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# EASTERN AFRICA WASTE IS WEALTH CONFERENCE REPORT

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# CONFERENCE DETAILS



This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the conference, its objectives, key highlights, and the outcomes achieved during the event.

## **Conference Details:**

**Name:** Africa Waste is Wealth Series - Eastern Africa Waste is Wealth

**Conference Theme:** Promoting Effective Waste Management Practices for Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation

**Date:** 6th-8th June 2023

**Location:** Trademark Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Africa Waste is Wealth Series - Eastern Africa Waste is Wealth conference was designed to foster sustainability in the waste management sector by convening a diverse group of key professionals from the Eastern Africa region.

Participants included representatives from the private sector, governments, and the community, united by their shared interest in tackling the region's waste management challenges. The conference sought to proactively address the issue and develop effective waste management systems, transcending crisis management. Moreover, it highlighted the considerable economic and environmental benefits associated with responsible waste management.



The conference featured an array of engaging activities such as keynote speeches, panel discussions, presentations, and parallel sessions. These covered a wide range of topics including waste management, sustainability, circular economy, technology, carbon credits and green innovations. Esteemed experts and thought leaders shared their insights and experiences, emphasizing the significance of sustainable waste management practices and the transformative power of technology.

The conference had several objectives, which encompassed identifying key policy and regulatory priorities for sustainable waste management, showcasing innovative approaches for commercializing sustainable waste management, demonstrating the practical application of technology in waste management, and establishing a plan of action for green financing investments in the field. Additionally, it aimed to raise awareness, foster knowledge sharing, and facilitate networking and partnerships among the participants.

To create an environment conducive to knowledge sharing and partnership initiation, the conference activities were meticulously organized.

This post-conference report serves as a comprehensive overview of the conference's key sessions, presentations, and outcomes. It emphasizes the importance of collective action, strategic alliances, and partnerships in addressing the waste management challenges in Eastern Africa.

# INTRODUCTION

The East Africa Waste is Wealth conference served as a platform for professionals, experts, policymakers, and stakeholders from across Eastern Africa to gather and address the pressing issue of waste management. With the theme of "Waste is Wealth," the event aimed at shifting the perception of waste as a burden and recognizing its potential as a valuable resource.

The inception of the conference stemmed from an acknowledgment of the fact that no single organization, group, or individual can provide long-lasting sustainable solutions to the continent's impending waste management problem. The need for creating strategic alliances and partnerships; in bringing together like-minded organizations and individuals to exchange ideas, brainstorm and collectively join efforts to generate, implement and finance sustainable solutions to transform the waste management sector is urgent.

Recognizing the imperative need for environmental conservation and climate change mitigation, the conference focused on promoting effective waste management practices that contribute to sustainable development in the region. By harnessing the potential of waste as a valuable resource, the conference aimed to create a paradigm shift in waste management strategies and highlight the economic and environmental benefits of responsible waste management.

The Trademark Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, served as the ideal venue for this significant gathering of industry experts and thought leaders. Nairobi, a vibrant city known for its innovative approaches to sustainability, provided an ideal backdrop for discussions and collaborations aimed at finding practical solutions to the waste management challenges faced by Eastern Africa.

Throughout the three-day conference, participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions, interactive workshops, and presentations by renowned experts in the field. The conference agenda covered a wide range of topics, including Road to COP28, Green Transition, Circular Economy, Extended producer responsibility implementation, the role of technology in sustainability and the circular economy, sustainability, and green innovations.

By fostering knowledge exchange, networking opportunities, and showcasing successful waste management initiatives, the conference aimed to inspire and empower participants to implement effective waste management practices in their respective organizations and communities.

This post-conference report provides an overview of the key sessions, presentations, and outcomes of the Africa Waste is Wealth Series - Eastern Africa Waste is Wealth Conference. It highlights the significant contributions made by participants and the key takeaways that emerged during the event.

We hope that this report will serve as a valuable resource for all those interested in sustainable waste management practices, environmental conservation, and climate change mitigation in Eastern Africa and beyond. Let us now delve into the conference proceedings and explore the transformative ideas and innovative solutions that were shared during this remarkable event.

# CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The Africa Waste is Wealth Series (AWWS) is a series of high-level regional conferences convened by Taka Taka Ni Mali, the East African Business Council, and the Alliance for Science. The series is informed by Taka Taka ni Mali's program under **Transform (FCDO, Unilever, and Ernst and Young), accelerated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Accelerator Lab**. The conference is a prominent conference focused on promoting effective waste management practices for environmental conservation and climate change mitigation in the Eastern Africa region. The conference aims to bring together experts, professionals, policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders from various sectors to discuss and share innovative ideas, best practices, and strategies related to waste management.

## CONFERENCE THEME

The conference's theme was "Promoting Effective Waste Management Practices for Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation." The theme highlighted the importance of addressing waste management challenges in Eastern Africa to safeguard the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change. It emphasized the potential of waste management as a means to transform waste into valuable resources, leading to sustainable development and a greener future.



## CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES.

- Determine the key policy and regulatory priorities for achieving sustainable waste management.
- Showcase innovative approaches for commercializing sustainable waste management.
- Demonstrate the application of technology in sustainable waste management.
- Establish a plan of action for green financing investments in this field.
- Raising awareness about the critical issues surrounding waste management, such as pollution, resource depletion, and climate change.
- Knowledge sharing among professionals regarding effective waste management practices and encouraging collaboration and exchange of ideas.
- The event provided networking opportunities for participants to interact, establish collaborations, and forge partnerships.



## PRESENTATIONS AND PARALLEL SESSIONS:

Participants had the opportunity to present their research findings, case studies, and projects related to waste management. Parallel sessions facilitate interactive sessions where attendees can delve deeper into specific topics and engage in hands-on learning experiences.

## NETWORKING EVENTS:

The conference offered networking events, such as receptions, coffee breaks, and social gatherings, which facilitated informal interactions and fostered collaborations among participants



## TARGET COUNTRIES

The target countries for the conference include Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Reunion.

## EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Identifying policy priorities to unlock climate financing at the country level.
- Presenting ecosystem investment models, developing a blueprint on the role of technology in waste management.
- Providing resources for the implementation of waste management solutions, such as a funding mechanism, CEO commitments, and technical assistance.

## EXHIBITION AND DEMONSTRATIONS

The exhibition area showcased products, technologies, and services related to waste management. Demonstrations and displays provided practical insights into waste treatment processes, recycling techniques, and sustainable practices.



# EXHIBITION AND DEMONSTRATIONS

## 2023 EASTERN AFRICA WASTE IS WEALTH SERIES EXHIBITION

The exhibitions were designed with the purpose of establishing a platform to showcase the exchange of knowledge and innovative approaches in waste management. Through the promotion of practical and efficient waste management strategies, the goal of the exhibition was to make a meaningful contribution to the preservation of the environment and the endeavors to mitigate climate change impacts in the Eastern Africa region.



# ATTENDANCE & IMPACT OVERVIEW

## CONFERENCE THEMES

- **Theme 1:** Waste Generation and Management
- **Theme 2:** Interventions for Waste Reduction
- **Theme 3:** Sustainability and Green Innovations.

