

INC5 Observer Statement - BVRio

BVRio started working with waste pickers 12 years ago in Rio de Janeiro. Now we work with them in many other countries too. In fact, over 10,000 waste pickers have made use of our KOLEKT App and Circular Credits Mechanism, and recently we surveyed 2,000 of them, with help of EU Africa Rise, which has informed our statement today.

We wish to emphasise the importance of the largest workforce in waste management in the world. The informal collectors or waste pickers.

Waste Pickers are active in most countries in the world from Los Angeles to Rio de Janeiro, from Durban to Athens and from Istanbul to Jakarta.

- They are a workforce of an estimated 19 to 25 million professionals
- They are responsible for 60% of all the recyclables collected globally today
- In the global south 1 in every 300 citizens is likely to be an informal collector.

They are also the most efficient waste sorting workforce that we have. In fact, on a per dollar basis, they are far more efficient at sorting from source to recycler than all the high tech sorting technologies available today.

BVRio champions the work of thousands of waste collectors, and they have asked us to ask the governments at INC-5 to acknowledge and prioritise the following:

1. Waste pickers should be a priority and an integral part of the UN treaty and EPR legislation. Without informal collectors there is no recycling industry;
2. Waste pickers should have VAT and tax charges waived, because they cannot off-set tax charges like normal companies can;
3. Waste pickers need to be guaranteed a fair share of EPR subsidies, because the normal EPR subsidies given to recyclers are assumed to trickle down to waste pickers. However, in our experience, trickle down economics does not work for informal collectors;
4. Many informal collectors do not wish to be formalised, for many reasons, and ask that this is respected and that ways are found to include these informal workers in any new waste management legislation.

On behalf of waste pickers, please include the world's largest waste workforce in the treaty text.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

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