



**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

Distr.: LIMITED

E/ECA/CFSSD/6/9  
9 October 2009

Original : ENGLISH

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development  
Regional Implementation Meeting for CSD-18

Sixth Session

27-30 October 2009  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Africa Review Report on Waste Management  
(Summary)**



## Contents

	Page
I. Introduction .....	1
II. Major trends and emerging issues on waste management in Africa .....	2
III. Action taken and progress made .....	2
IV. Implementation challenges and constraints.....	3
V. Lessons learn and the way forward .....	3



## **I. Introduction**

1. United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/Res.58/218 mandates United Nations regional commissions, in collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), regional and subregional organizations and bodies and regional offices of funds, programmes, international finance and trade institutions and other organizations of the United Nations system to organize multi-stakeholder Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs) and provide regional inputs into the work of the CSD. In this context, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has been organizing RIMs in collaboration with partner organizations since 2003.

2. RIM 2009, to be held in October 2009, under the auspices of the Sixth Session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development (CFSSD-6), is being organized in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and other partners. RIM 2009 will deliberate on regional inputs into the Eighteenth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-18). It will review progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 (A21), the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (PFIA21) and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) commitments relative to the thematic areas of transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and a ten-Year framework of programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).

### **Scope of the report**

3. This summary report on waste management draws from the main report of the same prepared under the leadership of UNIDO as Africa's contribution to regional preparations for CSD-18. UNIDO prepared this summary as well as the main report in collaboration with the African Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (ARSCP) and the African National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs). The report provides an overview of trends and emerging issues on waste management in Africa. It highlights progress and achievements, identifies implementation challenges and constraints, as well as lessons learned; and outlines the way forward, including policy measures and action needed to accelerate implementation.

### **Submission to RIM 2009**

4. Being submitted for consideration by RIM 2009, this report is intended to stimulate discussions aimed at generating inputs to inform the Africa RIM Statement. It is also intended to elicit comments and additional inputs for the finalization of the main regional review report on waste management. The final report will serve as a reference document for CSD-18 deliberations. It will be disseminated to member States, African regional and subregional organizations, and all relevant partners and organizations. The aim is to highlight the status of implementation of waste management-related commitments in Africa and serve as an advocacy tool for promoting appropriate action by all stakeholders at all levels, to ensure sound waste management in Africa.

## **II. Major trends and emerging issues on waste management in Africa**

5. Poor waste management practices, in particular, widespread dumping of waste in water bodies and uncontrolled dump sites, aggravates the problems of generally low sanitation levels across the African continent.

6. Urbanization is on the rise in Africa, and this trend is expected to continue in the future. Of concern is the inability of infrastructure and land use planning methods (including for waste management) to cope with urban growth, (the highest in the world) at 3.5 per cent annually. This is particularly urgent in slum areas, which constitute a big part of many of the cities and towns in Africa.

7. Waste management infrastructure is largely non-existent in rural areas of Africa. Improvements in infrastructure are urgently needed to combat the high cost of health services and thereby alleviate poverty and reduce rural-urban migration.

8. The gap between waste management policy and legislation and actual waste management practices is widening due to perennial capacity constraints and lack of waste management facilities for various waste streams. Access to major investments and acquiring the technical know-how needed to resolve the capacity constraints remain a tall order.

9. Waste generation is expected to increase significantly as a result of industrialization, urbanization and modernization of agriculture in Africa. This will further aggravate current capacity constraints in waste management.

10. The fast growing use of ICT and rapid turn-over in technology (particularly computers, mobile phones, etc.) is creating a growing E-waste stream, for which there is no waste management capacity yet. This leads to disposal of both E-waste and municipal waste in dump sites.

11. Changing lifestyles and consumption patterns of the growing urban middle class, in particular, is increasing the complexity and composition of waste streams in Africa.

## **III. Action taken and progress made**

12. Progress has been made in waste management policies and strategies. The use of economic instruments and implementation of polluter-pays principles in waste management have yet to mature in most African countries.

