
Circularity for a Sustainable Future

Case Studies: Solid Waste Management and Low-Carbon Construction

5th December 2018 | 15:00 – 16:30

COP24 Side event | UNFCC Room 1

Background Note

Global south has emerged as a leader in innovative solutions and technology development on resource substitution & supports rapid growth. Unlike advanced economies where the circular economy or alternative economic models are seen as a new model emerging sometime in the early 1970's, circularity and sustainability is already a familiar concept and practiced in many developing countries. The circular concept of repair, reuse and recycle is deeply embedded in these countries, where there is a thriving informal recycling network with a strong door to door collection system, as well as forward linkages to the recycling industry.

This session will discuss opportunities for increased circular economy action to promote sustainable growth through green technology transfer. Circular economy practices in sectors such as solid waste management and construction offers huge opportunities to not only reduce GHG emissions and environmental pollution but also contributes to increase in employment and improvement in health conditions of the communities.

The construction sector is one of the largest emitters, with cement alone accounting for around 8% of global CO₂ emissions.¹ However demand-side measures including demand stimulation for green building materials alone could potentially contribute to reduction in the carbon emissions by half in the coming decades, compared to business-as-usual². While developed countries will continue to play a critical role in the reduction of carbon emissions by accelerating the shift to a net-zero built environment, e.g. by setting clear targets, encouraging private sector investment, and demonstrating sustainable, circular public procurement; the responsibility to reduce carbon emissions also lies with the developing countries. This is so because in the future, with rising urbanization most new buildings and infrastructure will be developed in developing countries.

¹<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018-06-13-making-concrete-change-cement-lehne-preston-exec-sum.pdf>

²<https://europeanclimate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/MATERIAL-ECONOMICS-CIRCULAR-ECONOMY-WEBB-SMALL2.pdf>

Overall, the waste sector contributes more than 5% of global GHG emissions³, but an estimate suggests there is a \$4.5 trillion global opportunity before 2030 through avoiding waste⁴. Around 70% of low-and middle-income countries already include waste management practices in their NDCs - the challenge is implementation, in the context of rising populations, urbanization, and shifts in consumption patterns. However, opportunities to leapfrog exist and can be accelerated by sharing lessons with developed countries, who are decreasing waste generation through better recycling and stronger policy initiatives.

As the world tread into the new global development paradigm, this proposed side event at COP24 recognizing the opportunity, aims to deliberate on the transformations needed to build a sustainable future for all; ensuring an economy that ensures natural resource resilience and green livelihoods. The focus will be to highlight and discuss:

1. South-South co-operation focused on innovation, technologies and practices within the broader principle of sustainable development.
2. What are the structural changes required for the global world to move towards greening the economy?
3. How do we move beyond the current indicators of economic progress and focus on well-being – for people and the planet?
4. How can global south extend its contribution for technology transfer in sectors including construction; and waste such as plastics.

The environmental impacts of the economic development and the potential to mitigate the negative environmental impacts through an inclusive economic strategy will be deliberated in this proposed side event at - COP24. Sector experts, government representatives, entrepreneurs, development practitioners, businesses and community based organizations will be coming together to reflect on the principles and approaches for transitioning the high impact sectors like construction and waste including plastics sector towards a greener and inclusive sector. Accordingly, ***this side event will facilitate discussions on options for the global world with respect to technology, innovations and practices.***

³<https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg3/ar4-wg3-chapter10.pdf>

⁴<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-12-05-circular-economy-preston-lehne-final.pdf>

COP24		
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Time	Topic	Speakers
10 minutes	Introduction and setting of context	Felix Preston , Deputy Research Director and Senior Research Fellow, Chatham House
15 minutes	Key Note Address	Ms. Tawonga Mbale- Luka , Director of Environment Affairs, Environmental Affairs Department, Government of Malawi
30 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the structural changes required for global world to move towards greening the economy? • How do we move beyond the current indicators of economic progress and focus on well-being – for people and the planet? • How can global south extend its contribution for technology transfer in sectors including construction; and waste such as plastics 	Chatham House International Solid Waste Association Development Alternatives
25 minutes	Open discussion	Chatham House International Solid Waste Association Development Alternatives
10 minutes	Vote of Thanks	Development Alternatives

