke Foundation, ZeroMonger, Shenzhen One Foundation, UN-Habitat



LOOKING AHEAD:

BUILDING MOMENTUM

While the fight against food loss and waste is far from over, solutions already exist that deliver environmental, social and economic benefits.

By placing food waste at the centre of the global conversation, the Zero Waste Day campaign helped elevate it from a sustainability issue to a climate priority.

As momentum builds toward COP31 and beyond, the focus must now shift from awareness to implementation at scale. The incoming COP31 Presidency of Türkiye has already reinforced this direction through its Global Climate Action Agenda, including a target to halve the growth in global waste by 2035 and a renewed emphasis on zero waste and methane reduction as central pillars of climate action.

ZERO WASTE DAY WAS A CHANCE TO TURN DECISION-MAKERS' ATTENTION TO FOOD WASTE, ENCOURAGING THE ROBUST POLICIES, PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTION NEEDED TO KEEP FOOD WHERE IT SHOULD BE: IN OUR BELLIES OR BACK INTO THE EARTH, NOT IN THE BIN.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO WASTE 2026

Contacts

Daniel Cooney

daniel.cooney@un.org

Director, Communication Division, UNEP

Katerina Bezgachina

ekaterina.bezgachina@un.org

Senior Public Information Officer, UN-Habitat

UNEP.ORG/ZEROWASTEDAY

#ZEROWASTEDAY

SIGN UP TO STAY UPDATED

**ZERO
WASTE
DAY**

UN
environment
programme


UN-HABITAT


ZERO WASTE
FOUNDATION