

**Executive Director of UN-Habitat  
International Zero Waste Day 2025**

**Remarks at the high-level New York event  
27 March 2025**

**Excellencies, distinguished guests,**

Cities are generating more waste than ever.

Every year, over 2 billion tonnes of municipal waste pile up, with fashion and textiles making up a growing share.

Fast fashion is worsening the crisis, filling cities with waste and polluting land and water.

In informal settlements and slums, where waste collection is scarce, the impact is even more severe.

But cities can lead the way.

Consumers can rethink their choices – buying less and choosing sustainable options.

Industry can innovate – designing textiles that last longer, can be reused, or safely recycled.

Governments can support circular businesses that reduce textile waste.

And cities can take the lead – investing in waste management, promoting reuse, and integrating informal waste workers into the solution.

I want to commend the outstanding zero-waste initiatives selected by the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Zero Waste. The board received over 200 submissions from individuals, companies and organizations in the fashion and textile industry worldwide. It is truly inspiring to witness so many proactive efforts driving change.

We extend our deep appreciation to the Republic of Türkiye for its leadership in advancing the zero-waste agenda and to Her Excellency, First Lady Emine Erdoğan, for bringing this issue to the global stage.

UN-Habitat looks forward to strengthening collaboration with all partners as we work together toward a future with zero waste.

On this International Day of Zero Waste, let us act. A waste-free future starts in our cities.

Thank you.