

Summary Report

Online Joint Dialogue on Waste Management in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

12:30h–15:40h, Monday, 13 July 2020

Session I: Opening

Welcome Speech; Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA

- This Online Joint Dialogue is the second joint activity based on the ‘MOU to Develop AIPA’s Capacity on Matters Concerning ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Economic Integration in Various Areas’ signed by ERIA and AIPA in 2016.
- ERIA published a Policy Brief entitled ‘Strengthening Waste Management Policies to Mitigate the COVID-19 Pandemic’ on 1 July 2020, which highlights several ways COVID-19 has affected waste management due to a dramatic increase of medical plastic waste and a rise in plastic waste related to greater use of food delivery services.

Opening Remarks; Hon. Ms. Nguyen Tuong Van, Secretary-General of AIPA

- The challenges of infectious waste management we face during this pandemic shall be transformed into opportunities for a better waste treatment in the near future.
- Developing harmonised prevention and mitigation policies at all governmental levels amongst ASEAN countries is essential.

Session II: Municipal Solid Waste Management and its Current or Potential Issues due to COVID-19

Municipal Solid Waste Management in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic; Dr. Enri Damanhuri, Professor, Institut Teknologi Bandung

- There are three waste management schemes in Indonesia: (1) municipality-based management, (2) private company-based management, and (3) community association-based management.
- The main constraint in Indonesia is the limitation of local government budgets – only around 0.6% of local government budgets is allocated for local waste management.
- The SE.2/MenLHK/2020 on ‘Guidance for Infectious and Domestic Waste Management’ covers the guidelines on managing infectious waste from health care

facilities, infectious waste from people under surveillance originating from households, and domestic waste.

- In Indonesia, there has been a change in people's lifestyles, with more people relying on online deliveries, which frequently come with several layers of packaging. As a result, there has been an increase in the amount of plastic waste in some cities, although total domestic waste has decreased.
- It has been difficult to control the informal workers who are vulnerable to the spread of the virus since many local governments did not respond properly to the circular letter on waste management during COVID-19, launched by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.
- In Japan, the revised Waste Management Act in 1970 mandates all local governments to provide waste collection services in their respective areas.
- In South East Asian countries waste collection services and proper waste disposal should be promoted, not only in urban areas but also in rural areas.

Q&A

Hon. Mr. Putu Supadma Rudana, MP of Indonesia:

- Most local governments in Indonesia have limited capacity and capability to properly dispose of medical waste.
- Parliaments must perform their roles by holding governments to account for managing waste comprehensively and integrate the process from upstream to downstream.
- How do you foresee the potential of ASEAN countries to achieve the sustainable development goals amidst our efforts to curb the health and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19? How do you foresee the role of the parliament in addressing this issue?
- Bali has already banned single-use plastic based on the local wisdom of *Tri Hita Karana*, which underlines human to human, human to nature, and human to God relations.

H.E. Dr. Ty Sokhun, MP of Cambodia:

- As of 13 July 2020, Cambodia had 156 infected cases, 23 of which were active, and no COVID-19-related deaths had been reported.

- This shows the success of Cambodia's approach to preventing a community outbreak, especially through its '5Es approach' – Early Detection, Early Tracing, Early Isolation, Early Treatment, and Early Prevention.
- Total waste generation in Cambodia decreased from January to April, but there has been a major increase in plastic waste, which rose from 10% to 15% due to an increase in the use of delivery services.
- The application digital technology will be further enhanced, especially to provide real-time information on COVID-19 infected individuals.

Mr. Sanya Praseuth, MP of Lao PDR:

- According to JICA, the average waste collection rate in urban areas is about 40%, the remaining 40%–65% is treated informally in other ways.
- In Vientiane, the recycling rate is 8.9% since there is no major recycling industry, hence recyclable waste is exported to neighbouring countries such as China and Viet Nam. Regarding medical waste, there is no centralised incineration in Lao PDR, but Vientiane and Luangprabang have incinerators.
- From April to June 2020, the monthly generation of general waste as well as medical waste increased.

MP of Brunei Darussalam:

- Community association is a good example of how to manage this issue well. How do the community associations organise waste? What benefits can be gained from such practices?

Dr. Enri Damanhuri:

- Support from the members of parliament of Indonesia is required to obtain a bigger budget allocation and proper technology with greater capacity for better waste management in Indonesia.
- A household association usually consists of 30–40 houses, with representatives giving money to appointed workers not only for collecting waste, but also for other tasks, such as maintaining security at the settlements.

