

UPFI: From Partnership to Service: Zero Waste and the Work of Peace

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Key Takeaways

International Day of Zero Waste 2026 focuses on food waste. Reducing food waste supports SDG 11 and SDG 12 and strengthens community resilience.

For UPF, zero waste links stewardship with peacebuilding and service.

April's month of service is a timely opportunity to turn environmental concern into practical action.

UNEP reports that over 1 billion tonnes of food were wasted in 2022, with households responsible for about 60 percent.

As the United Nations marks the International Day of Zero Waste on 30 March, this observance closes March, dedicated to partnerships, and opens April as Universal Peace Federation's (UPF) month of service within its 100 Days of Serving Community campaign from 20 February to 1 June 2026.

On 30 March, the [United Nations](#) observes the [International Day of Zero Waste](#), a reminder that waste is not only a technical issue but a human one. In 2026 the day focuses on food waste, placing it squarely within the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), especially [Sustainable Development Goal 11](#) and [Sustainable Development Goal 12](#). It speaks directly to target 11.6 on municipal waste management and target 12.3 on reducing food waste and food loss across supply chains.

According to the [UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2024 Key Messages](#), around [60 per cent](#) of food waste comes from households, while food loss and waste account for an estimated [8 to 10 per cent](#) of global greenhouse gas emissions. UNEP also notes that in 2022, the world wasted an estimated [1.05 billion tonnes](#) of food, nearly one fifth of all food available to consumers. The [United Nations Environment Programme](#) and [UN-Habitat](#) jointly facilitate this day, giving it clear international weight.

For the [Universal Peace Federation](#), zero waste begins with habits. When food, water, materials, and public spaces are treated carelessly, relationships also suffer. A culture of peace values resources as gifts, rejects waste, and restores damaged places. That is why this day closes a month centered on partnership and opens a month centered on service. Environmental responsibility depends on cooperation, but it is proven in action.

This understanding reflects the vision of [Dr. Hak Ja Han](#) and [late Dr. Sun Myung Moon](#). They taught that peace grows through responsibility, care, and living for the sake of others. The family is the first school of

gratitude, moderation, and stewardship. When those habits enter public life, they strengthen communities and help people see the Earth as a shared home. In that sense, care for resources is one practical expression of [one family under God](#).



UPF chapters have expressed this ethic in clear ways. In Slovakia, UPF-Slovakia used [World Water Day](#) to examine [ocean plastic pollution and microplastics](#), linking local responsibility to global harm. In Kenya, a [Nairobi River cleanup](#) brought together more than a thousand participants to clear waste, plant trees, and take ongoing responsibility for sections of the river. In Mali, [UPF and youth partners](#) combined canal cleanups with tree planting in Bamako. In Argentina, UPF-Argentina's ["Peace With Creation" meeting](#) connected responsible consumption, waste separation, eco-bricks, and reforestation. In Seychelles, UPF-Seychelles marked [World Cleanup Day](#) through service at a children's home. In Russia, UPF-Russia's [EcoGeneration project](#) in Voronezh taught children and adults how to sort waste and build better daily habits.

These efforts show that environmental care is peacebuilding in action. They also resonate with [UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities](#) framework and with [UNEP's work to protect rivers and freshwater systems from pollution](#).

The 2026 focus on food waste is especially timely. It is no longer a marginal issue. It stands at the intersection of climate responsibility, resource stewardship, and social ethics. Food waste grows from excess, neglect, and indifference in homes, schools, restaurants, farms, and public events, yet it can be reduced through ordinary choices.

UPF also recognizes the contribution of organizations working seriously in this field, including the [United Nations Environment Programme](#), [UN-Habitat](#), the [Zero Waste International Alliance](#), [Zero Waste Europe](#), and [WRAP](#). Their standards, research, and practical guidance have helped communities move from awareness to action. As April unfolds within UPF's 2026 [100 Days of Serving Community](#) campaign, zero waste can become not only an environmental goal but also a practical discipline of community service, carrying the spirit of March partnerships into the campaign's month of service.

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