



'International Alliance of Waste Pickers (IAWP) and leaders from 19 countries commemorates the International Waste Pickers Day in Nairobi'

The Kenyan National Waste Pickers Association and the IAWP will host a march to raise the visibility of thousands of waste picker families around the world.



Waste pickers during their march around the Dandora Dumpsite, in Nairobi, Kenya, to commemorate the International Waste Pickers Day

More than 20 million people in the world work as informal waste workers (ILO 2013.). Waste pickers represent the largest workforce in the recycling chain and recover a higher proportion of recyclable materials than formal waste management systems.

Through their work in recovering recyclable and reusable materials, waste pickers – who are often discriminated against and face stigma for belonging to poor and marginalized groups, working classes, oppressed castes, ethnic, religious, and racial minorities, indigenous peoples, climate and war refugees, and survivors of violence and substance abuse – play a major role in reducing plastic pollution and carbon emissions.

Waste picker representatives from 19 countries are gathered in Nairobi to participate in the International Alliance of Waste Pickers Coordination Meeting. The general objectives are to discuss the interim work towards their Elective Congress; to promote connection and trust-building among waste pickers from the different regions, and to celebrate International Waste Pickers Day on March 1st.



Waste pickers march around the Dandora Dumpsite, in Nairobi, Kenya, to commemorate the International Waste Pickers Day

March 1st commemorates waste pickers who lost their lives on this day in the Universidad Libre De Barranquilla Colombia in 1992. 21 years ago, waste pickers were invited to the university under the pretext of receiving recyclable materials. Once inside the campus, they were beaten and shot to death, and their bodies were to be used for research and organ trafficking.

Further, through the march, they highlight that International Waste-pickers Day is a day to memorialise the struggles of waste-pickers for recognition, and dignity across the planet. It is the day to mark the achievements of waste-pickers associations, organizations and unions and the International Alliance of Waste-pickers. On this International Waste-pickers Day and through their march, waste pickers demand the following from the national and county governments in Kenya and governments around the world:

- Recognise the occupation of waste-pickers and recognise waste-pickers' right to access waste.
- Waste-pickers should be paid fair and better prices for recovering and reclaiming recyclable and reusable materials.
- Affordable, comfortable and quality housing for all waste-pickers and their families.
- Government should give waste management tenders to waste-pickers, run enterprises and organizations.
- Health and life insurance for all waste-pickers and their families.
- The dumpsites should not be closed before providing sustainable and regularised livelihood opportunities to waste-pickers.

Post the march, the Kenyan National Waste Pickers Association will hold a press conference with the participation of government officials, leaders of the IAWP and representatives of the media at Dandora Community Centre, followed by a tree plantation at Dandora Hip Hop City.



Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Executive Secretary, Secretariat, INC for Plastics Pollution, addresses Waste Pickers during the press conference for the International Waste Pickers Day in Nairobi, Kenya.



Nao Takeuchi, Waste Management Expert from UN-HABITAT, highlights the importance of waste pickers for the informal waste sector.

As part of the week's activities, waste pickers also visited the Dandora dumpsite, which covers approximately 70 acres, and is the destination of about 1,100 tonnes of solid waste generated daily by Nairobi's population. The dumpsite sustains the livelihoods of approximately 3,000 waste picker families. They recover plastic, food, clothes, paper and bottles that they can sell for much-needed income. "One of our biggest challenges here is access to health and access to education" says Winnie and Joyce, National Organizing Secretaries of Kenyan National Waste Pickers Welfare Association (KENAWPWA).

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Note to Editor: For more information please visit our webpage: <https://globalrec.org/>

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The Intl. Alliance of Waste Pickers is a networking process that connects and supports thousands of waste picker organizations in over 28 countries covering mainly Latin America, Asia and Africa. Supported by WIEGO — Women in Informal Economy: Globalizing and Organizing — the Alliance has taken waste pickers to the world stage at international climate change conferences and events to highlight the need for global policies that help, not hinder, their work.