## EXPECTED AUDIENCE.

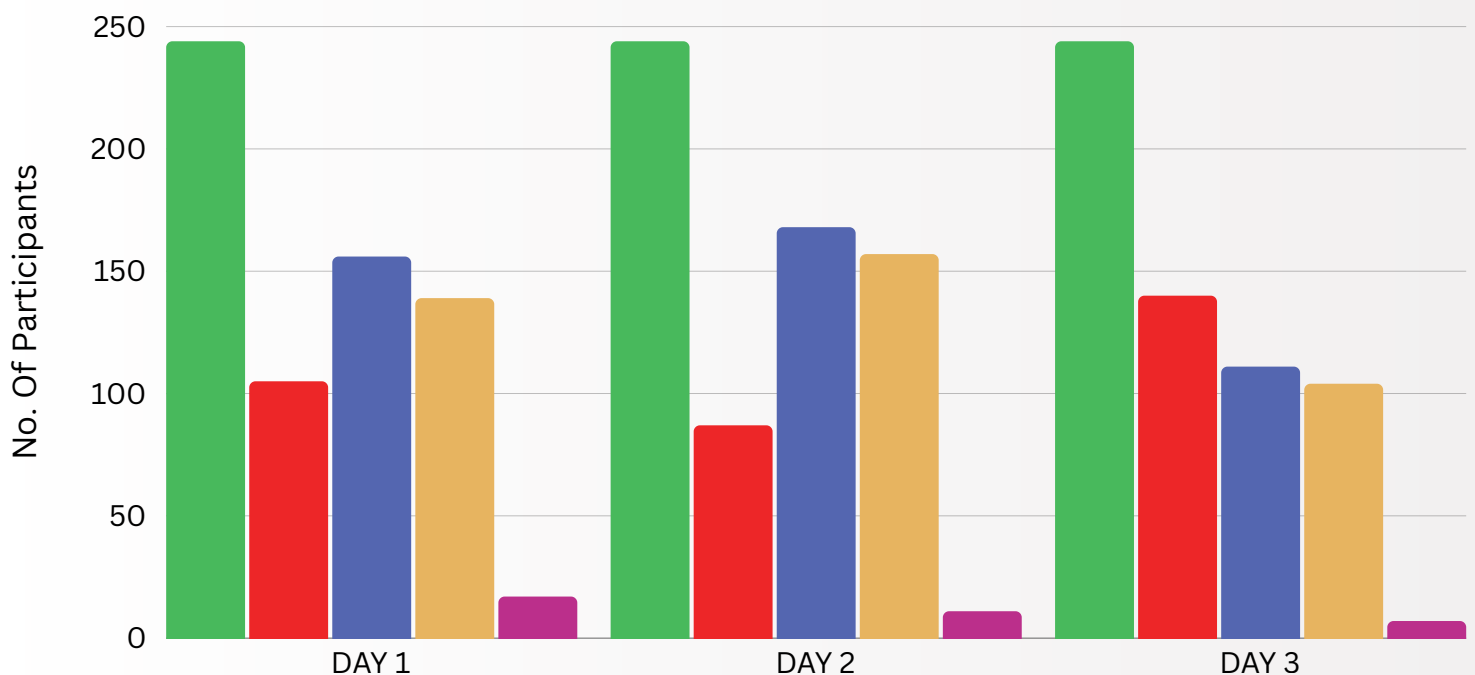
- Experts from the waste management industry,
- Advocates for sustainable development and climate change,
- African policymakers, influential thinkers, and academics.
- Additionally, small and micro enterprises involved in recycling and waste management, as well as
- Entrepreneurs from the informal sector participated in the event.

## IMPACT.

The conference contributed to locally-led climate actions by promoting the acceleration of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans for African countries. It facilitated the mobilization of climate financing to support local priorities and foster innovative partnerships, particularly in the field of sustainable waste management. Additionally, the conference created opportunities for investors interested in sustainable waste management models, thereby stimulating economic growth in the region. Moreover, it raised awareness about the environmental impact of waste management and encouraged governments and the private sector to adopt sustainable waste management practices.

## Overall Attendance Graph Representation

● Total Confirmed ● Absent Participants ● Actual Participants  
● Participants with Tickets ● WalkIn Participants



# CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

## OPENING REMARKS.



"I stand before you, expressing my vision, to urge various stakeholders to actively participate in order to advance the dialogue on transforming Africa's waste into valuable resources. Together, let us generate policies and establish effective mechanisms that will propel the notion of waste as wealth. I am delighted to be hosting the East Africa Waste is Wealth Conference. This conference offers a valuable opportunity to discuss and explore topics such as financing circular economy models, policy development, and the economic significance of waste."

