

Appendix: Declarations

In March 2008 participants from 34 countries gathered in Bogotá, Colombia for the First World Conference of Waste Pickers and the Third Conference of Latin American Waste Pickers which was timed to coincide with the global event. In addition to waste pickers, the event was attended by researchers and representatives of development agencies, NGOs, private enterprise and government.

Led by waste pickers, the conference participants developed and endorsed a Global Declaration of the First World Conference of Waste Pickers. The Latin American waste pickers also developed and endorsed the Declaration of the Third Regional Conference of Latin American Waste Pickers. Both declarations focus on increasing recognition of the work done by waste pickers, improving their position within the waste management system and value chain, transforming waste management systems to make them more environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive, and increasing the organising and networking capabilities of waste pickers around the world.

Declaration of the Third Regional Conference of Latin American Waste Pickers

In Bogotá, between the 1st and 4th of March 2008, the delegates of 15 Latin American countries –Argentina, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador, Paraguay, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Haití, and Colombia– gathered as members of grassroots organisations of waste pickers, also known as *pepenadores*, *cartoneros*, *cirujas*, *clasificadores*, *buceadores*, *guajeros*, *minadores*, *catadores*, *thawis*, *barequeros* and countless other denominations according to where they come from. We declare the following commitments in the framework of the Third Latin American Conference of Waste Pickers to the public, governments, communities, society in general, co-operation agencies and our own organisations:

- To promote globally recognition of the profession of waste pickers and our organisations through creating spaces for discussion and to develop strategies for having an active presence in those spaces.
- Generate actions and strategies for the recognition of the Latin American Network of waste picker organisations and to certify the work and the profession of waste pickers and our organisations.
- Commitment to share and socialise knowledge to waste pickers and their national organisations, their local structures and the members of the different movements.
- Promote the progress of waste pickers and their organisations in the value chain to gain access and share in the benefits generated by the activity.
- Contribute to a world mobilisation from each country in a connected effort that seeks to have a World Day of the Waste Picker aimed at recognition of the activity and of the people who work as such.

- The congress participants demand from governments that they prioritise waste pickers' organisations in the solid waste management system, giving the required conditions for their inclusion, through the development of social, financial and environmental affirmative actions.
- Review laws and public policies so that they include waste pickers organisations in their formulation, considering them as actors in decision-making
- The participant organisations commit to generating the capacity-building, training and knowledge to professionalise the activity.
- The global commitment to promote contact with as many waste pickers and waste picker organisations as possible.
- Advance together with the world, regional and local committees with the aim of controlling the value chain and its income, through networks and production centres.
- To work to implement the commitments of the Declaration of the Second Latin American Congress of Waste Pickers.

March, 2008

Global Declaration of the First World Conference of Waste Pickers

At the First World Conference of Waste Pickers, grassroots organisations of waste pickers from around the world gathered in Bogotá, Colombia, from March 1st to 4th, 2008, representing waste pickers from Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, make a declaration to the public, governments, support organisations, society in general, and their own organisations, joined by technical advisor delegates, technical support organisations, government representatives, non-governmental organisations, universities, enterprises, micro-enterprises and other civil society groups.

We Declare:

- Our commitment to work for the social and economic inclusion of the waste picker population, promote and strengthen their organisations, to help them move forward in the value chain, and link with the formal Solid Waste Management systems, which should give priority to waste pickers and their organisations.
- Our agreement to reject incineration and burial based processing technologies and to demand and work on schemes of maximum utilisation of waste, as activities of re-use, re-cycling and composting represent popular economy alternatives for informal and marginalised sectors of the world population.
- Our commitment to continue sharing knowledge, experience and technology, as these actions will promote and accelerate contact with the greatest possible number of waste pickers and their organisations across the world, making visible their living and working conditions and their contributions to sustainable development.
- Our commitment to advocate for improved laws and public policies so that their formulation effectively involves waste picker organisations. Waste pickers should become actors in decision-making, searching for improved common conditions, and for capacity-building activities and knowledge for the recognition and professionalisation of their work.

March, 2008



Refusing to be Cast Aside: Waste Pickers Organising Around the World

Edited by Melanie Samson

In cities across the world, millions of people sustain themselves and their families by reclaiming reusable and recyclable materials from what others have cast aside as waste. They are frequently ignored within public policy processes and harassed and persecuted by authorities. However, waste pickers from around the world are beginning to organise. They are demanding recognition for the contributions that they make to the environment and the economy, and they are fighting to ensure that their role within municipal waste management systems is valued and made more secure. This book profiles waste pickers, the organisations and networks that they have formed and the struggles that they are waging in a number of countries. It looks at how the law has been used to advance waste pickers' rights and how municipal waste management systems in some cities have been transformed to formally integrate waste pickers. It also explores how waste pickers in different places have been affected by, and responded to, privatisation.

