

UNFCCC COP 27

Outcome Document

Implementation Lab – Changing the paradigm: Harnessing multiple benefits from reducing and valorizing waste

Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

Thursday, 10 November 2021

14:30 – 16:00

Organised by CCAC and UNEP

MPGCA: Implementation Lab – Changing the paradigm: Harnessing multiple benefits from reducing and valorizing waste

Section 1 - Action Event

Key Messages:

The key message from the Implementation Lab on waste management is that we are a team, and we must tackle the problem together from various perspectives – with a particular focus on scaling up finance and creating a circular economy for waste. We need to go back to basic principles, recognizing that 50-70% of waste generated in Africa is organic waste that could have significant economic value. Landfills are not the solution; burning waste is not the solution. We need a new green economy that is not only a net-zero but is net-positive as we rethink our decisions on every level to fundamentally change and actually generate income from waste to achieve climate, health and sustainable development goals.

Waste management is rising to the top of the global political agenda. COP27 is the first time waste management has received a spotlight, and this is an essential change because waste is responsible for 20% of global anthropogenic methane emissions. Existing targeted measures could reduce methane emissions from the waste sector by 29–36 Mt/yr by 2030. The greatest potential is in improved treatment and disposal of solid waste. Moreover, addressing waste has economics benefits because up to 60% of targeted measures in this sector have negative or low costs.

Head of CCAC Secretariat Martina Otto's opening remarks introduced the central premise that we must take a holistic approach to waste management aligned with the Global Waste Initiative 50 by 2050 announced at COP27.

In her opening remarks Ms Bogolo Kenewendo, UN Climate Champions' Special Advisor, Africa Director, highlighted the partnerships forged in the regional platforms including Africities, Africa Climate Week and Africa Ministerial Conference for the Environment (AMCEN), as exemplars of the Marrakech partnership. She reminded us of the injustice of poor waste management, as the most affected communities contribute the least to generating waste and the most to managing it. She reiterated that failing to tackle waste sustainably and inclusively essentially perpetuates poor health, social and economic inequality, climate and environment pollution. While on the other hand, tackling waste enables us to meet sustainable development and Paris Agreement goals. Thus, the support of Engineering X to the High Level Champions to catalyze action on the elimination of open waste burning

of waste in Africa leverages the global appetite to set the necessary level of policy making, raise awareness and ensure targeted financing and investments towards sustainable, integrated and inclusive waste management.

Dr. Nagwa El Karawy, Focal Point of COP27 Global 50 by 2050 Waste Initiative, Ministry of Environment, Egypt emphasized the importance of the moment by saying “that is the difference and that is the edge of 50 by 2050. It looks at the whole continent, at all waste types, and it has five different working groups where it will be covering all waste, from all aspects.” This was reinforced by Stephen Hammer, Advisor, Global Climate Policy and Strategy World Bank -- Climate Change Group drew out the need for a holistic approach to waste management saying, “you need to focus on the financial sustainability, the operational sustainability, as well as the environmental sustainability.”

The Implementation Lab dialogue highlighted that as per the World Bank’s recent report [“What a Waste 2.0”](#), the total quantity of waste generated in low-income countries is expected to increase by more than three times by 2050. The fastest growing regions are Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa. In these regions, more than half of waste is currently openly dumped. Furthermore, food waste accounts for nearly 50% of emissions. According to R20, globally, 41% of all waste produced is burned – with higher percentages in developing countries – and this burning often occurs in dumpsites. Organic waste diversion will reduce methane emissions benefitting both public health and slowing the rate of climate change. In addition, establishing mechanisms to prevent open burning of waste is also crucial for both air quality, public health and slowing the rate of near-term warming.

