



# Kpone Landfill Waste Pickers Association

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## PRESS STATEMENT

### International Waste Pickers Day Celebrations

On this occasion of the commemoration of International Waste Pickers Day, we the members of the Kpone Landfill Waste Pickers Association extend our best wishes to all informal waste pickers in Ghana and around the world. The International Waste Pickers Day which is remembered annually on March 1<sup>st</sup> in honour of eleven Waste Pickers who were cruelly murdered in a Colombian University in 1992. On that terrible day, the waste pickers were tricked by personnel from the Universidad Libre de Barranquilla, who invited them to enter into the premises of the university under the pretense of providing them with recyclable waste materials. Once inside they were beaten and shot to death so that their bodies could be used for medical research and organ trafficking.

As waste pickers commemorate this day in remembrance of this tragic incident, we also bring to the fore the challenges confronting informal waste pickers as we struggle to provide essential environmental services for our communities and the country. Therefore, on this occasion of the International Waste Picker's Day, the Kpone Landfill Waste Pickers Association wish to join other waste pickers in Ghana and the International Alliance of Waste Pickers in remembrance of the tragedy of this day and to echo the many challenges confronting waste pickers. Waste pickers in Ghana are still confronted with diverse challenges including but not limited to stigmatization, disrespect, exclusion, and our livelihoods are often threatened in most cases.

Notwithstanding these challenges, waste pickers continue to make important contributions to solid waste management, environmental services and supporting many livelihoods in the country. Waste pickers collect and divert recyclable waste materials from the landfills thereby increasing the lifespan of the landfill sites and diverting large quantities of materials into the circular economy. Waste pickers also contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In 2019, waste pickers at the Kpone landfill site prevented the emission of 23,500 Tonnes of eCO<sub>2</sub>, through recycling materials and preventing them from being burned on the site.

Therefore, on the occasion of this year's International Waste Picker's Day, we the Kpone Landfill Waste Pickers Association wish to highlight the following concerns:

1. The Kpone landfill site is the main source of income and livelihood for over 500 waste pickers and our families. Decisions on the management of the landfill site should take into account the concerns of waste pickers through due consultation and engagement to safeguard and protect livelihoods of waste pickers and our families.
2. Whilst we have over the years provided critical services in municipal solid waste management (SWM) in the country, we are still not integrated into municipal SWM systems. We therefore urge Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies to integrate informal waste pickers into the solid waste management systems through the provision of contracts for recycling service provision and secure conditions for work.
3. We the waste pickers working on the Kpone Landfill Site have established a waste picker cooperative and have been proactively exploring and piloting waste collection services in low-income coastal communities but without any support from the government. We therefore wish to appeal to the government and private sector to support our cooperative with the essential logistics, infrastructure, and financial support to secure community waste management contracts to enable us undertake door-step waste collection.
4. Informal waste pickers are often not recognized as important stakeholders that provide waste management and environmental services. We therefore wish to use this remarkable day to call for the recognition of, and effective inclusion of waste pickers through our membership-based organizations in decision making processes and structures that have implications for waste pickers.

Kindly contact Mr. Divine Dekonor (Secretary of the Association) on **0551332614** should you require any further clarifications or information.

Long live the global solidarity of waste pickers!!

**SIGNED**

Johnson Doe

Chairman, Kpone Landfill Waste Pickers Association

Accra – Ghana