

Global Treaties, Policies and Legislations pertaining to waste

Before you Begin

Waste as we have come to understand are materials that are unwanted or unusable that get discarded. We have also learnt that what is waste for one person, may not necessarily be the same for another. The term waste is also applicable to different types of materials including municipal, hazardous, biomedical, industrial, E-waste, to name a few. Based on its nature, waste can also be toxic, hazardous, inert or infectious. The nature of the waste and the volume in which waste is being produced today, has put immense pressure on our environment.

Waste type, quantity of waste generated, how and where it is disposed, its nature (hazardous or infectious) which sometimes makes it mandatory to be handled with care. How it is collected, transported and treated are some of the other questions which arise around “waste”.

A number of laws and legislations are in place which look at waste management. These govern the transport, treatment, storage, and disposal of waste. These laws look at minimising or controlling indiscriminate dispersal of waste; reduce ecological or biological harm; mandate waste recycling or even mandate where the waste can or cannot be disposed.

Different conventions and laws have been put together for waste management, some of these are:-

- Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail, and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), Geneva, 1989
- Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, Basel, 1989
- Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements and Management of Hazardous Wastes Within Africa, Bamako, 1991
- Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, Rotterdam, 1998
- Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, Helsinki, 1992
- European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (AND), Geneva, 2000
- European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), Geneva, 1957
- FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, Rome, 1985
- Minamata Convention on Mercury, Minamata 2013
- Stockholm Convention Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants Stockholm, 2001
- Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region, Waigani, 1995

The Microbead-Free Waters Act are examples of some of the different types of laws and legislations governing waste that are applicable in different locations.