Session III: Medical Waste Management and its Current or Potential Issues due to COVID-19

Clinical Waste Management Under COVID-19 Scenario in Malaysia; Dr. Agamuthu Pariatamby, Professor, Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development, Sunway University and High-Level End Foreign Expert, Ministry of Science and Technology, China.

- Clinical waste is about 80% non-infectious waste, 15% pathological waste, and 3% chemical and pharmaceutical waste. If not well separated, the non-infectious waste can also be contaminated, thus making the issue more complicated.
- In Malaysia, scheduled waste refers to infectious waste.
- Clinical waste management is regulated under the Environmental Quality (Scheduled Wastes) Regulations 2005.
- The waste is disposed of according to colour-coded containers: blue containers are used for waste that will be autoclaved, yellow for waste that will be incinerated, and black for general household waste.
- It is important to properly separate the waste from the beginning to avoid waste contamination. If the waste has already been contaminated, it will go directly to the landfill, but the amount of waste that goes to landfills must be reduced because landfill capacity is limited.
- Kualiti Alam Sdh Bhd is the only integrated facility, so it manages all clinical waste.
- In Malaysia, clinical waste from healthcare facilities has been well managed under relevant guidelines, but household clinical waste is the biggest emerging issue that needs to be addressed. Penang City Council reported that about 9,000 face masks are disposed of every day, which will be dangerous for waste workers who collect it without proper safety equipment.

Thailand Infectious Waste Management during Covid-19 Pandemic; Hon. Asst. Prof. Mr. Boonsong Kaigate, Member of the Senate and Spokesperson to the Standing Committee on Public Health of the National Assembly of Thailand.

- Thailand has seen a sharp increase in infectious waste generation due to the pandemic, but it has been decreasing since April 2020, in line with a decrease in the number of infected cases.
- Thailand has prepared a three-phase contingency plan for infectious waste disposal – for normal, moderate, and severe conditions.

- Thailand has released three major guidelines for infectious waste disposal: (1) guidelines for healthcare facilities and hazardous laboratories, (2) guidelines for infectious waste transporters, and (3) guidelines for infectious waste agencies. However, there are no specific guidelines for household waste disposal, which might also become a source of virus transmission.

Q&A

Hon. Ms. Dyah Roro Esti, MP of Indonesia:

- The COVID-19 pandemic will not end until we can manage the infectious waste properly.
- In Indonesia, the increase of infectious waste has not been matched by an increase of the proper facilities to treat those. That waste mostly ends up in landfills and can harm waste workers and others. Improving and upgrading technology, therefore, is the most appropriate way to tackle this problem as it reduces the threat to humans.
- Are we currently adopting the most suitable regulations and policies to address this issue?
- The relevant stakeholders, including the members of parliament, must work together to create a green economy, which benefits people, the economy, and the environment

H.E. Dr. Ty Sokhun, MP of Cambodia:

- Unlike before, when most infectious waste originated from hospitals, during the COVID-19 pandemic much infectious waste also originates from households. This causes even greater problems as many households are either unwilling or unable to properly organise their waste for collection, which makes it difficult for Cambodia to properly dispose of and incinerate its infectious waste.
- Cambodia will adopt corrective actions, especially to better educate households on the proper disposal and segregation of waste. Cambodia is also planning to strengthen its healthcare system to anticipate future pandemics by enhancing the education of young Cambodians in the medical and biomedical fields.
- What is the role of parliament in solid and clinical waste management in Malaysia?

MP of Myanmar:

- In Myanmar, the biggest challenge concerns waste management in rural areas and small towns.
- What advice can you give for the limited facilities in rural areas in Myanmar?
- What is the difference between rural and urban areas regarding infectious waste management?

Dr. Agamuthu Pariatamby:

- Financial support becomes an issue for waste management in developing countries.
- The government of Malaysia provides regulations for a collection routine of clinical waste from hospitals during COVID-19. The collection is centred in hospitals, because the number of patients there is higher, rather than in private clinics.

Boonsong Kaigate:

- Both rural and urban areas must follow the regulations. Infectious waste in rural areas must be collected in incinerator centres if available.

Session IV: Conclusion

Sum-up; Mr. Michikazu Kojima, Senior Economist, ERIA

- The major issue to consider is the limited local budgets allocated to domestic waste management.
- Another important issue is the limited guidelines for disposing household waste properly.

Closing Remarks; Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of ERIA

- I greatly appreciate and thank you for the excellent presentations and fruitful discussions during the online joint dialogue.
- Communication and strong political commitment are required to adopt the proposed measures to overcome the challenges of medical waste management.

- We are planning to jointly propose with the AIPA Secretariat a draft resolution on ‘the Waste Management for New Normal Amid COVID-19’ to the 41st AIPA General Assembly.