

*Establishing common guidelines for  
industrial waste management*

**Committee Guide**

*UN Environment Programme Governing  
Council*





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## Personal Introduction

Dear delegates,

My name is Mendy Stad and this year I will be one of your chairs overseeing the UNEP. I am Dutch, and during OLMUN I will be 19. I'm currently in my first year of International Relations and International Organizations at the RUG in Groningen. This OLMUN will probably be my 15th MUN, my fifth OLMUN, and my third time chairing. In my free time I like to read, hang out with friends and people from SIB, the student association I'm part of. I'm looking forward to fruitful and lively debates, making new friends, and reliving the wonderful atmosphere of OLMUN that I have experienced before, and that I hope you too will experience. See you at OLMUN 2015!

Honorable delegates,

my name is Hauke Hawighorst and I will serve as one of your chairs at UNEP GC. I am currently attending Gymnasium Eversten in Oldenburg. I got my MUN-experience (FC-MUN, HSNU-MUN and Taipei-MUN) during my exchange in Taipei, Taiwan. Furthermore I am an active member of our student council as the representative of grade 11. In my free time I do scuba diving.

I am looking forward to a fruitful debate with a lot of informed and well-prepared delegates as well as the unique atmosphere.

# 1. The Committee

The United Nations Environmental Programme was established on June 5th, 1972 by the General Assembly. Its full name is the United Nations Environmental Programme Governing Council. It was established to coordinate environmental policies, especially in LEDCs (Less Economically Developed Countries). It covers subjects such as but not limited to the atmosphere, ecosystems, both earthly and marine and governance relating to the environment on a regional and international level.

It has established several organizations and treaties itself, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the Montreal Protocol which deals with protecting the ozone layer. It also is one of the main actors in the Rio Treaty.

The UNEP GC also supports scientific research on the environment by providing analysis and assessments of the environment and it also simulates international policies to find out what the consequences would be.

UNEP's mission is "To provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations"<sup>1</sup>.



## 2. The Topic

### 2.1 Industrial Waste

What exactly is industrial waste? According to Collins Dictionary, it is "*waste materials left over from a manufacturing process in industrial buildings such as factories and mines*". Basically, it is waste produced by industrial activity, and it has existed since the Industrial Revolution. For example, in a metal factory, there are some metal scraps which the factory cannot use anymore. Those scraps therefore would be industrial waste.

Industrial waste can be either solid, fluid or gaseous. These solids can be biodegradable, like waste from slaughterhouses and the food processing industry, and non-biodegradable, like waste from refineries, steel plants and thermal power plants. The fluids are often chemicals dissolved in water. Both solids and fluids can be hazardous and non-hazardous. A relatively new kind of waste is electronic or e-waste, i.e. broken computers, televisions, and other electronics. These contain hazardous substances such as mercury, lead and zinc.

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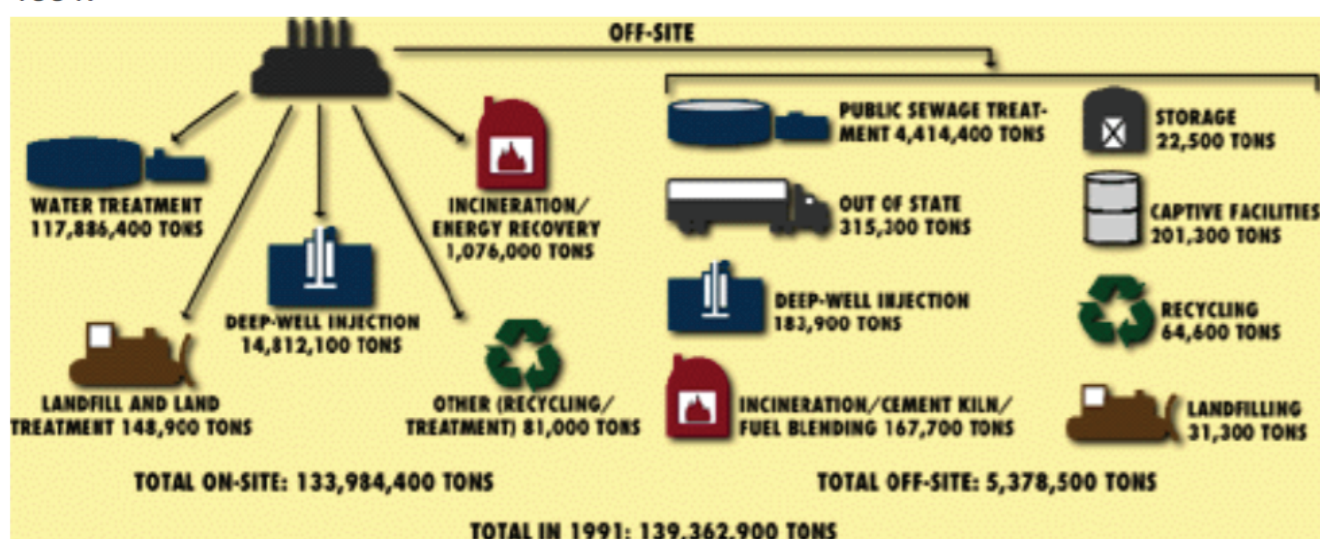
<sup>1</sup> Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations\\_Environment\\_Programme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Environment_Programme)



When industrial waste is dumped into the ecosystem without any processing or any attempt to remove the harmful components, it can be a disaster for the environment, as plants and animals die or suffer from those components. And it can harm humans because we use resources from the land and from animals.