Countries are taking major steps forward. Erika Rosenthal, Senior Attorney, Earthjustice described the 6-year process in Kenya where, with a technical assistance package from the CCAC, public interest environmental lawyers were coordinated to support Kenyan leaders on the issue of waste management. The project stemmed from rising public pressure due to discontent surrounding the health and environmental impacts of waste. The second stage involved consultation and input from stakeholders including waste pickers and youth organisations where peer-to-peer learning from across Africa was central to producing a draft bill. The draft bill benefited from the constitutional requirement in Kenya that there be a consultation process, which increased the nation-wide engagement. The final phase is ongoing, as there needs to be continual development to ensure that the regulations in the law are implemented. However, this project was a success in producing ambitious legislation, Erika Rosenthal highlighted that a reason for Kenya success was that “the process really did benefit from the input of many stakeholders – not enough input – but it was a really good first step.”

Acknowledging the complicated question of how we process waste sparked conversations about how can we ensure accountability, as Joshua Amponsem the World Climate Ambassador and Facilitator, and Founder of Green Africa Youth Organization noted, “the most important part ... is the transparency and accountability element of it, ... we are happy to read pledges and we are happy to see commitment but how do we really measure that comes with it, its really a big challenge.”

Monitoring was one element of this as satellites are now able to detect super-emitting sources of methane emissions, and GHGSAT has identified more than 100 super-emitting landfill sources around the world. These sites are not included yet in national inventories, or in NDCs, and so this discovery

provides us with huge opportunity to mobilize resources to tackle point sources quickly and reduce emissions at a large scale. Marcelo Mena, CEO of the Global Methane Hub said, “now with the satellite observations we’ve been able to also see that even the best [landfills] that we thought were doing the best job are actually methane super emitters”.

Integrating and valuing the informal sector into our evolving waste management was also an area of debate, particularly in relation to financial incentives. Luyanda Hlatshwayo, Reclaimer with Africa Reclaimers Organisation (ARO) and representative of the International Alliance of Waste Pickers stated that “we have a lot of the informal sector globally making a huge difference that is not being recognised.” This led onto a broader question of how we finance waste, including the link between waste management and adaptation and the possibility of accessing adaptation finance for waste management projects. The complexities of waste means that all these individual questions intersect with one another, and it was in discussions at these intersections that the session truly emphasized the value of peer-to-peer learning and the 50 by 2050 strategy to create an Africa based wholistic approach to waste and as was emphasised by Gareth Phillips, Climate and Environmental Finance Expert, African Development Bank Africa is key as “we are going see urbanisation in Africa and if we collect that waste Africa is going to become a very significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, if we don’t do it in the right way and use the right policies.”

Outcomes:

1. Endorse and drive action aligned with the Marrakech Partnership Climate Action Pathways

In alignment with the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action’s Human Settlements Action Pathways Subgroup on Waste and Consumption, the expectation is that “by 2050, cities must become “zero waste”, with no discharges to land, water or air that threaten the environment or human health by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse and recovery of organic waste, products, packaging and materials without burning.” This Implementation Lab both endorsed that goal and contributed to driving action by encouraging governments to include waste in their NDCs, for which the CCAC can provide support. Alongside this the convening of stakeholders drove action towards the phasing out of open burning of waste, a crucial element of aligning with the Marrakech Partnership Climate Action Pathways

2. Generate Convergence around campaigns, Race to Zero, Race to Resilience, Race to Zero breakthroughs

There was a clear convergence around the UNFCCC’s campaigns, firstly surrounding the *Race to Zero*, where in the goal of achieving net-zero waste is an often neglected, but essential component, one element that was focused on in the implementation lab was the ‘Commitment for action on phasing out open waste burning from Africa by 2050’ developed under the High-Level Champions’ initiative aimed at

addressing the systemic deficiencies associated with waste management in Africa. This also ties into the *Race to Zero Breakthroughs* campaign, where the phasing out of open burning in Africa represents a key breakthrough in the waste sector. Finally, there was also convergence around the *Race to Resilience*, as focusing on thriving in the face of climate change is at the core of the African continent-wide waste sector convergence around 50 by 2050, which considers how to turn waste into an economic advantage.

3. Strengthen the quality and depth of dialogues and collective action between non-Party stakeholders and governments

The 18th session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) this year made a decision “Towards phasing out open burning of waste in Africa” in which AMCEN member States, and all the relevant stakeholders are encouraged to join the Global Waste Initiative 50 by 2050 UNFCCC COP-27 Presidency as well as the multi-stakeholder partnership to eliminate open burning of waste in Africa by 2050, we saw at this event discussions from a broad range of stakeholders, including youth organisations, and representatives from waste picker alliances alongside IGO and government representatives.

