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To "UNEP Civil Society" <Civil.Society@unep.org>

cc

bcc

Subject RE: UNEP Governing Council 2008 - Background documents on Waste management (UNEP/GCSS/X/7)

History:

 This message has been forwarded.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sharing the the Report of the Executive Director on Waste Management (document UNEP/GCSS/X/7). On behalf of Practical Action I am pleased to offer a few comments which we hope will assist preparations for the Governing Council and discussion there of matters raised in the Executive Director's report on waste management.

We would in particular like to highlight points concerned with municipal waste in developing countries and the need there for equitable access to waste collection services for all social and income groups. Concerning the impacts of waste (Section II, Part III) we would emphasise that, for municipal waste, impacts can be mitigated through proper storage and reliable collection from the source. Many small towns, and in particular low income areas, do not have this service. This leads to a high risk of vector borne disease and has an impact on the performance of other infrastructure services. Communities living near dumps do indeed suffer from littering, odour, insects and rats, as well as dust and smoke. In low-income countries scavenging by both people and animals can aggravate the health risk.

In most developing countries, open *uncontrolled* dumping with open burning is the norm. (Section II, Part V) Municipal authorities in these countries do not have a reliable allocation for capital investment in waste management facilities and waste collection services. While waste collection might account for 80-90 per cent of their solid waste management budget, this is not necessarily a 'drain' on resources and may only be a reflection of the techniques used for waste collection and management in low-income countries. Cost comparisons based on unit costs might be more revealing.

Concerning the collapse of the Payatas dumpsite in the Philippines, it is probable that this was a landslide rather than due to the explosion of gases. (Section II, Part III)

The Executive Director is right to draw attention to the volume of waste (Section II, Part IV). We would further add that new materials are being brought into production at a rapid rate in response to consumer demand. However, the long term behaviour of such materials is unknown and methods for their proper disposal and recycling are still under development.

With regard to Need Analysis (Section II, Part VI), we would suggest inclusion at the technical level of the collection of reliable data on various waste streams, particularly hazardous and industrial waste. In the social category, we would emphasise the need to work towards equitable provision of services to all social and income groups.

We would be grateful if you would forward our comments to the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies and look forward to the deliberations on waste management and other issues of the Governing Council and Global Ministerial Forum.

Regards,

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