"Let us recognize that in waste lies a world of opportunity. We mustn't overlook the potential that lies within various waste streams. Consider, for a moment, the immense possibilities presented by food waste, plastics, electronics, and textiles. These are just a few examples of sectors where we can unlock tremendous value. However, to harness this potential, we must ensure that waste is properly segregated, well-packaged, and handed over to recyclers. Only then can we transform waste into end products that can be reused, creating a sustainable and circular economy." **—Mary Ngechu; Founder Taka Taka Ni Mali Foundation.**

## KEYNOTE SPEECHES.



"While new waste management systems are required to take up the historic waste, there is a need to put in place efficient infrastructure to manage the current waste and ensure that a repeat of historic waste is avoided. This conference comes at a time when pollution and waste threaten the survival of mankind. "Waste begins even before products are manufactured, a more in-depth approach to sustainable waste management must focus on the entire lifecycle of a product to help reduce the negative environmental impacts.

The Ministry will work closely with the county governments and other stakeholders to develop an ecosystem that is able to support an efficient waste management infrastructure at all levels." **— Eng. Festus Ng'eno Principal Secretary Ministry of Environment.**

## KEYNOTE SPEECHES

"We as Alliance for Science partnered with Taka Taka Ni Mali Foundation as we could see the role of waste management in climate change conversation happening globally. We need to live in a world where we are constantly thinking about how our decisions are affecting the environment around us. We cannot live dignified lives until we learn how to manage our waste." **\_Dr. Sheilla Executive Director, Alliance for Science.**



"Kenyans have a throw-away culture, & depend on other people to pick up their waste. We all have a right to a clean environment; however, it comes with responsibility and each of us must take care of our waste. We need to transition from linear waste management to circular to drive value from our waste, because waste is a resource." **\_Mamo Boru Mamo; Director General , NEMA.**

"Transition to the circular economy has climbed up in the agenda of many policy makers and business leaders in recent years. A shift to circular economy can help reduce the global emissions halfway to the 1.5 °C goal. The British High commission is committed to working with others and open to dialogues like the #EAWasteisWealth conference where issue-based solutions to waste management are discussed." **Josephine Gauld Deputy British High Commissioner to Kenya.**

"This is a necessary partnership. We need to invest more in terms of infrastructure from collection, to segregation to recycling. By doing so, we will add 7 Billion USD to the EAC economy. Policies are available - the problem is implementation. We need to create incentives to ensure that the private sector has an appetite & interest to take up waste management" **-Don Bosco Kalisa CEO EABC.**

"Waste management can be sustainable in both businesses and homes if the right framework is implemented. But more importantly, the consequences, if waste is left unchecked, are too great not to consider" **Mandisa Mashologu UNDPKenya**



"Kenya stands out as a country experiencing rapid industrialization, characterized by a substantial upswing in production, consumption, and waste generation. This surge encompasses diverse waste streams, spanning from solid waste to the more critical categories of toxic and hazardous waste. It is crucial to acknowledge the potential of industrialization in driving the adoption of sustainable waste management practices. Numerous industries are actively implementing strategies such as recycling, waste reduction, and energy recovery to minimize waste generation and promote a circular economy." **Alexander Magwiro** -Regional Coordinator Chemicals And Waste, UNEP.

"We are now at the midpoint of 2030, and unfortunately, we have not made sufficient progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is crucial that we harness the incredible ideas and innovations being generated by innovators and entrepreneurs worldwide in order to address this shortfall. While the ideas and intentions are present, what we lack is the capability to scale these ambitious initiatives further. This is precisely where TRANSFORM comes into play. We specialize in amplifying and expanding these groundbreaking ideas, ensuring their wider implementation and impact." **Grace Cramer**- Tech and Innovation Theme Leader, Transform - FCDO

"Without environmental rights then there is no Human rights. The ecosystem has to be right for us to enjoy the other rights." **Sarah Godana**-Commissioner of Kenya National Commission On Human Rights

"We need to shift our way of thinking and build a circular economy – where waste and pollution are designed out in the first place; products and materials stay in use for much longer; and natural systems can regenerate" **Simon Kaheru** - Vice Chair Board Director, EABC



# PANEL DISCUSSIONS



## 1. High-Level Panel – Private Sector Preparedness for COP28.

This high-level panel session discussed the UN Framework Convention Conference (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) with a focus on the role of the private sector in the COP 28 negotiations. There were deliberations on the actual problems and challenges that the East African government should be addressing at the upcoming COP negotiations, from the perspective of the private sector; and how the private sector could be effectively equipped to participate in the negotiations.

