



The French Solid Waste Partnership (FSWP) Calls for the Inclusion of Waste and Resources Management in the UN Water Conference

Pollution travels from land to sea: 80% of plastic pollution in oceans originates on land¹.

Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of waste as defined by the Basel Convention is one of the most effective and sustainable solutions to reduce river and marine pollution. It protects water quality in hydrographic basins, as a core component of the “source to sea” approach.

The implementation of such management systems is complex, requiring the control of waste collection, treatment, and disposal in ways that protects both human health and the environment. The local waste systems are preventing macro-waste from entering water streams or blocking urban drainage systems, as well as controlling leachate to prevent groundwater pollution.

However, limiting action to managing waste better is unsustainable for two main reasons:

1/ managing waste has an infrastructure and environmental cost: the more we limit the environmental impacts the higher the infrastructure cost. Many local authorities in charge of waste management cannot afford that cost, in particular in the face of rising waste volumes and their hazardous substances content. The cost of inaction on waste management and waste prevention far exceeds the cost of implementing ESM of waste measures, as illustrated in the World Bank report on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. 1% of waste volume reduction in MENA would deliver a gain of US\$150 million per year in solid waste management (SWM) expenditures².

2/ our linear use of resources is depleting Nature. Many individuals live significantly above the recommended material footprint of ~5t/capita/year for 2050³. These individuals would need to reduce their consumption of virgin materials through a change in production, consumption and usage models based on reducing, reusing, repairing, and ultimately recycling, through solutions adapted to each type of product. The mechanical consequence of this shift to a circular economy is a reduction in future waste volumes, therefore reducing investment costs as well as environmental and social impacts. Such a deep transformation, and the implementation of the 13

¹ EEA. (2022). *Marine Litter: the untold story* [online]. European Environment Agency. [Last consulted: 18 February 2026]. Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/from-source-to-sea-the-untold-story-of-marine-litter#:~:text=Marine%20litter%20is%20defined%20as,85%25%20of%20it%20is%20plastic>.

² The gain of US\$150 million per year equate to ~1% of the region’s cumulated current total expenditures in SWM (US\$7.7 billion/year) and costs of environmental degradation (US\$ 7.2 billion/year). See World Bank. (2026). *Waste Management in the Middle East and North Africa* [online]. World Bank Group. [Last consulted 05 February 2026]. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/mena/publication/waste-management-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa>.

³ For instance, see Fischer-Kowalski, M. et al. (2011). *Decoupling natural resource use and environmental impacts from economic growth. A report by the Working Group on Decoupling to the International Resource Panel* [online]. UNEP, pp. 26-32. [Last consulted: 23 February 2026]. Available at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/items/c337f278-f250-40a6-bcc0-57da308b2e0d> In this report, UNEP uses the term “metabolic rate” instead of material footprint.





actions of the circular economy, as presented and ordered in the ISO norm 59004:2024⁴ would be aligned with the internationally recognised need to decouple growth from resource extraction and environmental bads.

This calls for deep transformations in the way we produce, consume and design our economic models, integrating all circular economy actions through pathways adapted to local contexts. Many countries, particularly emerging economies, rely more or less on an informal sector which, often in precarious conditions, contributes to the circular approach when economically viable. Throughout the world, depending on the context, these transformations call for establishing a robust regulatory framework to strengthen or preserve industrial recycling, as well as a culture of durability, reuse and repair in the face of linear economic models.

While this transition is underway, it faces significant push-backs. Now more than ever, broad-based cooperation among all stakeholders, including governments, industry, communities, and civil society, is critical.

During the last COP of the Basel Convention, the French Solid Waste Partnership (FSWP) launched the Global Push initiative for sustainable resources and waste management, which is a united initiative to secure the central role of waste management and the transition to circularity in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through enhanced cooperation, and coordination of actions internationally delivering on a double commitment made by all stakeholders involved: 1/ implementing ESM-compliant waste management worldwide, and 2/ transitioning to implement the full array of actions of the circular economy , therefore reducing dependencies on strategic resources, and eventually reducing future waste volumes.

