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Solid waste management is the one thing just about every city government provides for its residents. While service levels, environmental impacts and costs vary dramatically, solid waste management is arguably the most important municipal service and serves as a prerequisite for other municipal action.

Currently, world cities generate about 1.3 billion tonnes of solid waste per year. This volume is expected to increase to 2.2 billion tonnes by 2025. Waste generation rates will more than double over the next twenty years in lower income countries. Globally, solid waste management costs will increase from today's annual \$205.4 billion to about \$375.5 billion in 2025. Cost increases will be most severe in low income countries (more than 5-fold increases) and lower-middle income countries (more than 4-fold increases).

The global impacts of solid waste are growing fast. Solid waste is a large source of methane, a powerful GHG that is particularly impactful in the short-term. The recycling industry, with more

than two million informal waste pickers, is now a global business with international markets and extensive supply and transportation networks. Locally, uncollected solid waste contributes to flooding, air pollution, and public health impacts such as respiratory ailments, diarrhea and dengue fever. In lower income country cities solid waste management is usually a city's single largest budgetary item.

The report you have before you is an important one that provides a quick snapshot of the state of today's global solid waste management practices. A credible estimate is made for what the situation will look like in 2025. The findings are sobering. Improving solid waste management, especially in low income countries, is an urgent priority. Hopefully, this report will contribute to the dialogue that leads to much-needed action.

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▲ ITC landfill and recycling center, Ankara, Turkey

◀ Ghabawi landfill, Amman, Jordan

Photo: Perinaz Bhada-Tata