



Zero Waste

Passed by the WFPHA General Assembly - 2003

The World Federation of Public Health Associations,

Whereas, as has been said before, the earth is a finite place; whether it is one hundred years or one thousand years from now, eventually we will run out of space to dump waste. Meanwhile, we are polluting our air, water, and soil with landfills and incinerators;

And whereas Zero Waste as a goal that prioritizes the recycling of all materials back into nature or the marketplace protects human health and the environment;

And whereas society needs to conceptually convert waste management into resource management to allow for a sustainable health future for human kind;

And whereas WFPHA, in 1996, in its position paper on Health Economics and Development called upon the health and development community to: "Promote the development in multilateral financial institutions of ... consideration of the social and environmental costs of projects. " and to "Support the use of indicators of progress and well-being that reflect social, cultural, and environmental factors....";

And whereas WFPHA, in 1999, in its resolution on Medical Waste noted that it was "aware as well that "end-of-the-pipeline" solutions (i.e. alternatives to incineration) are more expensive and less protective than a "preventive medicine" approach that integrates medical product purchasing and disposal decisions and which emphasize the use of non-toxic, recyclable, and reusable materials.

And whereas The United Nations, along with the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Civil Society Secretariat, and the South African Government, agreed to green the Johannesburg Summit (WSSD) following Zero Waste principles.

And whereas Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary General of the United Nations responsible for the WSSD in Johannesburg stated "I support this project (WSSD as a Zero Waste Event), and encourage all to reach as close to Zero Waste as is possible."

And whereas numerous benefits accrued to the Johannesburg Summit as a Zero Waste event including: Zero Waste was consistent with the recent Stockholm convention's goal towards elimination of POPs, including incinerator by-products Dioxin and Furans.

Zero Waste systems minimized the environmental impact of the WSSD itself and set the



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highest standards for future events.

Zero Waste practices and systems at the event educated many thousands of South Africans and visitors on concepts of sustainability in action in very tangible ways that were brought back to their own countries and implemented after the Summit.

It minimized waste dumping costs for the WSSD, as well as minimized landfill usage, generated jobs, and avoided incineration.

And finally whereas it is estimated that some 80% of all materials used at the WSSD Civil Society Meeting and 20 % of the WSSD Governmental Meeting were recycled in some manner; Therefore be it resolved that:

The WFPHA endorses a zero waste approach for its General Assembly and Triennial Meeting as steps toward sustainable development and health.

and that The WFPHA calls upon WHO to conduct its World Health Assembly consistent with the goals of zero waste.

and with respect to future activities that

The WFPHA will explore actions highlighting the public health benefits of zero waste as a societal goal both as an organization and in coalition with other like-minded health and civil society stakeholders.