## 2. High-level policy panel: The status of waste management policies across East Africa.

This high-level policy panel brought together key stakeholders and policymakers from East Africa to discuss the current status of waste management policies in the region. With the increasing urbanization and population growth in East Africa, effective waste management has become a pressing issue for governments and communities alike. This panel aimed to facilitate a dialogue on the challenges, opportunities, and best practices in waste management policies across East Africa.

## 3. 1.High-Level Panel: Advancing Carbon Credit Initiatives in Kenya; Identifying Opportunities and Challenges in Carbon Credit Markets.

This panel discussion focused on exploring the current state of carbon credit initiatives in Kenya and analyzing the opportunities and challenges that exist within the carbon credit markets. With growing concerns about climate change and the need for sustainable development, carbon credits have emerged as a crucial mechanism to incentivize greenhouse gas reduction projects and promote environmental sustainability. The panel brought together experts from various fields, including environmental policy, finance, renewable energy, and carbon market professionals.

# KEY SESSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS



## **Parallel Session 1: Green Transition and the Circular Economy.**

Meticulously crafted in collaboration with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, centered around the theme of "Green Transition and the Circular Economy." Distinguished industry experts and thought leaders shared valuable insights, shedding light on the significance of sustainable practices and exploring the potential of a circular economy.

## **Parallel Session 2: The pivotal role of technology in effective waste management.**

Esteemed professionals and innovators in the field convened to deliberate on the latest advancements and pioneering solutions that leverage technology to tackle waste-related challenges head-on.

## **Parallel Session 3: Financing for Circular Economy.**

This parallel session was specifically dedicated to exploring the crucial aspect of financing in the context of the circular economy. Esteemed experts, investors, and stakeholders deliberated on innovative funding mechanisms, investment opportunities, and financial models that can propel the transition towards a more sustainable and circular economy.

## **Panelists Session 1:**

- Mavji Varsani, CEO - Vintz Plastics
- Daniel Paffenholz- CEO- TakaTaka Solutions
- Bonnie Mbithi - CEO, WEEE Centre
- John Mwendwa - Public Affairs, Communications, and Sustainability Director, CCBA - Kenya
- Janet Ruto, Regional Business Development Manager - Geocycle.

## **Panelists Session 2:**

- Michael Koech-Environmental and Social Lead, Airtel Africa
- Caroline Kiarie, Head Exploration - UNDP Kenya Accelerator Lab
- Thomas Mcdawell, Country Manager, Kenya - FiTz
- Valentine Cheruiyot, Environment Compliance and Sustainability, Safaricom.

## **Panelists Session 3:**

- Mary Njuguna, Principal Specialist, Capital Markets, Financial Services Deepening(FSD)
- Sandeep Main, Associate Director, KPMG East Africa
- Eric Wambua, Senior VP, Head Of Corporate , SBM
- Judy Mulwa, Insights Manager, Climate Tech - GSMA
- Charlotte Ludi Obado, Group Sustainability Manager, KCB
- Anne Ketelesi - Sustainability Strategy and Solutions Manager - Equity Group.

## Parallel Session 4: Implementation Approaches to the Kenyan Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulations.

The panel, comprised of esteemed professionals with expertise in waste management, policy development, and industry practices, aimed to shed light on the strategies and approaches necessary for effective implementation of the Kenyan EPR Regulations.

Throughout the session, participants engaged in a comprehensive discussion, addressing key topics such as the scope of the EPR regulations, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and the challenges and opportunities associated with their implementation. The panelists shared their experiences, insights, and best practices, offering valuable guidance to attendees on how to navigate the complexities of the EPR framework.

The panel discussion provided a platform for stakeholders from various sectors, including government agencies, manufacturers, waste management entities, and environmental organizations, to exchange ideas and perspectives. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the regulatory requirements and explored innovative solutions for the successful implementation of the EPR regulations in East Africa.

