



UN-HABITAT

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### First ever World Cleanup Day to launch in Tromsø, Norway

**Nairobi, 28 August 2024** – On 20 September, the world will come together in Tromsø, Norway, for the first-ever World Cleanup Day. This global event, established by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2023, will be celebrated annually to combat the urgent issue of mismanaged waste and pollution and to encourage worldwide participation in voluntary cleanup activities.

**WHAT:** Inaugural observance of World Cleanup Day  
**WHEN:** 20 September 2024  
**WHERE:** Fram Centre, Tromsø, Norway  
**WHO:** Organized by UN-Habitat, GRID-Arendal, and the Norwegian Retailers' Environment Fund (NREF), in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development of Norway, Tromsø Municipality, Let's Do It World, and Fram Centre

The inaugural event in Tromsø will spotlight the theme “Arctic Cities and Marine Litter,” focusing on the need to protect vulnerable and remote ecosystems from pollution. Norway’s national cleanup initiatives, such as the “Cleanup Norway in Time” programme, have set a global benchmark for environmental stewardship, demonstrating the effectiveness of combining government support, voluntary participation, and professional management.

“Our world is facing an environmental crisis. Around 40 per cent of global municipal waste, 2.3 billion tonnes, is not properly managed. By mobilizing cities and communities in clean-up initiatives, UN-Habitat wants to raise awareness about the pressing issue of waste pollution and promote sustainable approaches to waste disposal and treatment,” said Michal Mlynár, Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

“We are honoured and proud to be elected to host the world’s first UN Cleanup Day,” says Cecilie Lind, Chief Executive Officer of the Norwegian Retailers’ Environment Fund. “We look forward to sharing our knowledge, experience and results with the world. Additionally, we hope to inspire and enable other countries to adopt and expand our model of nationwide professional cleanups, like our ‘Cleanup Norway in Time’ initiative.”

Since 2015, the Norwegian government has supported national cleanup efforts. NREF’s “Cleanup Norway in Time” programme, the world’s first professional national cleanup

initiative, cleared 40 per cent of Norway's outer coastline from plastics between 2021 and 2023, with a target of reaching 55 per cent by 2024.

"World Cleanup Day presents us with a tool to spread awareness and empower the public in the fight to prevent waste from ending up in nature," remarks Karen Landmark, Managing Director at GRID-Arendal – an environmental non-profit organization based in Norway contributing to the development of policies aimed at mitigating marine litter and plastic pollution and supporting the development of sustainable waste management practices. "We think it will also provide an additional incentive for those participating in the final Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee negotiations to achieve something truly remarkable – a comprehensive global plastics treaty."

UN-Habitat – the United Nations agency dedicated to promoting sustainable urban development – has been entrusted the facilitation of the global observance of World Cleanup Day. UN-Habitat will leverage its expertise in waste management, sustainable development, and environmental advocacy to drive coordinated global action.

For more information and updates on World Cleanup Day, visit the official [UN-Habitat World Cleanup Day webpage](#).

### **About UN-Habitat**

UN-Habitat is the United Nations entity responsible for sustainable urbanization. It has programmes in over 90 countries supporting policymakers and communities to create socially and environmentally sustainable cities and towns. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action. To know more, visit [unhabitat.org](https://unhabitat.org) or follow us on X @UNHABITAT.

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