

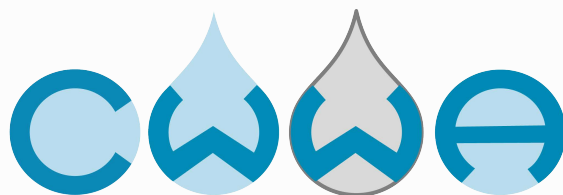


GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

DECLARATION OF PORT OF SPAIN 2024 ON REGIONAL ACTION TOWARDS ZERO WASTE

Issued at the Conclusion of
the Eighth Meeting of
the Caribbean High-Level Forum
of Ministers Responsible for
Waste Management (HLF8-Waste)

23 – 24 October 2024



**CARIBBEAN WATER AND
WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION**

**Signed on the 24th Day of October in the Year 2024
in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

**Declaration Issued at the Conclusion of
the Eighth Meeting of
the Caribbean High-Level Forum
of Ministers Responsible for
Waste Management (HLF8-Waste)
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Adopted at the Eighth High-Level Forum for Caribbean Ministers with Responsibility for Waste Management, held at the Thirty-Third Annual Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association Conference and Exhibition, under the theme “Strengthening Regional Action Toward a Zero Waste Caribbean”, 23 - 24 October 2024, Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

PREAMBLE

We, the Caribbean Ministers with responsibility for Waste Management, gathered on this 24th day of October 2024 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, recognize that the increasing volume of waste, particularly plastics, poses a growing threat to the region’s natural environment, biodiversity, and affects the livelihood of millions in our region. We therefore hereby declare that the critical importance of preventing waste and ensuring effective waste management in safeguarding public health, protecting ecosystems, and promoting the conservation and the sustainable use of resources.

ACKNOWLEDGING the need to accelerate the transition from the traditional linear model of “take, use, and dispose,” which demands high material and energy utilisation to a circular economy. Through reduction, reuse, renewal, repair, and recycling, we can extend the life cycle of existing goods, reduce environmental pressure on virgin materials, and minimize waste. In Latin America and the Caribbean, only 4% of municipal solid waste is recovered, 46% ends up in sanitary landfills, 40% is released into the environment at inadequate disposal sites, and 9% is collected with an unidentified destination.

RECOGNISING that many countries in the Caribbean Region face challenges due to fragmented policy, legal and regulatory frameworks, where waste management regulations are scattered across different legislative areas. This fragmentation hinders comprehensive waste management solutions. Most significantly the need to advance sustainable financing cannot be overstated including the Polluters Pay Principle such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

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RECOGNISING the need for the public sector to ensure an enabling environment to support private sector involvement is critical to success and the urgent need for regional and national collaboration between and within sectors. We collectively reaffirm our commitment to fostering sustainable waste management practices for the benefit of the Caribbean Region and its people.

RECALLING regional and international agreements, declarations, and goals relevant to waste management, including:

- The **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), particularly Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Goal 13 (Climate Action), Goal 14 (Life below Water).
- The **Paris Agreement** on Climate Change.
- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution** (A/RES/77/161) “Promoting zero-waste initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.
- The **CARICOM Regional Framework** for Achieving Development Resilience to Climate Change.
- **The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity.**
- The **Caribbean Waste Management Action Plan** (CWMAP), as the foundation for regional and national actions.
- **Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment** of the Wider Caribbean Region (WCR) and the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS Protocol).
- **Basel Convention** on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

ACKNOWLEDGING the efforts of international and regional partners such as the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (**CWWA**), the United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**), the European Union (**EU**), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (**OECS**), the Caribbean Development Bank (**CDB**), the Inter-American Development Bank (**IDB**), the World Bank, the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Caribbean (**BCRC-Caribbean**) among others, as well as other key stakeholders for the range of

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programmes, projects, technical assistance and training activities which enable Caribbean States to address the Integrated Sustainable Waste Management .

CONTINUING OUR EFFORTS

RECALLING the efforts made, which include:

- Adoption of Caribbean Waste Management Action Plan (CWMAP) in 2018.
- The 2021 Implementation Plan for the CWMAP funded by the IDB.
- The EU Zero Waste in the Caribbean Programme being implemented in Cariforum Countries in the region, in support of the CWMAP.

