

**Remarks by the President of the UN General
Assembly Mr. Philemon Yang at the
International Day of Zero Waste
15:00 hrs, 27 March 2025, GA Hall**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I commend the Permanent Mission of Türkiye, as well as the United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations-Habitat for organizing today's important event.

I am also pleased to see the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, with us and look forward to hearing his remarks.

I extend my appreciation to the First Lady of Türkiye, Mrs. Emine Erdoğan, for her esteemed presence today to deliver the keynote address.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Day of Zero Waste is an important platform for sharing knowledge, fostering collaboration, and promoting best practices.

By raising awareness and encouraging innovative solutions, this day supports our global transition from a linear “take-make-dispose” economy to a circular one.

One where materials are reused and recycled efficiently.

This conversation is especially timely as we implement the Pact for the Future, which calls for accelerated efforts to restore, protect, conserve and sustainably use the environment.

We must work to create a world with zero waste and dismantle the barriers standing in the way of this goal.

Excellencies,

The theme for this year “Towards zero waste in fashion and textile” is extremely relevant.

The fashion industry is responsible for an estimated 2-8% of global greenhouse gas emissions annually.

It is also the second-biggest consumer of water and contributes 9% of the annual microplastic pollution found in the ocean.

Yet, this sector plays a crucial role in global economic growth.

This is particularly true in developing countries, where the clothing industry is a key driver of employment, trade, and industrialization.

It is also a major international employment sector, providing jobs to over 75 million people – many of them women.

We must strike a balance between the economic benefits of this industry and mitigating its environmental harms.

Zero-waste approaches must be integrated into the business models of the fashion and textile industries, without jeopardizing labour conditions.

Excellencies,

I am committed to support Member States in addressing the challenges of zero waste.

And to advancing the Pact for the Future's call for the sustainable use of the environment by finding circular solutions.

Achieving this call demands collective action over the long term.

Across Governments, businesses and civil society.

This is what will drive systemic change.

Together, we must ensure a healthier planet and a more sustainable future for generations to come.

I thank you.