

## Global Waste to Grow by 70 Percent by 2050 Unless Urgent Action is Taken: World Bank Report

**WASHINGTON, September 20, 2018**—Without urgent action, global waste will increase by 70 percent on current levels by 2050, according to the World Bank's new *What a Waste 2.0: A Global Snapshot of Solid Waste Management to 2050* report.

Driven by rapid urbanization and growing populations, global annual waste generation is expected to jump to 3.4 billion tonnes over the next 30 years, up from 2.01 billion tonnes in 2016, the report finds.

Although they only account for 16 percent of the world's population, high-income countries combined are generating more than one-third (34 percent) of the world's waste. The East Asia and Pacific region is responsible for generating close to a quarter (23 percent) of all waste. And by 2050, waste generation in Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to more than triple from current levels, while South Asia will more than double its waste stream.

Plastics are especially problematic. If not collected and managed properly, they will contaminate and affect waterways and ecosystems for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. In 2016, the world generated 242 million tonnes of plastic waste, or 12 percent of all solid waste, according to the report.

*What a Waste 2.0* stresses that solid waste management is critical for sustainable, healthy, and inclusive cities and communities, yet it is often overlooked, particularly in low-income countries. While more than one-

third of waste in high-income countries is recovered through recycling and composting, only 4 percent of waste in low-income countries is recycled.

Based on the volume of waste generated, its composition, and how the waste is being managed, it is estimated that 1.6 billion tonnes of carbon-dioxide-equivalent were generated from the treatment and disposal of waste in 2016 – representing about 5 percent of global emissions.

*“Mismanagement of waste is harming human health and local environments while adding to the climate challenge,”* said **Laura Tuck, Vice President for Sustainable Development, World Bank.** *“Unfortunately, it is often the poorest in society who are adversely impacted by inadequate waste management. It doesn’t have to be this way. Our resources need to be used and then reused continuously so that they don’t end up in landfills.”*

The report notes that good waste management systems are essential to building a circular economy, where products are designed and optimized for reuse and recycling. As national and local governments embrace the circular economy, smart and sustainable ways to manage waste will help promote efficient economic growth while minimizing environmental impact.

*“It makes economic sense to properly manage waste,”* said **Silpa Kaza, World Bank Urban Development Specialist and lead author of the report.** *“Uncollected waste and poorly disposed waste have significant health and environmental impacts. The cost of addressing these impacts is many times higher than the cost of developing and operating simple,*

*adequate waste management systems. Solutions exist and we can help countries get there.”*

Supporting countries to make critical solid waste management financing, policy, and planning decisions is key. Solutions include:

- Providing financing to countries most in need, especially the fastest growing countries, to develop state-of-the-art waste management systems.
- Supporting major waste producing countries to reduce consumption of plastics and marine litter through comprehensive waste reduction and recycling programs.
- Reducing food waste through consumer education, organics management, and coordinated food waste management programs.

Since 2000, the World Bank has committed over \$4.7 billion to more than 340 solid waste management programs in countries across the globe.

*What a Waste 2.0* was funded by the government of Japan through the World Bank's Tokyo Development Learning Center (TDLC).