4. Demonstrate action and evidence of transformation across diverse parties of the NPS community

This round table brought together speakers from a range of diverse parties of the NPS, including Bogolo Kenewendo, the UN High-Level Champion’s Special Advisor, Africa Director; Martina Otto, the Head of Climate and Clean Air Coalition Secretariat; Andriannah Mbandi of Engineering X; Dr. Nagwa El Karawy, the Focal Point of COP27 Global 50 by 2050 Waste Initiative from the Egyptian Ministry of Environment; Joshua Amponsem, the World Climate Ambassador and Facilitator and Founder of Green Africa Youth Organization; Luyanda Hlatshwayo a reclaimer with Africa Reclaimers Organisation (ARO) and representative of the International Alliance of Waste Pickers; Erika Rosenthal a Senior Attorney at Earthjustice; Marcelo Mena, the CEO of the Global Methane Hub (GMH); Gareth Phillips a Climate and Environmental Finance Expert from the African Development Bank, and Stephen Hammer an Advisor on Global Climate Policy and Strategy at the World Bank. This range of participants this enabled showcasing success at the national and subnational level; discuss key roadblocks to improving waste management infrastructure taking into account the informal sector; and discuss next steps on how encourage sustainable and integrated waste management and circular economies and nurture the collaboration around these issues.

Section 2 - Progress and Outlook

Overview of progress in 2022

Waste is an area that has often been under-discussed in high level climate negotiations, against this political backdrop the focus on waste at the COP27 represented a seismic shift towards understanding the social consequences that failing to address waste has had on vulnerable communities. Equally, economically this session drew out the economic advantages of better waste management as 60% of measures in this sector are negative or low cost.

In terms of realising these developments there were two particularly noticeable occurrences this year with regards to waste, the first was the decision of the 18th session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) to move towards the “phasing out open burning of waste in Africa” in which AMCEN member States. This was interlinked to the second significant development which was the Global Waste Initiative 50 by 2050 Championed by Egypt the hosts of the UNFCCC COP-27 Presidency, combined with the multi-stakeholder partnership to eliminate open burning of waste in Africa by 2050. These two key developments affected the work of stakeholders in Africa, as it has set a very clear and unified target.

Section 3 – Action during 2023

The Climate Action Pathway sets out sectoral visions for achieving a 1.5° C resilient world in 2050, although waste is not explicitly included within the Climate Action Pathways, the actions outlined beneath are certain to make a substantive contribution to the overall Climate Action Pathway goal of achieving a 1.5 ° C resilient world. However, we would also note that there could be great value in introducing a Climate Action Pathway that is specifically related to waste.

1. Waste should be appropriately included in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national and local climate change and environment pollution programmes. The CCAC is working to support national governments to incorporate waste targets and implement projects to reduce SLCPs from the waste sector.
2. There is real opportunity to achieve the 2030 ambitions by working on reducing and valorising organic waste, and in particular, by tackling global food loss and waste, which account for a significant proportion of organic waste. Improving the management of organic waste will also lead to significant methane and black carbon reductions, impacting climate change and human health
3. The 18th session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) this year made a decision “Towards phasing out open burning of waste in Africa” in which AMCEN member States, and all the relevant stakeholders are encouraged to join the Global Waste Initiative 50 by 2050 UNFCCC COP-27 Presidency as well as the multi-stakeholder partnership to eliminate open burning of waste in Africa by 2050.
4. During 2023 the series of regional climate weeks will also be organised. This represents a good opportunity to build off of the momentum from COP27 on waste to ensure that this continues through to COP28, whilst also representing an opportunity to shape the strategic direction of discussions on waste both within and external to the African context. It will be an opportunity to

map joint work programs, assess progress and catalyse action from the multi-stakeholder partnership to eliminate open burning of waste in Africa and the Global 50 by 2050 initiatives both launched at COP 27.