### Panelists Session 4:

- Nicholas Jackson Ambwene, Country Co-Ordinator, PETpro Tanzania
- Joyce Gachugi Waweru, Country Manager, PETCO Kenya
- Wambui Mbarire, CEO, Retail Trade Association Kenya
- Priyen Tanna, Technical Lead, Kenya Extended Producer Responsibility Organisation.
- Henry Ochieng, CEO, Kenya Alliance for Residential Associations

### KEY STUDIES.

- **TRASHCON** - A Case Study on South-to-South Material Recovery Facility: Raghavan Madhubala Nivedha, the esteemed CEO and Founder of TRASHCON, shared a comprehensive case study highlighting the innovative material recovery facility's success in the context of South-to-South waste management. The presentation showcased the efficacy and impact of TRASHCON's pioneering approach.
- **KEY RESEARCH:** The State of Waste Management Policy, Circular Economy, and Green Finance in East Africa: Michael Kalo, an esteemed consultant representing Taka Taka Ni Mali in collaboration with Alliance for Science, presented the insightful findings of a study that examined the current landscape of waste management policy, the circular economy, and green finance in East Africa. This comprehensive analysis provided attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the region's progress and potential opportunities.



# MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED

- **The role of partnerships in fostering solutions for the impending waste management problems**

The waste management sector in East Africa has predominantly been informal. Though companies and organizations have taken initiatives to individually contribute to solving the rapidly growing waste management crisis in their respective jurisdictions and areas of expertise, collective action in terms of partnerships has been the missing link to make the waste management sector a success in the region. The critical role of strategic partnerships in structuring and transforming the waste management sector cannot be undermined.

The East Africa Waste is Wealth series focused on presenting a platform to initiate the formation of partnerships that cut across different sectors and different waste management initiatives to create an ecosystem with synergistic results. Partnerships create a harmonious relationship between sectors to form complete and complementary solutions to address the complex nature of challenges attending the waste management sector.

Partnerships will reduce the period required to achieve zero waste to landfills and make it less than 100 years. Collaborations merge the efforts between policymakers, businesses, the community, and the government at large, to implement behavioral change and strategic solutions required to transform the waste management sector.

- **Circular economy and green transitions.**

Achieving zero waste is the true definition of the circular economy. Our current understanding and definition of the circular economy have been conflated to accommodate downcycling, which is entirely referential to the process of converting a material into a lower-quality or less valuable form during the recycling or reprocessing process. Unlike traditional recycling, where materials are transformed into new products of equal or higher value, downcycling involves the degradation of materials, resulting in a lower-quality end product.

For instance, recycling plastics does not fully fit the definition of circular economy, since there is a limited number of times in which plastics can be recycled. However, organic materials and glass which can endlessly be recycled, fit in the circular economy model.

The circular economy is supposed to enable us to achieve zero waste. However, considering our current state, in the short to medium term; achieving zero waste is not possible. But in the long run, this could be possible with proper utilization of the circular economy.

The circular economy presents an opportunity of utilizing waste and turn it into valuable resources, protect the environment, and build sustainable and resilient businesses. Organizations can take advantage of the circular economy model to minimize waste through reduction, reuse, and recycling.

# The role of innovation and technology in providing solutions for the waste management sector.

The objective of technology is to enable people and not to replace them. It adds value to the waste management sector by generating feasible solutions and bridging the gap between entrepreneurs, thought leaders, and waste actors (aggregators and recyclers). Technology injects value into the waste management chain and provides a platform to incentivize people.

Technology can be harnessed to bridge the existing gap of lack of statistical data around waste management to provide information for corporates to utilize and reference while making informed decisions and initiating significant innovations to solve waste management challenges.

Technology helps the waste management sector to be efficient in its operations. It provides data integrity and qualifies its application in demonstrating projects' outcomes. This validates the need for investment in promising innovations and opens the door to the upscaling of such innovations to reach a wider audience and boost their productivity.

The waste management sector can benefit from the digital economy by contextualizing the need for data and information in designing new responsive solutions that help in shaping policies to drive research and development in companies, contributing to the general economic environment.

Technological and innovative solutions such as waste-to-energy systems, smart waste management systems, and advanced recycling are being developed to improve production efficiency, minimize waste generation and mitigate environmental impacts.

