

African businesses, policy-making and the circular economy:

Pathway to sustainable economic growth in Africa

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ABOUT THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY (CE)

- No commonly agreed definition: well over 100 attempts to define.
- Q: *“What is the definition of the circular economy?”* A: *“The answer depends on who exactly you ask, and what kind of main CE discourse they follow.”*

Commonly agreed key elements

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep products and material in use while preserving their highest value
- Regenerate natural systems

A circular economy will help curb carbon emissions, preserve natural resources and mitigate the effects of climate change while creating new jobs.

CIRCULAR PRACTICES AND POLICIES, A POTENTIAL FOR AFRICAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Africa's **population is predicted to double in just over 25 years**, creating **unprecedented market potentials**
- Most economies in Africa are **led by natural resources extraction**
- CE is an approach that – if embraced - will help ensure **more sustainable exploitation of resources - by preserving their potential for future generations**
- CE presents opportunities to considerably **improve people, planet and profit in some major industries: Agribusiness, construction, textile, energy, transportation, manufacturing and packaging**

MAIN CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTING CIRCULAR PRACTICES IN AFRICA

- **Institutional capacity:** Policy-makers do not fully understand why CE is beneficial for Africa, given that the continent accounts for only 5 per cent of global GHG emissions
- **Lack of understanding the concept:** Policy-makers do not understand the scope of CE as many still think it boils down to ... recycling. In a CE, “Recycling” is the last resort!
- **CE ≠ waste management:** need to understand that CE is not limited to waste management - it starts with circular design or “designing OUT waste”
- **Regulatory frameworks:** do often not exist or are counterproductive: “waste” in one country is ... not the same as waste in another.
- **Education and academia:** CE is different from other similar concepts – need and opportunity to embed CE education in curricula and practice it in schools & campuses

Thank you for your kind attention!

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