In the past, industries were inclined to dump all their industrial waste in rivers, disturbing the ecosystem and killing tons of fish and other water animals. For example, illegal disposal of asbestos still happens. Asbestos can affect humans with its carcinogenic characteristics, especially in the United States where there is no ban on asbestos, but also in LEDCs where there are no or too few guidelines of waste management.

There are several ways of processing industrial waste. The main ways are mentioned in this illustration of waste management of the state Texas, USA in 1991.



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## 2.2 Waste Management

The illustration shows two types of waste processing: there is on-site waste processing (at the factory itself) and off-site waste processing, (not carried out by the factory itself and not at the factory site either).

“Water treatment” means harmful chemicals are filtered out of the water, both by the factory itself and by public sewage treatment plants.

The technique of a “Landfill” is used when solid hazardous waste is deposited and covered in order to minimise the chance of release in the ecosystem as a final disposal.

“Land treatment” is based on the same idea, but in this case the goal is to reduce toxicity, usually by using organisms like bacteria to remove or neutralize the toxics, so land treatment is not the final disposal method.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.texascenter.org/almanac/Waste/INDUSTRIALCH9P3.HTML>

“Deep well injection” is a way to process fluid waste. Fluids are placed deeply underground into porous rock formation, which is rock that allows the fluids to seep through the layers. The depth of the injection depends on the kind of fluid: already treated water is injected quite close to the base of underground drinking water, but hazardous or non-hazardous industrial waste is injected deep into the ground.

“Incineration” refers to the burning of waste materials. The energy generated there can be used in the factory’s process. It can also be used to create a certain kind of cement or to mix industrial fluid waste with commercial fuels to fuel e.g. industrial furnaces.

Of course, recycling is also a part of the industrial waste processing. It can be done both on and off-site. If none of the mentioned treatment methods can be carried out, facilities off-site will store the waste in storages or captive facilities.

Many countries have their own guidelines which differ a lot from country to country, depending on their size, economic development, population, the government, etc. The European Union is one of the few regions that have established common guidelines for industrial waste management. All countries of the European Union have to stick to those guidelines. The challenge for you, delegates, is to develop guidelines of a similar kind, but for all UN member states.

In these guidelines you should mention which kind of industrial waste your regulations concern, which ways of waste processing should be used (deep well injection, water treatment...), which way is the cheapest, which way is the best from an ecological perspective, etc. These guidelines have to be realistic for both MEDCs (More Economically Developed Countries), and the LEDCs, all over the world. All these are aspects you should consider.

### **3. Possible solutions**

First of all, when you are thinking about possible solutions, keep in mind that you should always take the entire environment into consideration, so your measures should work on a global scale, and remember that it is also possible to combine several solutions.

Second of all, remember that the debate is about establishing common guidelines so you might also want to include mechanisms of overseeing the implementation of these guidelines.

One approach to this problem is using the best technology available. By using the best technology that is available, inefficient and less environmentally



friendly technologies are not used, and this of course avoids environmental damage.

Investing in and promoting research and development to ensure steady improvement of today's technologies will help the industry in terms of efficiency. It also reduces the burden that waste management technologies have for our environment.

Another idea is to minimise the waste per product, without reducing the amount that is produced. This means establishing international standards for the amount of waste per product. In order to establish realistic guidelines, you need to know what the lowest technologically achievable amount is. Based on this data, you can define today's limits and try to set realistic future aims for the industry.

Many products are today being recycled or reused. This can be enhanced by changing the conception of products: they should already be designed with the recycling process in mind. This means consciously choosing recyclable or reusable materials. As the UNEP, you can encourage this with your resolutions.

Last but not least, you should think about ideas that have an impact on a global scale, rather than thinking about solutions applying on a national scale. Try to act on a global level because pollution does the same!

## 4. Research

In order to actively participate in the debate, we expect you to do research. There are two things you need to research: your country and the topic. First, get to know basic facts about your country, then you should also do research about the topic itself. Just reading this committee guide is not enough.

These two documents can give you an idea about the opinion of your country: the CIA World Fact Book and the OLMUN Handbook.

With this information, you should be able to write a policy statement: a short speech which summarises your country's position about this topic. Do not make this too long, try to keep it around 150 words. We also expect you to write a draft resolution. Again, for more explanation, check the handbook.

Please send the policy statement and the draft resolution to [unep@olmun.org](mailto:unep@olmun.org) by **May 25<sup>th</sup>** so we can look it through and send you some feedback.

## 5. Useful Sources

**CIA World Fact Book**

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

**Programs acknowledged by UNIDO sorted by country**

[https://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user\\_media/Services/Environmental\\_Management/Cleaner\\_Production/RECP\\_Network\\_Contacts\\_Oct\\_2010.pdf](https://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media/Services/Environmental_Management/Cleaner_Production/RECP_Network_Contacts_Oct_2010.pdf)

**List of databases provided by UNEP**

<http://www.unep.org/gpwm/InformationPlatform/WasteManagementDatabases/tabid/79590/Default.aspx>

**Classification of different types of industrial waste according to a governmental organization of the United States**

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/guide/index.htm>

**General Guidelines by the UNEP**

Annex pages 88 to 102 can be used for further sources when looking for information about your country

<http://www.unep.org/ietc/Portals/136/Publications/Waste%20Management/UNEP%20NWMS%20English.pdf>

