

VIENNA COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Vienna NGO Committee on Sustainable Development organised a virtual event on “Linking Criminal Justice and the SDG’s in a new way: Corruption creates wicked legacies at hazardous sites”.

Advancing towards the SDG Agenda 2030, goals hinges on progress with target 16.5: “Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms”.

Transnational crime and corruption can lead to significant and serious environmental problems, if it jeopardizes the care, maintenance and clean-up of toxic legacy sites. The SDGs can only be achieved if stocks as well as flows of toxic substances and pollutants are reduced and finally eliminated. Abandoned toxic sites and mines present not only challenges to the environment and people, but also a growing threat as mines worldwide may increasingly be used for storing CO₂ with possibly hazardous results due to chemical reactions. The cleanup of this toxic legacy and the management of its risks are of utmost importance.

SDG 3.8 demands to substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

Hazardous waste and chemicals have a grave impact on human health and the environment. They can contaminate the air, soil and water. It is clearly stated in the “1989-Basel Convention” that human health and the environment must be protected against the effects of hazardous wastes.

Electronic waste is categorised as another extremely dangerous issue because of the highly toxic chemicals that leach from the metals inside when buried.

In 2014 only 10 to 40 % of the 42 million tonnes of globally generated electronic waste was disposed through proper channels.

Global chemicals-production is expected to double by 2030. The already widespread use of chemicals included in consumer products will also increase. Many of these are toxic.

Waste crime is an extremely severe problem. A legal framework to fight it is urgently needed and the founding of an international “High Court for Environmental and Health” under the UN is proposed.

Also Interpol could be involved in the battle against waste-crime.

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