13. Biogas and compost production from organic waste fractionation has been widely accepted in Africa as a best practice, and progress is being made in developing and implementing specific projects in various countries.

14. Energy production from agricultural residues (including co-generation) is increasingly accepted as another best practice, and several projects have been implemented, some of them with jointly-funded carbon credits (using the Clean Development Mechanism).

15. Some countries have refurbishment centres for used ICT equipment which serve to extend the useful life of the products.

16. Resource-efficient and cleaner production has become a feasible best practice for reducing waste from businesses and other organizations in different parts of Africa and is now being promoted through channels like the network of UNIDO-UNEP affiliated National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs).

#### **IV. Implementation challenges and constraints**

17. The single largest implementation challenge remains creating sufficient capacity for environmentally sound management, including, where appropriate, recovery and recycling of various waste streams across Africa. The effort to do this is constrained by access to finance and technical know-how.

18. Current by-laws in most African countries give responsibility for waste management to municipalities, which are often ill-equipped to deal with collection and disposal. Such by-laws are now an impediment to investment in waste management by the private sector.

19. Imports of second-hand consumer goods and production and/or import of substandard products are all contributing to rapid increase in waste generation. Policies should be put in place and existing standards enforced to reverse this trend.

20. Implementation or enforcement of waste regulations and conventions is severely constrained by the lack of good governance, transparency and prevalence of corruption in some cases.

21. Lack of awareness and appreciation of best practices for environmentally-sound management of wastes is a major constraint. A paradigm shift among communities and society at large is needed.

#### **V. Lessons learn and the way forward**

22. *Involvement of the Private sector:* The involvement of the private sector, in partnership with local communities, in solid waste management activities, has created employment and job opportunities for a substantial number of jobless city residents, many of whom were previously-unemployed women and youth. Gradually, this experience is gaining ground, and is certain to reach other countries.

23. *Income generation:* Solid waste management activities have been serving as means of income generation for people. The income generated is not only from wage payments but also from sales of items recovered from solid waste. Waste products like plastic bags, plastic containers, knives, spoons and frying pans may be reused. Indeed waste recycling could yield a monthly income of between US\$130 and US\$800. Income generation from waste related activities needs to be recognized, formalized and replicated. In this regard the use of the term salvagers instead of scavengers should be promoted to describe those involved in recovering reusable waste items

24. *Refuse collection charges:* In some cities, a sound refuse collection system is in place and serves as a good source of income for city and municipal councils. It is necessary to exchange knowledge and experience in Africa on successful experiences, which can be replicated.

25. *Practical and attitudinal changes:* The manner in which solid waste was previously managed has changed. For example, there are increasing signs of waste being segregated at source and to a large extent, collected and stored in waste bins. Sorting is being done at communal waste collection points with noticeably organized groups of people. Increasingly, peoples' attitude to solid waste is gradually changing; and they no longer regard solid waste as a menace but rather a commercial good that can be used to generate income and alleviate poverty.

26. *What Africa expects from the international community:* The international community should support transfer and dissemination of knowledge and technology and foster investments in best practices for environmentally sound management of various waste streams within the African continent. The scale of investments needed for proper sanitation and environmentally sound management of wastes is beyond the capacity of African countries.

27. The international community should implement the relevant international agreements/conventions on waste management (particularly the Bamako, Basel and Cotonou Conventions) and provide assistance to African countries to strengthen their national, human and institutional capacities for implementation and enforcement (especially for control of imports and exports of wastes and waste containing products into and within the region).

28. The international community should conclude, as a matter of urgency, the negotiations and ratification of a protocol on liability and compensation for damages under the Basel Convention.

29. Specific assistance is needed to establish proper inventories of hazardous and radio-active wastes and sites potentially affected by poor management of such wastes, as a basis for developing and implementing facilities for managing them and cleaning up contaminated sites.

30. Assistance is also required for awareness and cultural exchange programmes for integrated waste management.