

# An Open Letter to the Japanese International Cooperation Agency in the Philippines

30 January 2023

---

*This statement is released in response to JICA's statements that it has not been supporting WTE incinerators in Davao City published in Sunstar Davao<sup>1</sup> and Mindanews<sup>2</sup>*

We, the undersigned alliances and organizations, are deeply concerned about the integrity of the statements recently released by the Japan International Cooperation Agency for its lack of accountability on past and present efforts in promoting and investing in false solutions to waste management and climate in Davao City. In the articles, it has disclaimed its support for the WTE incinerator project as it impedes the rights of affected communities to receive adequate information, to be heard, to seek redress and file complaints to accountable institutions.

Since 2010, JICA has been instrumental in the entry of Waste-to-Energy (WTE) incinerators in Davao City. The development assistance which began as a Collaboration Program with the Private Sector for Disseminating Japanese Technology<sup>3</sup> commenced in March 2018 with the signing of the Japanese Government and the Republic of the Philippines of a grant agreement worth PhP 2.052 billion to fund the construction and operation of a PhP 5.23 billion WtE incinerator in the City. The remaining project cost of around PhP 3 billion will be covered by the Philippine Government which was already requested for release through a resolution by the Davao City Council in August 2022 — an amount equivalent to more than 60 percent of the entire annual budget of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The feasibility report of the WTE project in Davao<sup>4</sup> stressed that the absence of prior experience in managing and operating WTE facilities is a big hurdle in the Philippines, and the limited capacity of the municipality to cover the cost of waste treatment with WTE technology. It also added that proper legal and regulatory scheme are all required to implement the first project of full-scale WTE facility<sup>5</sup>.

These statements indicate a recognition of the legal barriers put in place by the Filipino people through our Congress to safeguard our health and the environment as stated in the Clean Air Act and the Solid Waste Management Act.

Yet, JICA has continued promoting its Japanese technology despite a standing legal ban on incinerators now being defended by environmental advocates in the Supreme Court and in the midst of City-wide

---

<sup>1</sup> [JICA clarifies it is not funding WTE project in Davao City](#), Sunstar, 30 January 2023

<sup>2</sup> [JICA says it's neither funding nor implementing proposed WTE facility in Davao City](#), Mindanews, 28 January 2023

<sup>3</sup> This landing site from JICA's website shows the agency's involvement since 2010.

[https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our\\_work/social\\_environmental/id/asia/southeast/category\\_c.html](https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/social_environmental/id/asia/southeast/category_c.html)

<sup>4</sup> [Final Report. Collaboration Program with the Private Sector for Disseminating Japanese Technology for Waste-to-Energy system in Davao City published by the Republic of the Philippines Davao City Environment and Natural Resources Office](#), May 2016

<sup>5</sup> [Fund for P2B waste-to-energy project in Davao City still available](#), Manila Buletin, 22 January 2023

opposition to the project. JICA's assistance flowed to systematically undermine the policy barriers for the entry of this Japanese technology in our waste management system. JICA has directly engaged in the development of waste management guidelines, supported interagency meetings to discuss implementation arrangements for its project<sup>6</sup>, and facilitated learning tours of government officials and waste regulators to WTE incinerator sites in Kitakyushu City, Japan. This cooperation continued without access to information and meaningful consultations that city residents have continued to oppose<sup>7</sup>.

As rightly identified in the feasibility study, 50% of the area is afforested or tropical forest of which 43% is used for agriculture where bananas, pineapples, coffee, and coconuts cover most of these agricultural areas. When operationalized, the WTE incinerator will produce globally known harmful byproducts such as dioxins, furans, mercury that will have dire implications to crop and soil health, air quality, the ecosystems, health and food security.

The WTE incinerator is not the answer to our City's limited capacity for collection and segregation that was identified in the project feasibility. We would hope that development institutions like JICA see their support to capacitate our local governments to fully implement the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act and the provision of financing for existing Zero Waste systems and innovations that are deemed to be a just and more appropriate option for managing our waste.

We respectfully urge JICA to withdraw its support for Waste-to-Energy in Davao City and elsewhere in the country in respect to our ban on incinerators. We also encourage JICA to ensure transparency and accountability in their development projects to ensure that the benefits of the development vision are equitably shared with and for disadvantaged groups. ###

**Signed by:**

**National Groups**

**Philippines**

1. Buklod Tao
2. Cavite Green Coalition
3. Consumer Rights for Safe Food
4. Developing the Youth with Environmentally Sustainable Advocacies to Build and Empower Lives (DYESABEL) Philippines
5. Ecowaste Coalition
6. Ecoteneo
7. EGIP Foundation, Inc.
8. Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (IDIS), Inc.
9. Institute for the Development of Educational and Ecological Alternatives Inc. (IDEAS – Cavite)
10. Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad (MASIPAG–Mindanao)
11. Mintal Resource Collectors Association
12. Mother Earth Foundation
13. Panalipdan Youth – Davao
14. Pangasinan People's Strike for the Environment (Eco Dangla)
15. Partnership for Clean Air

---

<sup>6</sup> [The Project for Capacity Development on Improving Solid Waste Management through Advanced/Innovative Technologies](#). DENR Newsletter January 2021

<sup>7</sup> Petition to Davao City Council and Mayor Sebastian Duterte "[No to WTE incineration in Davao! Go for genuine zero waste solutions!](#)" by No Burn Davao

16. Pag-asa Youth Association of the Philippines – Mintal Chapter
17. Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ) Davao Chapter
18. Pundok Sagop Kalikupan
19. Sanlakas
20. Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance, Inc. (SSMNAI)
21. Sustainable Davao Movement
22. United Cycling Adventure Society Inc.
23. War on Waste - Negros Oriental
24. Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP) — Visayas
25. Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP) — Mindanao
26. Youth for Climate Justice (Y4CJ)
27. Zero Waste Baguio, Inc.

### **Indonesia**

28. Bali Waste Platform
29. Ecoton Foundation
30. Nexus3 Foundation
31. Komunitas Nol Sampah Surabaya / Surabaya Zero Waste Community
32. Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI) / Friends of the Earth Indonesia

### **India**

33. Centre for Financial Accountability
34. Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group
35. Eco Circular India Foundation
36. Stree Mukti Sanghatana

### **Bangladesh**

37. ASD-Bangladesh
38. Women & Child Development Organization (APARAJITA)

### **Malaysia**

39. Sahabat Alam Malaysia

### **Viet Nam**

40. No-Burn Vietnam Network (NBV)

### **The People's Republic of China**

41. Blue Dalian

### **The United Kingdom**

42. Derby & South Derbyshire Unfriends the Burning Earth

### **The United States of America**

43. Zero Waste Ithaca

### **Mongolia**

44. Ecosoum NGO

### **South Africa**

45. Zero Waste Association of South Africa (ZWASA)

### **Tanzania**

46. Innovation for Life group

47. IRTECO

### **Argentina**

48. Taller Ecologista

### **Regional Groups**

49. Centre de Recherche et d'Education pour le Développement (CREPD)

50. Greenpeace Southeast Asia

51. Health Care Without Harm Southeast Asia

52. NGO Forum on ADB

### **International Groups**

53. American Environmental Health Studies Project (AEHSP)

54. Break Free From Plastic

55. Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives

56. International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN)

57. Oceana