Technology automates the supply chain and paves the way for innovative sustainable practices to be incorporated in manufacturing processes; customizing designs and packaging materials to limit waste generation.

IoT technology offers real-time monitoring, data analytics, and automation capabilities that can assist in waste management. Specifically, it aids in various aspects such as Smart Bin Monitoring, ensuring Efficient Collection Routes, optimizing Recycling processes, enabling Waste Tracking and Traceability, and facilitating Data Analytics and Optimization.

Africa is ready to embrace technology for circularity. The challenge is in accessing the required technology and financing the initiative. There's a need to bring together partnerships and finances to facilitate the enabling environment for the deployment of technology to aid innovations in Africa's waste management sector. As this is being done, it is critical to acknowledge that Africa does not have the capacity to treat E-waste. Therefore, strategies need to be employed to handle E-waste alongside the venture into actively embracing technology. This is a point of concern.

Despite the promising potential of technology in solving waste management challenges, many innovative ideas from waste aggregators, recyclers, and enabler organizations have not been implemented by technological corporates because they are not clear in demonstrating the capabilities of the ideas in drawing shared values for all the players in the ecosystem and affirm their ability to being sustainable. Technological corporates are interested in the alignment of innovative ideas with sustainability strategies. They need to see the business sense presented by the ideas.

# NOTEWORTHY INNOVATIONS

## ECOLOOP; THE SOLUTION.

Ecoloop is an integrated waste regeneration ecosystem designed by Taka Taka Ni Mali, that leverages technology to track waste movement, and conversion, and assess environmental impacts. It enables corporates to unlock brand values, increase visibility across the value chain, comply with environmental regulations, and monitor and evaluate their environmental impact.

Ecoloop engages various stakeholders, including SDG partners, Development partners focused on accelerating development, and corporates. This ecosystem brings together all relevant players to establish a comprehensive circular economy loop. By leveraging technology, Ecoloop promotes collaborative innovations that facilitate the integration and implementation of sustainability practices within organizations.

Ecoloop has main features like; Management dashboard, ERP capabilities, Social Media integration, and ESG reporting. It allows corporates to unlock brand value, increase visibility across the value chain, comply with environmental regulations, reduce their carbon footprint, monitor and evaluate their environmental impact, access to global events and form public-private community collaboration.

The environmental policy landscape is undergoing changes, requiring businesses to adapt and remain relevant. In this context, Ecoloop offers a solution that enables corporates to meet environmental regulations and incorporate sustainability into their operations. It emphasizes the importance of not only individual organizational efforts but also collaborative engagement within the ecosystem. By assessing the collective impact, Ecoloop helps measure the overall effectiveness and influence generated by working together.

Ecoloop tailors its solution to cater to the specific requirements of each organization. This involves a comprehensive planning and onboarding process that includes mapping the infrastructure and enhancing the capacity of the organization. Ecoloop facilitates the connection between organizations, collectors, and recyclers, while also providing detailed reports on the environmental benefits achieved, such as emission reductions, the creation of green jobs, and improved access to green financing. Furthermore, Ecoloop keeps organizations informed about the latest developments in sustainability and grants them exclusive access to relevant events.



# NOTEWORTHY INNOVATIONS

## TRASHCON. A CASE STUDY BY NIVEDHA R

Trashcon, a company based in India, aims to divert 25% of India's waste from landfills by 2025. Operating for two years across two countries, the company has made a significant impact on over 15 cities through 25 installations. Trashcon specializes in providing solutions for recovering and utilizing unrecyclable plastics found in mixed municipal solid waste. This type of non-recyclable mixed waste is often improperly disposed of in the environment, leading to soil and water pollution. In some cases, it is even burned, causing air pollution.

The company dedicated three years to search for practical and cost-effective solutions to recover valuable items from mixed waste that is typically considered worthless. Their objective was to develop a system that could be operated by unskilled labor. As a result, they successfully created TrashBot, an automated material recovery facility specifically designed for this purpose.

