

Partnership session summary

Unlocking the value of waste

15:00-16:30, Wednesday 13 May

Moderator and speakers

- Ivo Mulder, UNEP (Moderator)
- Dr. Jens Ejbye Schmidt, Professor, Head of iEnergy, Masdar Institute, UAE
- Dr. Loice M. A. Omoro, Chief Officer, Environmental Management Department, County Government of Kisumu
- Evans Ondieki, County Executive Environment, Nairobi County
- Suzan Oelofse, Council for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- Hastings Chikoko, Regional Director, C40
- David Ben Jesse, CEO, Association of Biogas Contractors of Kenya
- Grace Lubaale, Strategic Advisor to UN Habitat on Waste management
- Joshua Palfreman, Urban Planning and Waste Management Consultant

Partnership session background

As a result of a growing population and increased consumption, the accumulation of waste is fast becoming one of the world's fastest growing environmental problems. 1.3 billion tonnes of solid waste is currently generated each year with handling costs around 205 billion US dollars annually. Uncollected and untreated solid waste present additional significantly environmental and health threats.

Large parts of municipal solid waste present an unutilized resource, which can be transformed into useful and valuable bio-products such as biofuel, bio-chemicals, energy and heat. To enable the transformation of waste into resources require close coordination between various stakeholders involved within aspect of waste collection, separation, treatment and disposal. It also requires an Integrated Sustainable Waste Management (ISWM) system enabling the right framework conditions through legal regulation, technological solutions and infrastructure.

This partnership aims to unlock the value in the waste and recycling supply chain whilst creating cleaner cities and societies, demonstrating best practice, developing a roadmap to highlight barriers and opportunities in integrated waste management and eventually to demonstrate ISWM in practice.

The "Unlocking the Value of Waste" partnership is working to create value in the waste management and recycling supply chain, such as organic fraction into biofuel and bio-chemicals through creation of best practice roadmaps and demonstration sites. Led by Masdar Institute, the focus at 3GF Africa was to develop a roadmap to enable stakeholders to achieve Integrated Waste Management Systems with contributions from Abu Dhabi, Kenya and other African countries.

Partnership session goals

- Identify the challenges of waste management in Africa
- Bring more value from waste along the supply chain in Africa
- A roadmap designed and tested by leading African waste experts
- Clarify commitment from African stakeholders to the ISWM partnership

The partnership is contributing to the proposed SDGs:

7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Session summary

During the session the main problems facing the waste management sector in Africa were discussed alongside the role and responsibilities of key stakeholders. The session brought together policy makers, experts from areas of municipal solid waste management and financial sector. A holistic vision of integrated waste management was shared with examples of best practise and innovation of how to unlock value along the waste supply chain and one of the main objective is to give roadmaps of implementing integrated sustainable waste management of municipal and agricultural solid waste.

Results and outcomes

Participants agreed on the following recommendations and actions:

- *Enforcing policies* – different countries have different policies which have been endorsed in different ways. It is clear concrete action will only be achieved when enforcement is implemented. The 4Rs, Reuse, Recycle, Reduce and Reclaim remains a valuable way to understand the waste hierarchy and opportunity for value creation.
- *Private investment* - Africa has the opportunity to enable green growth in Africa by investing in green technologies for waste handling and waste management more broadly. There is a need to focus on identifying the opportunities for value creation, and specifically on how to achieve this. Speakers and participations highlighted that investment in green waste technologies can create jobs. One way to enable investment is to create a regulatory framework within waste management that supports private investment. The increase in private investment is important to ensure access to the recycling market. Also creating a stable and transparent market for products of waste management is essential for attracting private investment. Looking into the increased number of people that have moved into the cities and the increase in investment in waste handling make a clear business case.
- *Educating people* - Important to showcase the value for sustainable waste management – the benefits need to be demonstrated. There is often a long distance between where the waste is collected and where it end up in the land field so people are not aware of the consequences of not doing the 4Rs. At the same time continuously education of how to sort the waste and why it is important need to be in focus. We need to change the mind-set of people and educate them in looking at waste as a value. Today people look down on people that work in the waste sector and it is difficult to get trained personal.
- *Engagement between technology provider and public sector* - Private public engagement is very important and models for the public/private partnership should be developed. Private partners should be more active and should give input on how the framework could be formed. They should not only promote their own technology but be in a continuous dialog with the public sector. The municipalities often “owns” the waste and should be open to discuss the possibility of companies to access the different sorted waste streams. One way to increase the engagement between the technology providers and public sector is to set standards for waste management.
- *Waste pickers/cartel discussion - professional waste handling and relation to waste collectors* - In many African cities the waste pickers are a key player in the waste value chain especially in the informal settlements. Involving the waste pickers in the design of future waste management systems can be an advantage, especially if a relationship is established between the waste pickers and waste handlers. Evidence in Cape Town and Cairo suggests that if waste pickers are incentivized, all of the waste in the informal settlements can be effectively sorted, collected and brought to the wastehandlers.

“We need to change the mind sets of people. waste is a not problem but a value for the society”

“The informal waste sector needs to be included – not excluded - in future waste management”

The key outcome from the meeting was critical input to help finalize the roadmap for implementing integrated sustainable waste management of municipal and agricultural solid including best practices and innovation emphasizing the importance of private and public collaboration to ensure green growth within the waste sector in Africa. Watch this space for publication of the roadmap!

For more information, please contact: Dr. Jens Ejbye Schmidt, email: jschmidt@masdar.ac.ae