

20th AMCEN Ordinary session: Regional Consultative Meeting | Concept note

Proposed session title: From AMCEN Resolution to Action: Ending Open Burning in Africa by 2040

Subtitle: Exploring implementation of the Africa Regional Roadmap on transformative action to end open burning of waste through innovative financing and the use of a circular economy approach.

Proposed session date + time: Saturday 12 July, 1.15pm – 2.45pm

Location: TBC

Session implementation partners: Engineering X, African Circular Economy Alliance (hosted by African Development Bank)

Context

Open burning is an outcome of a deficient waste management system and has catastrophic effects on human health and the environment. A recent poll found that 41% of households worldwide rely on open burning as their primary waste disposal method.¹ It is estimated that up to 90% of waste in African countries is dumped or openly burned².

Open burning of waste has significant impacts on public health. It significantly contributes to air pollution with an estimated contribution of 11% of global black carbon emissions, as well as many other Short-Lived- Climate Pollutants (SLCPs) including methane. This can cause upper respiratory tract infections, dermatological illnesses, immunological, reproductive and developmental abnormalities. Communities living close to dumpsites and waste workers are disproportionately impacted. SLCPs contribute more to climate change than CO₂ because they have higher global warming potential and trap more heat per molecule despite their shorter atmospheric lifespan.

Across Africa, countries face similar challenges that drive open burning of waste. Local government and municipalities hold the main responsibility for waste management, and are faced with low capacity, poor coordination, and limited resources. This leads to a lack of basic services, like waste collection, forcing communities to dump or burn their waste. While community-based organisations and informal waste pickers and recyclers help bridge the gap, they receive little support despite their vital role.

Urgent financing is needed to close the waste management funding gap which is partly driven by misalignment between national and local government priorities. More than 50% of the respondents to a recent survey indicated that while local governments allocate up to 20% of their budgets to waste services (collection and transfer stations), national governments allocate less than 5% of infrastructure budgets to waste management. Overseas development finance (ODF) is also scarce, with just 0.41% committed globally between 2003 and 2021. Innovative financing and leadership from African Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) are crucial. Beyond funding, Africa has a major economic opportunity - nearly 80% of municipal solid waste generated in African cities is recyclable, potentially generating \$8 billion annually and creating better jobs in a circular economy.

¹ Gallup & Lloyds Register Foundation. 2024. World Risk Poll 2024 Report

² Cogut, 2016; Kaza *et al.*, 2018; UNEP, 2018

The AMCEN resolution

In 2022, the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) passed a landmark resolution to end open burning in Africa by 2040 and reduce it by 60% by 2030, based on previous work done by the United Nations High Level Champions and Engineering X, a growing collaboration founded by the Royal Academy of Engineering and Lloyd's Register Foundation. The resolution:

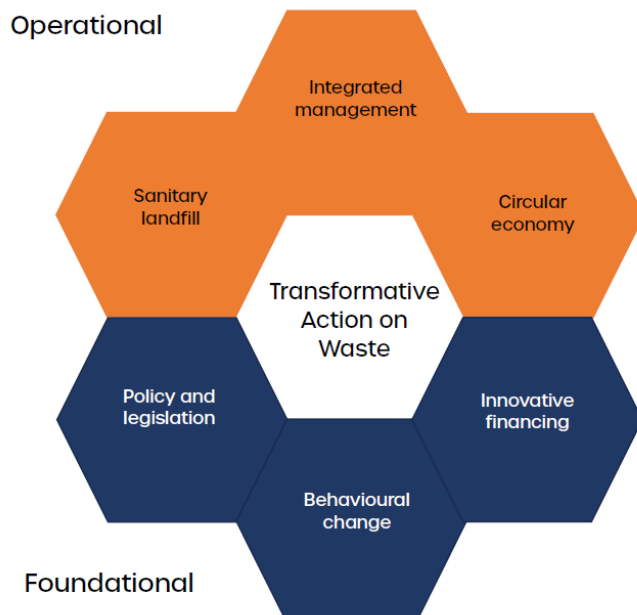
- a. urged Member States to take the necessary policy and legislative action for the elimination of open dumping and burning of waste by addressing the systemic deficiencies that exist within waste management systems in Africa,
- b. called on countries to promote the implementation of an integrated solid waste management system with a particular focus on promoting circularity that facilitate the reuse of waste as a secondary resource input,
- c. and encouraged Member States, local authorities, civil society actors, community groups, the private sector and development partners to join the Multi Stakeholder Partnership (MSP) in eliminating open burning of waste and the dumping of waste.

To implement the AMCEN resolution, the Multi Stakeholder Partnership was launched at COP27 in Egypt, co-Chaired by AMCEN and United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, which brings together a network of implementers working towards collective action. As part of resolution delivery, in 2024, UNEP's Climate and Clean Air Coalition, funded a consortium of partners³ to develop three regional roadmaps to create the enabling conditions to change behaviours, policy and practice.

The Africa Regional Roadmap promotes a holistic transformative action framework to end open burning of waste. The framework consists of two parts:

- 1. Foundational Pillars:** Core actions for all African countries and cities.
- 2. Operational Actions:** Context-specific measures tailored to different challenges.

While not exhaustive, the roadmap provides a starting point for action.



The session will focus on the 'innovate financing' foundation pillar and the 'circular economy' operational pillar as a method of implementation. This is in line with the African Circular

³ Engineering X (lead), Practical Action, Institute of Global Environment Strategies, International Solid Waste Association, UN Habitat

Economy Alliance and the forthcoming African Union Continental Circular Economy Roadmap.

Summary of session

To turn this resolution into action, the Africa roadmap outlines key steps for stakeholders to eliminate open burning, which this session will aim to discuss across a range of stakeholders, including government and finance institutions. The session topics will follow the Africa Roadmap transformative action framework pillars to discuss innovative financing mechanisms as one of the defined core foundational actions that need to be taken by all African countries and cities. The session will then focus on circular economy as the operational pillar and discuss this as a method of implementation for transformative action in the waste sector. This will align with discussions on national circular economy roadmaps.

This side session aims to:

- bring together stakeholders from across a range of sectors to discuss the implementation of the Africa Roadmap and national circular economy plans,
- exploring innovative financing mechanism for the waste sector in African countries,
- and align multi stakeholder messaging for presentation to the 20th AMCEN ordinary session.

There will be an opportunity for participants to ask questions and input into the development of the Africa Roadmap before it is presented to AMCEN for endorsement in the 20th ordinary session the next week.

The session will have a regional focus but will bring examples from: Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria. Aligning with the ACEA founding members and the Africa Roadmap priority countries.

Expected outcomes:

The following are the expected outcomes from the event:

- To align the Africa regional roadmap on transformative action to end open burning of waste with circular economy initiatives being undertaken both regionally and at national level to support aligned government action
- Improved awareness of the challenges of open burning of waste
- Increased commitment from the AMCEN to implement the Africa Roadmap transformative action framework

Proposed session structure

The session will consist of:

- introductory remarks,
- a panel discussion with representatives from national and local government, finance institutions and NGOs/IGOs,
- and followed by participant questions and input into the Africa Roadmap.

Possible speakers: The panel will include representatives from across the different stakeholder groups (national and local government, finance institutions, NGOs/IGOs). Suggestions thus far: Engineering X, African Development Bank, Development Bank of Ghana, Rwanda national government, Practical Action, Green Africa Youth Organisation