



UAE Warns About E-Waste Risks

Countries around the world are starting to take notice of e-waste, and how much they generate. The UK was in the spotlight in March, with revelations that the nation [Ugenerates over 50 lbs per person of e-waste annually](#). And the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is no different.

During the recent World Economic Forum, a joint [United Nations report](#) revealed that a whopping 50 million tonnes of e-waste is generated globally every year. The report called for all countries to make changes to minimise waste and energy leakage, problems that are damaging the world's environment and contributing to degradation.

Harmful impacts

E-waste can be just as harmful to the people around it as it is to our environment. The improper handling of the material can have an adverse effect on human health, [particularly in developing countries](#) with a lot of waste, such as India or China.

Recycling processes, such as dismantling components, wet chemical processing and incineration are commonly used across the world to reclaim and reprocess e-waste materials. But these processes expose those nearby to harmful chemicals. The toxins released can lead to an increased risk of cancer, kidney and liver damage and even cause bone loss. Children are more susceptible to these harmful health impacts if exposed to e-waste materials for a prolonged amount of time.

Sustainable initiatives

[Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi](#), Minister of Climate Change and Environment, took part in the Closing the Loop on Electronics panel discussion, highlighting the steps the UAE has already taken towards a cleaner future. He explained that “if e-waste continues unabated, its volume is projected to amount to 120 million tonnes annually by 2050”.

Al Zeyoudi displayed his concern for e-waste production, labelling the UAE as one of the main culprits – “the UAE is fully aware of the challenge e-waste poses. Unfortunately, the UAE is one of the highest producers of e-waste in the region... But we are also the most active in creating proper e-waste disposal procedures”, he added, highlighting the UAE's commitment to reducing the problem.



Time to step up

Al Zeyoudi also called for other governments around the world to step up and do their bit to reduce e-waste. “It’s clear that governments and societies all around the world are progressing in recycling paper, glass and plastic. But our fast-moving digital culture... means that we are creating a global problem of electronic waste that too few governments are addressing”.

As part of a sustainable initiative to reduce e-waste across the UAE, the UAE has committed to diverting all municipal solid waste from landfills by 2021. In order to achieve this, the ministry has established the Integrated Waste Management system and has created a number of laws to improve the management and disposal of waste materials.