RECOGNITION

- We recognize the critical synergy between **Policies for Water, Wastewater, and Solid Waste Management** and the role of CWWA and other regional partners in promoting such synergies. Specific reference to the Water Declaration of Port of Spain 2024.
- We recognize the **Caribbean Waste Management Action Plan (CWMAP)** and its Implementation Plan as the foundation for transitioning toward a circular economy. The success of CWMAP and Integrated Sustainable Waste Management depends on the vision, leadership, and commitment of regional leaders, development partners and national stakeholders.
- We recognize the ongoing efforts of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee which seeks to develop a new internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

We commit to fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among countries and stakeholders in the Caribbean region by **2026** through the following:

1. **Regulatory Framework:** Developing and revising policies, strategies and legislation to enable the transition toward zero waste and the circular economy, integrating waste minimization, product life extension, and resource recovery as core principles.



2. **Finance:** Supporting sustainable financing for the sector including the application of the Polluter Pays Principle through the establishment of financial instruments such as Waste Management Fees and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Policies. Sustainable Waste Management and Circular Economy investments will create new industries, jobs, and opportunities for sustainable economic growth.
3. **Private Sector Engagement:** Creating an enabling environment for private sector investment in a circular economy, encouraging innovation and sustainable business models and creating an enabling environment for Public Private Partnerships (PPP).
4. **Data Collection and Information Systems:** Strengthening data collection and information management systems to inform decision-making in waste management which includes circular economy approaches. Facilitate the development of and contribution to data management systems such as the Solid Waste and Circular Economy Hub (IDB) which aims to support national governments by improving the availability of statistical data and sectoral information. Addressing the data and information gaps is crucial for developing effective public policies and attracting finance. This includes developing national information systems, promoting digital transformation, adopting smart waste technologies, and enhancing data quality.
5. **Disaster Waste Management:** Enhancing the capacity of the region to respond to and recover from climate-induced extreme weather events. This includes preparedness, response and contingency planning as well as the development of innovative solutions for associated disaster waste and climate resilient waste management systems.
6. **Capacity Building:** Enhancing the capacity of public sector institutions to spearhead the transition to a circular economy. This will be achieved through financial and technical support to ensure minimum standards for sustainable resource management.
7. **Public Education and Awareness:** Enhancing public education and awareness programs on responsible waste management and circular economy practices, focusing on reducing waste generation and littering, good practices of waste separation and disposal with consideration given to marine litter.



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8. **Tourism Sector Engagement:** Giving specific attention to waste management in the tourism sector, emphasizing the nexus between tourism and waste management and supporting initiatives and solutions to protect the region's tourism product.
9. **Research, Technology and Climate Change:** Providing incentives and encourage universities and research institutions to undertake scientific studies on waste management. Prioritizing the use of the best available technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve land resources, and minimize dependence on fossil fuels.
10. **Job Creation:** Developing circular economy and enhance waste management practices to create green jobs and improve employment opportunities.
11. **Regional Coordination:** Ensuring coordination of existing initiatives and avoiding duplication of efforts through fostering dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and replication of successful projects. Support the development of **Regional Working Groups:** Policy & Legislation, Sustainable Financing, Data Management, Technical (infrastructure, treatment & final disposal).

ENDORSEMENT


The decisions made during this forum will shape the environmental and public health outcomes of the Caribbean for decades to come. Urgent action is needed to transition toward a circular economy and zero waste management practices.


With the right partnerships, we can achieve transformative changes that ensure a prosperous, sustainable, and resilient future for our region. This declaration represents our collective vision and commitment to advancing Integrated Sustainable Waste Management practices, securing a resilient and prosperous future for our region and its people.

We, the Caribbean Ministers responsible for Waste Management, gathered with the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association and regional partners, hereby endorse the Waste Management Declaration of Port of Spain 2024.



Signed:

Carolina Santana




Martin Gonzalez
