

Suggestions for newly elected president of South Korea

: How can we build a sustainable Zero Waste Society

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Korea Zero Waste Movement Network

1. Achieving zero discards to the landfill or incineration by 2022

(1) New Deal for Zero Waste green jobs: More than 30 local governments in the U.S. announced plans for 100% diversion by 2020. About 100,000 jobs are expected to be created through implementation of the Zero Waste goals.

(2) Maximize reuse and recycling: Recycling is critical for countries with scant natural resources like Korea. While many developed countries approach resource management in the perspective of resource security, Korea still lacks awareness-building efforts and infrastructures. Policies focused on resources security should be developed to ensure high quality recycling and promote resource circulation.

(3) Readjust landfill/incineration tax and reduce waiver on hazardous substances

2. Building Zero Waste Network 'Upcycling Korea'

(1) Establish a database of local Zero Waste practices

- Precise statistics on waste including local level should be prioritized. Currently local governments manually process data on household waste after receiving them from contracted waste management companies to report to the central government.
- Proper statistical system, especially at the local level, should be put in place in order to provide adequate information to the public.

(2) Improve collection and transportation system

- Automated transfer stations are not being properly managed because they are not classified as waste management facilities. Transfer stations should be incorporated in the current waste management system by amending relevant statutes.
- Korea should create an enabling environment to encourage waste management companies equipped with high technology and expertise to expand their practices nationwide while ensuring that there are more than 5 companies in each local autonomous entity to strengthen the competitiveness.

(3) Build an infrastructure for effective recycling

- The government should stabilize the price of recycling materials to prevent resources from ending up either in landfill or incinerator depending on the unstable market price.
- Extended Producer Responsibility(EPR) must be strengthened because current waste levy system and voluntary agreement system can be misused to avoid recycling cost. Packaging industry should start manufacture with recyclable materials instead of plastic.
- Efficient management of organic waste can be achieved by raising awareness on composting and strengthening the role of local governments in treating food waste effluent. Especially, solidifying sewage sludge for landfill should not be understood as recycling.
- The government should develop technologies and induce investment to improve the quality of recycling materials with less logistical cost.

(4) Promote culture of sharing in towns and cities

- More reuse markets and sharing markets should be placed in the city to promote the culture of sharing. Also supporting reform centers and social enterprises could contribute to boosting the culture of upcycling.

3. Vitalizing voluntary civic participation

(1) Establish a public-private governance for greater public support on Zero Waste policies

- Gaining support from the public as well as building institutional and physical infrastructures is crucial for achieving a circular economy.
- The government should operate education programs to offer citizens opportunities to learn about reducing, reusing, recycling in their daily life.
- In order to reduce the amount of waste generated at the local, collaboration with environmental organizations must be institutionalized through participatory governance.

(2) Support development of voluntary resource management models at the local level

- A more autonomous model of waste management should be developed at the local level as waste resources can add value to connecting environment and social welfare. Financially supporting a social enterprise that works to assist low-income senior citizens to collect and sort out waste resources can be an example.
- Despite the fact that as high as 80% of all collected materials for recycling comes from junk shops, there have been legal restrictions on junk shops which label them as illegal. Korea should protect low-cost and high efficiency practices of junk shops by amending the National Land Use Law.