INTERNATIONAL COMPOST ALLIANCE

HEALTHY SOILS • HEALTHY PLANET

ICA Press Release

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The International Compost Alliance calls for immediate action on food waste recycling at COP30

- The International Compost Alliance highlights that the recycling of unavoidable food waste constitutes an effective measure to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.
- The International Compost Alliance calls for the implementation of efficient systems to collect and recycle food waste.

The waste sector currently contributes to around 3% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. But according to recent findings, better waste and resource management could significantly contribute to mitigate global GHG emissions. Since food waste accounts for nearly 50% of total emissions, it represents a major opportunity for emission reduction.

Indeed, part of this food waste is difficult to avoid, and by ensuring that this unavoidable waste is separately collected and recycled, it can be diverted from landfill, thereby significantly reducing methane emissions.

Furthermore, the recycling of food waste produces high-value organic fertilisers and soil improvers which contain valuable nutrients and carbon-rich organic matter. When returned to the soil, the compost serves as a “carbon bank”, helping to store carbon and removing it from the atmosphere. Globally, compost could save up to 98 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents every year through carbon stored in soils but also thanks to avoided emissions from fertilisers.

Organic fertilisers and soil improvers can also contribute to food security. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, 95% of our food is directly or indirectly produced on our soils. Healthy soil is therefore essential to supply the necessary nutrients, water, oxygen and root support that the plants need. Soil health is primarily determined by its organic carbon content. It is widely recognised[1] that compost has the capacity to increase the organic carbon content of soil, thereby bringing key environmental benefits in terms of soil structure, water holding capacity, and microbiological activity. Digestate contains readily available nutrients and can be used to replace mineral fertilisers. Repeated

[1] Gilbert, J. et. al. 2020: Quantifying the Benefits of Applying Quality Compost to Soil. @ISWA Report 4: https://www.iswa.org/biological-treatment-of-waste/?v=3a52f3c22ed6

applications of compost derived from food waste confers benefits to soil health and aids its productivity.

Therefore, the International Compost Alliance urges the Parties to take decisive action to accelerate the recycling of unavoidable food waste into valuable organic fertilisers and soil improvers, returning these nutrients back to the soil. To achieve this, countries should implement efficient separate collection and recycling systems to maximize the amount of food waste captured and treated. In this way, they could contribute substantially to the reduction and mitigation of GHG emissions and improving the circularity of managed bioresources.

We welcome that the Parties engaged in 2025 in global dialogues[2] focusing on the waste sector, as part of the 'mitigation ambition and implementation work programme', and we hope that reducing emissions from food waste will be duly considered in the future negotiations.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

The International Compost Alliance is comprised of:

The Renewable Energy Association (REA);

The Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA);

Compost Council of Canada (CCC);

European Compost Network (ECN);

International Solid Waste Association (ISWA);

Italian Composting and Biogas Association (CIC);

CRÉ - Composting and Anaerobic Digestion Association of Ireland;

The Organics Recycling Association of South Africa (ORASA);

WasteMINZ (Waste Management Institute of New Zealand);

The United States Composting Council (USCC); and

The Compost Research & Education Foundation (CREF)

Contact:

Aisha Afeef, Communications Executive: aafeef@r-e-a.net

[2] Moosmann, L., Siemons, A., Fallasch, F., Urrutia, C., Schneider, L., 2025, The COP30 climate change conference - Part I: Framework of COP negotiations and main expected issues, publication for the Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety (ENVI), Policy Department for Transformation, Innovation and Health, European Parliament, Luxembourg. European Parliament, link: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2025/772482/ECTI_STU(2025)772482_EN.pdf