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NEWS RELEASE

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International Alliance Condemns Waste Incineration, Favors Non-Burn Options

Washington, D.C./Manila – An international coalition of 111 organizations in 39 countries issued a new report today condemning waste incineration. *Resources up in Flames: The Economic Pitfalls of Incineration versus a Zero Waste Approach in the Global South* details how waste incinerators could spell financial disaster for host communities. The international coalition, coordinated by GAIA (Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance/Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives), challenged policymakers to reject incineration technology in favor of non-burn options and zero waste planning.

According to the GAIA report, prepared by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR), waste incinerators generate pollution, harm public health, and place huge financial burdens on host communities. Pitfalls such as high capital costs, tonnage shortfalls, expensive pollution control equipment, and hampering least-cost options such as recycling can beset an incinerator project in California as easily as one in Manila. The report points out the economic benefits of non-incineration strategies and indicates that sorting recyclables alone employs at least 11 times more jobs than incineration on a per-ton basis.

At least 16 jurisdictions worldwide have banned or restricted municipal solid waste incineration. Chicago, California's Alameda County, and Rhode Island are U.S. examples. The Philippines is the first country to explicitly ban all types of waste incineration.

Brenda Platt, co-director of ILSR and the report's author, asks "Why invest millions of dollars in a technology that after 30 years leaves you with a pile of potentially toxic ash, when that same money could be redirected to readily available cheaper and safer options which create many more jobs and new businesses for local communities?"

Platt adds that "even new incineration technology is not clean, efficient, nor safe. All incinerators release pollutants, many of which are known to be persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic. Ironically, the better the air pollution control, the more toxic the ash. Neither high temperatures nor pollution control can make incinerators safe."

According to GAIA co-coordinator Ann Leonard, "in the face of growing opposition to expanding business in North America and Europe, the waste incinerator industry is now looking to industrializing nations as a new market in which to sell its polluting and expensive product."

While the report introduces the need for zero waste planning and highlights the growing worldwide zero-waste movement, it emphasizes that non-burn alternatives are readily available. In the global South, where organic material is the single largest component of the waste stream, composting will be the easiest and least-expensive method to divert discards from disposal.

The 76-page *Resources up in Flames* is available as a PDF file on GAIA's web site at <http://www.no-burn.org>. Parts of the report have been translated into 22 languages.

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For more information on the Institute for Local Self-Reliance and GAIA, please visit their web sites at www.ilsr.org and www.no-burn.org, respectively.