We are in a key moment to advance global recognition of the resources and waste management agenda, as a key action item towards achieving all SDGs, from “No poverty” to “Peace, justice and strong institutions”, leveraging “Partnerships for the goals”. In particular, addressing resources and waste management is a necessity:

- to protect water quality and resources, rivers, seas and oceans. We call for it to be recognized in the final statement concluding the UN Water Conference 2026.
- to drive the negotiations for the upcoming Global Treaty to eliminate plastic pollution, and those under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

We call for the water community to support establishing a Global Commitment on Resources and Waste by mobilising public and private stakeholders all around the globe to commit to advance resources and waste management as one of the priority actions in every corner of the world.

⁴ The 13 actions are the following: refuse, rethink, source, reduce, repair, re-use, refurbish, remanufacture, repurpose, cascade, recycle, recover energy, re-mine. Derived from the 10R principle, the norm is presented in the following PowerPoint: https://www.pfd-fswp.fr/IMG/pdf/2025_circular_economy_presentation_en.pdf



We call for the consideration of waste and resources management in the Interactive Dialogue A “Water for People” of the UN Water Conference 2026

- Cross-sectoral collaboration is critical to advance and deliver on the different international agendas (SDGs, climate, pollution, biodiversity, health, etc.). Ministers in charge of waste management, agriculture and industry, should be invited to the Conference to further facilitate the protection of water resources and advance the transition to circularity;
- Safe water and sanitation cannot be achieved without waste and resources management, as mismanaged waste affects water quality, polluting drinking water sources, rivers, groundwater, and oceans
- Synergies between waste management and sanitation can support sound WASH projects and investments, as health protection requires safe management of both solid and liquid waste.
- Local waste management systems are a first line of defense for the protection of water resources from contamination, and for preventing flooding associated to drainage systems blockages
- The human right to water and sanitation requires going beyond infrastructure access to address upstream pollution drivers, including unsafe waste disposal and weak regulation, which undermine WASH investments
- Reducing waste at source through circular economy approaches lowers costs, protects ecosystems, and reduces pressure on water resources, making it a cost-effective and sustainable enabler of water security
- Waste and resources management needs to be explicitly integrated in action plans towards achieving SDG 6, as part of the source-to-sea approach, and a core pillar of resilient water and sanitation systems in the face of climate change, urbanisation, and vulnerability.

We call for the consideration of waste and resources management in the Interactive Dialogue F “Investments for Water” of the UN Water Conference 2026

- Cross-sectoral collaboration is critical to advance and deliver on the different international agendas (SDGs, climate, pollution, biodiversity, health, etc.). Ministers in charge of waste management, agriculture and industry, should be invited to the Conference to further facilitate the protection of water resources and advance the transition to circularity;
- The global water investment gap cannot be closed without addressing waste and resources management, as mismanaged waste degrades water quality, increases treatment costs, and undermines the economic viability of water infrastructure investments;
- Investing in waste and resources management is a high-return, preventive investment for water security, reducing flood damage, groundwater contamination, and costly downstream remediation across river basins and coastal zones;
- Investing in waste prevention and the transition to circular economy contributes to water security through reducing unnecessary water consumption that would be used in the production of food that gets wasted or products that have a too short lifespan.
- Integrating waste and resources management into water investment planning strengthens cross-sectoral value creation (water, sanitation, energy, agriculture, urban resilience, industry), aligning with the investment reform, de-risking, and capacity-development priorities identified for scaling finance toward SDG 6;
- Capacity development and project preparation for water investments must include waste and circular economy components to reduce regulatory risk, improve environmental performance, and unlock finance, private capital, and climate finance at scale;
- The UN Water Conference should explicitly recognise waste and resources management as an indispensable step to achieving SDG6 in which to invest and a core enabler of bankable, resilient water projects, essential for mobilising public and private finance and achieving water security, while protecting water resources.



Safe water relies on sound liquid and solid waste management everywhere

by the **French Solid Waste Partnership** working in collaboration with the **French Water Partnership**

