

International Day of Zero Waste

Nairobi Observance

Date: Thursday, 27th March 2025

Time: 5 pm to 6:30 pm

Location: CR1 at United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON)

Background

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in its seventy-seventh session, adopted the resolution “Promoting zero-waste initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” on 14 December 2022, which proclaims 30 March as the International Day of Zero Waste to be observed annually.

The resolution invites the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to facilitate the observance of Zero Waste Day. It further invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia, to observe Zero Waste Day appropriately, to raise awareness of national, subnational, regional, and local zero-waste initiatives and their contribution to achieving sustainable development.

Further, the International Day of Zero Waste promotes responsible production and consumption patterns and encourages a shift towards a lifecycle approach. This ensures that no materials or resources go to waste, enabling society to recognize waste as a resource.

The third annual International Day of Zero Waste will be observed at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) in Nairobi, Kenya, on Thursday, 27 March 2025. UNEP and UN-Habitat are jointly facilitating the observance of the Day and organizing this event in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Türkiye to the United Nations in Nairobi.

Theme of the International Day of Zero Waste 2025: Fashion and Textile Waste

Zero Waste initiatives are gaining worldwide attention as a sustainable solution to eliminate and reduce waste and promote a circular economy. The International Day of Zero Waste on 30 March 2025 is an opportunity to raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices to protect the environment. The insurmountable increasing waste flow from a myriad of sources is perhaps the most tangible and often visible challenge facing the planet. It is highly detrimental to not just human health but also sustainable development. Globally, between 2.1 billion and 2.3 billion tonnes of waste is generated annually. If current trends continue, 3.8 billion tons of waste will be generated per year by 2050. Mismanaged waste can become an incubator for infection and a source of pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The zero-waste movement highlights the importance of sound waste management and reforming consumption patterns.

This year’s International Day of Zero Waste focuses on the **theme of fashion and textile waste**, shedding light on the environmental and social challenges caused by the sector’s linear

business model, which drives overproduction and overconsumption. The textile sector embodies the whole waste agenda – from the importance of bolstering waste management globally to the need to reduce waste generation and promote sustainable consumption and production patterns. Every year the textile sector is estimated to be responsible for 2-8% of global GHG emissions, the use of 215 trillion litres of water (the equivalent of 86 million Olympic-sized swimming pools), and 9% of annual microplastic pollution to oceans. These staggering figures highlight the unsustainable practices driving the industry, where every second, the equivalent of a garbage truck full of clothing is incinerated or sent to landfills around the world, causing significant environmental, economic and social impacts, especially in the Global South.

Addressing the challenges of fashion and textile waste requires a shift towards sustainable and circular solutions. These may include the promotion of extended producer responsibility, fostering innovation in recycling technologies, and encouraging the adoption of sustainable materials. Initiatives like upcycling, repair, and reuse can reduce waste, while supporting zero-waste design principles can minimize waste generation at the production stage. Collaboration across governments, industries, and communities is essential to drive change and build a more equitable and environmentally friendly textile value chain.

Objectives

The Nairobi Observance events, facilitated in-person with digital contributions and live-streamed on UN Web TV, serve as a platform to underscore the critical importance of collective action in driving forward zero-waste initiatives, with a focus on fashion and textile waste.

1. Increase knowledge about the environmental and social impacts of fashion and textile waste and the potential of zero-waste solutions to promote sustainability and equity, particularly in vulnerable communities.
2. To inspire governments, producers, and consumers to embrace sustainable and circular practices, rethink manufacturing and consumption, reduce waste, and recover value from discarded textiles by showcasing initiatives and success stories from Member States, young entrepreneurs and communities' initiatives.

These events will feature distinct components bringing together key representatives and experts from governments, international organizations, fashion designers and civil society. As a side event, an art and initiative exhibition will be set up outside the main event hall, showcasing photos and posters of impactful zero-waste initiatives and good practices in the context of fashion and textile waste from around the world. Attendees can explore the exhibition during the refreshment break, as well as before and after the main event. The diverse event tracks will emphasize solutions to the environmental and health challenges posed by the sector, e.g., chemical-intensive production processes. Together, these events aim to inspire transformative action and collaboration toward a circular and equitable fashion industry on a global scale.

Agenda

Time	Item	Speaker
17:00–17:05	Welcoming remarks by moderator	Beatrice Muthoni Kariuki
17:05 – 17:06	Video message: Remarks from UN Secretary-General	António Guterres
17:06 - 17:08	Video message: Remarks from UNEP and UN-Habitat Executive Directors	Inger Andersen Anacláudia Rossbach
17:08 – 17:18	Acoustic song performance on sustainable fashion: Through music and storytelling, Savara will promote fashion solutions like second-hand, repair and mindful consumption	Delvin Mudigi aka Savara
17:18 – 17:23	Engagement session: Interaction with the audience	Savara & Audience
17:23 – 17:43	Panel discussion: Unveiling Key Insights on Fashion and Textile Waste Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Andrew Kimani, Director Environment Enhancement Network, Waste Management Specialist</i> - <i>Sarah Njau, Managing Director, GFS East Africa</i> - <i>Janet Chemitei, Africa Regional Director, Threading Change (NGO)</i> - <i>Belinda Atieno, Co-founder of Eco Fashion Week Africa and Founder of Sustainable fashion talks</i> 	Andrew Kimani Sarah Njau Janet Chemitei Belinda Atieno
17:43 – 17:55	Q&A session: Questions from the audience	Panellists & Audience
17:55 – 18:15	Spotlight: Zero Waste Good Practices in the Fashion and Textile Sector identified by the UN SG's Advisory Board on Zero Waste <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>United Wardrobe Project</i> 	In-person and Video Presentations of selected Good Practices (TBC)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Textiles-as-a-service - leasing coveralls for kids in Norwegian kindergartens</i> - <i>Closing the Loop on textile waste (CTL), a flagship program of Circular Apparel Innovation Factory (CAIF)</i> 	
18:15– 18:17	Video message: Members of the UN SG's Advisory Board on Zero Waste (TBC)	Members of the UN SG's Advisory Board on Zero Waste (TBC)
18:17 – 18:20	Member State: Ambassador and Permanent Mission of the Republic of Türkiye to the United Nations	H.E. Subutay Yüksel
18:20–18:25	Closing Remarks: Remarks from UNEP Representative	TBC
18:25–18:30	Closing Remarks: Remarks and Vote of Thanks from UN-Habitat Director Global Solutions Division	Rafael Tuts
18:30–18:35	Closing with Group Photo	Beatrice Muthoni Kariuki
From 18:35	Refreshments	

Background Information

The Nairobi Observance aims to spotlight the critical role of zero waste initiatives, with a particular emphasis on fashion and textile waste.

- Webpages for International Day of Zero Waste 2025 from [UN-Habitat](#) and [UNEP](#)
- Dissemination of previous work conducted by the [UN SG's Advisory Board on Zero Waste](#);
- Good practices and resources on sustainable production and consumption through the [One Planet Network](#);
- UNEP's [International Environmental Technology Centre](#) (IETC), which promotes environmentally sound waste management technologies;
- UN-Habitat's [Waste Wise Cities](#) and the [African Clean Cities Platform](#), which support sustainable urban waste management.
- The [Life Cycle Initiative](#), hosted by UNEP, which advances life-cycle knowledge to encourage circular approaches.
- [UNEP's Textile Initiative](#), which provides strategic leadership to accelerate a just transition toward a sustainable and circular textile value chain.