

Monday, September 14, 2018  
Mr. Erik Solheim  
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri  
PO Box 30552, 00100  
Nairobi, Kenya  
cc: United Nations Environment Program



Dear Erik Solheim,

We were dismayed to see that the United Nations Environment has expressed its [support](#) for the controversial Reppie Waste-to-Energy Project. This misguided plan is setting the region on the wrong path: one that encourages waste instead of reducing it, and puts the surrounding community's health at risk. We are also concerned with UN Environment's inconclusive stance on incineration in Africa, as outlined in its latest Outlook Report.

According to the UN Environment's [own report](#), waste incineration is especially unfeasible for low and middle income countries like those in Africa, due to its cost-prohibitive nature and unsuitable waste composition [pp.22-pp.26]. As stated in the report: "WtE technologies are...typically both a more expensive way of managing waste and a more expensive way of producing energy." However later in [another report](#), one of the authors--who is connected with the Danish incinerator industry--writes favorably of incineration [pp.141-148].

The [U.S.](#) and [EU](#) are already moving away from incineration, with the understanding that incineration [stands in the way](#) of a zero waste, circular economy. Why should Africa be treated differently than its Northern counterparts? It seems that in response to "waste-to-energy"'s waning popularity in the West, the incinerator industry is attempting to make a profit by exporting Europe's old waste management approach to Africa, undermining both regions' zero waste goals.

The Reppie project might be lucrative for the multinational company behind it, Cambridge Industries Ltd, but it is a burden on the surrounding communities who will be exposed to the emissions that result from burning waste. In fact, the waste incineration industry has the [highest negative economic impacts](#) from air pollution compared to the financial value added by the industry. Trash incineration emits large quantities of pollution including nitrogen oxides (NOx), mercury, dioxins, and ultra-fine particles. Incinerators are also a major [contributor](#) to climate change.

Africa has the opportunity to build a just, equitable Zero Waste economy by enacting policy mechanisms to phase out the sale of wasteful products, create markets for reduction and reuse, and build more robust zero waste infrastructure. Instead, incinerator projects like Reppie lock cities into a cycle of burning that directly competes with zero waste efforts like recycling, composting, and other waste reduction strategies.

We ask the UN Environment to give a clear stance and policy statement supporting sustainable waste and resource management approaches at the top of the waste hierarchy, to refrain from endorsing waste incineration projects, particularly here in Africa, and to stop advocating waste incineration in all the agency's publications and statements.

From,

ACPO - Associação de Combate aos Poluentes  
African Uranium Alliance  
Amigos de la Tierra Argentina  
APRONAD  
Association Toxicologie-Chimie (ATC)  
Biofuelwatch  
BIOS Argentina  
CADIRE CAMEROON ASSOCIATION  
Centar za zivotnu sredinu/ Friends of the Earth Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)  
Centre for Earth Works (CFEW)  
Centre for Environment Justice and Development  
Centre for Zero Waste & Development  
CETAAR  
Children's Environmental Health Foundation  
Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group  
COAST  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd  
Consumers' Association of Penang  
Coordinadora de Pueblos y Organizaciones del Oriente del Estado de México en Defensa de la Tierra, el Agua y su Cultura  
CREPD  
Društvo Ekologi brez meja  
Earthlife Africa Durban  
Eco-Accord  
EMPOWER INDIA  
Environmental & Public Health Consulting  
Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)  
European Environmental Bureau  
Fluoride Action Network  
Food & Water Europe  
Food & Water Watch  
Friends of the Earth Australia  
Friends of the Earth Australia

Friends of the Earth Canada  
Friends of the Earth Europe  
Friends of the Earth Ghana  
Friends of the Earth International  
Friends of the Earth Sierra Leone  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
FUNAM, Environment Defence Foundation  
Fundación Basura  
Fundación el árbol  
GAIA Africa  
Goldman Environmental Prize  
Green Knowledge Foundation, Nigeria  
Greeners Action  
groundWork  
Health Care Foundation Nepal  
IndyACT and InnoDev - Lebanon  
Institute for Local Self-Reliance  
Irrigation Training and Economic Organization - IRTECO  
JA!Justica Ambiental/FOEMozambique  
Jovenes Ambientalistas  
Les Amis de la Terre-Togo  
NESMAC KITARA  
NGO LA GRANDE PUISSANCE DE DIEU  
Nipe Fagio  
No Waste Louisiana  
ONG AVPIP  
ONG Valpo Interviene  
Pan African Vision for the Environment  
Plastic Change  
Recicladores El Bosque.  
RedBioLAC  
REDES - Friends of the Earth Uruguay  
Regional Centre for international development cooperation  
Rose Academies  
Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth Malaysia)  
Society for Earth  
South Durban Community Environmental Alliance  
Thanal  
Toxisphera Environmental Health Association  
United Kingdom Without Incineration Network (UKWIN)  
University of the Witwatersrand School of Governance  
Wellington Association Against the Incinerator ("WAAI")  
Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

Zero Waste Europe

Zero Waste OZ

Centro Universitário Fundação Santo André