TrashBot, an automated system, efficiently segregates the output from mixed municipal waste into four distinct waste streams: biodegradable waste, non-biodegradable waste, metals, and inert waste such as diapers and sanitary towels. With an impressive capacity to segregate up to 250 tons on a daily basis, TrashBot achieves this at a cost of less than 1 Euro per ton. Notably, Trashcon faced the challenge of dealing with non-recyclable plastic recovered from the waste. To address this issue, they developed a unique solution called the WoW recycler (Wealth out of Waste recycler). The WoW recycler effectively utilizes the previously deemed unrecyclable waste and transforms it into high-quality WoW boards, which are then utilized in furniture production. These WoW boards possess exceptional qualities when compared to their alternative, plywood.

WoW boards offer a compelling advantage over plywood as they are not only more affordable but also of superior quality. In comparison to plywood, WoW boards exhibit desirable properties such as being waterproof, termite resistant, and visually appealing. Consequently, WoW boards have found application in construction sites as a plywood replacement and are also utilized in the production of home and office furniture. This shift helps reduce the demand for wood and contributes to a decline in deforestation rates. Furthermore, these boards are fully recyclable and boast an extended lifespan.



# NOTABLE PANNEL Q & A

## **Is the problem plastic or plastic pollution? If the population can handle plastics responsibly, will there be any problem with plastics?**

The issue lies not with plastic itself, but rather with single-use plastic. Both the design of plastics and their disposal at the end of their life cycle are significant factors. When plastics end up in dumpsites, the cost of recovery increases, leading to a decrease in their overall sustainability.

## **Is plastic waste? At what point should plastics be considered waste?**

Ideally, plastic should be considered waste once it has reached a point where it cannot be used or recycled anymore. This means, any plastic viable for recycling should not be considered waste, neither should it end up in landfills in the first place. There's a need to provide segregation centers to differentiate waste from recyclables. Recyclers need clean waste streams to lower the cost of the end products and make economic sense. Therefore, segregation at source is much needed.

## **Is there anyone doing something about human waste? Specifically diapers and sanitary pads? They have become a point of concern.**

No one is doing anything about recycling diapers and pads. The technology to recycle them is quite pricy and is not economical. However, some developing countries like India are shredding them and incinerating them to recover energy to replace coal in industrial processes.

## **Have we included our children in the conversation? Are we forming responsible behaviors among children between the age of 8 to 15?**

The inclusion of environmental topics in the school curriculum and the participation of students in creative presentations during drama festivals helped raise awareness effectively. However, in the present, not much is being done in this regard.



# CONCLUSION

The conference covered various themes and discussions related to the challenges and solutions in the sector. Key topics included identifying gaps in waste management, the role of partnerships, circular economy and green transitions, the role of innovation and technology, and case studies of implemented solutions. The conference highlighted the importance of partnerships in structuring and transforming the waste management sector, emphasizing the need for collective action among stakeholders. It also emphasized the role of innovation and technology in providing solutions for waste management, such as waste-to-energy systems and smart waste management systems. The circular economy was discussed as a means to achieve zero waste and utilize waste as valuable resources. Noteworthy innovations presented at the conference included Ecoloop, an integrated waste regeneration ecosystem, and Trashcon, a company focused on recovering and utilizing unrecyclable plastics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The conference was a call to action on individuals and corporates to actively implement the solutions discussed.
- The private sector should spearhead the incorporation of sustainable organizations practices in their businesses before the government tightens its regulations because it soon will. Proacting will give the private sector stability when the regulations come up.
- The turning point for change is when we will all attain behavioral change. There's need to streamline our efforts in attaining behavioral change from the individual, family , community and organization levels.
- Strategic alliances, functional policies and proper integration of technological innovations are required for significant implementation of sustainable waste management crisis .



# OUR TEAM



**FOUNDER  
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EAST AFRICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL**  
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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
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**Dr Sheila Ochugboju**



**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT,  
TAKATAKA NI MALI.**  
**Eve Odete**

# OUR PARTNERS



# JOIN US

There are many opportunities of becoming a strategic partner and join the AWWWS Partners Group to drive a shared vision on Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation in Africa.

As a sponsor in different categories, you will help shape and drive the event in ways aligned to your organization's vision and strategy.

You will also get visibility and institutional benefits.

## CONTACT US



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