

Draft Concept Note

High-Level Launch of African Union's "Continental Circular Economy Action Plan (2024-2034)"

Theme: *Accelerating Africa's Transition to a Circular Economy*

Date: 17 July 2025

Time: Dinner (6:00 PM - 9:00 PM)

Venue: UN Office at Nairobi (UNON)

Organizers: African Union Commission in collaboration with the European Union, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA), and other confirmed partners

- Ministers of Environment and related portfolios from African Union Member States
- Senior Officials from the African Union, RECs and the European Union.
- High-level representatives from industries, including leaders from circular start-up companies and SMEs from Africa and beyond
- Representatives from international organizations, UN Agencies, development partners and financial institutions
- Key stakeholders in the circular economy space, academia and civil society organisations (CSO) and the media

Background:

Africa is making steady progress in implementing Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want and achieving its aspirations. However, Africa's current consumption and production practices pose a clear challenge to the sustainability agenda. The linear "take-make-dispose" model has placed immense pressure on our planet's natural resources and ecosystems, disproportionately impacting the African continent. Recognizing the urgent need for a paradigm shift, the African Union Commission (AUC), with support from the European Union (EU) and cooperation partners, developed its "**Continental Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) (2024-2034)**", a strategic framework to foster sustainable growth, create green jobs, and enhance resource efficiency across the continent. The Action Plan, which was developed to guide AU Member States in transitioning towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns, was officially endorsed at the 44th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council through Decision EX.CL/Dec.1234(XLIV).

In order for Africa to accelerate its Transition to a Circular Economy and leverage on Opportunities for Green Growth and Partnerships, the proposed high-level launch event aims to raise awareness, build political momentum, and foster partnerships for the effective implementation of the CEAP. Holding the launch in the margins of the Twentieth Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN-20) provides a strategic platform to engage key policymakers and leverage the high-level presence of environmental leaders. Furthermore, it strategically aligns with the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and AMCEN resolutions on circular economy.

The “**Clean Industrial Deal**”, proposed by the European Commission in February 2025, is expected to contribute to and accelerate the clean, just and competitive transition to circularity. Through the EU-AU strategic partnership, the EU has been providing increasing co-funding to invest in the transition to a competitive circular economy at bilateral, regional and continental level. The **EUR 150 billion Europe-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package** presents a potential opportunity to raise significant grant and loan funding for the implementation of the Action Plan.

Objectives:

- **Officially launch** of AU’s Continental Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) for Africa 2024-2034.
- **Raise awareness** on the opportunities and benefits of a linear to circular economic transition in Africa.
- **Showcase tangible circular economy solutions, innovations, and investment opportunities** within Africa.
- **Inform how the European Union already supports the implementation of the CEAP** and invests in circularity in Africa across many sectors.
- **Facilitate dialogue** and foster potential partnerships between policymakers, industry leaders, and development partners to accelerate the transition to a circular economy.
- **Highlight** the alignment of the CEAP with the EU-AU strategic partnership, as well as with relevant SDGs including those on Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Sustainable Consumption and Production (SDG 12); Climate Action (SDG 13), Life Below Water (SDG 14), Life on Land (SDG 15) as well as with Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9);
- **Catalyze action** and commitment towards the implementation of the Action Plan at national and regional levels.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness and understanding of the African Union Circular Economy Action Plan among key stakeholders.
- Stronger political will and commitment towards the implementation of the Action Plan.
- Enhanced dialogue and networking opportunities between African policymakers, EU officials, and the private sector.
- Identification of potential areas for collaboration and partnerships in advancing the circular economy in Africa.
- Positive media coverage showcasing Africa's leadership in embracing sustainable development pathways.

EVENT PROGRAMME

- **18:00 – 18:35:** Welcome Reception, Networking and Exhibition Viewing

Showcasing African Circular Innovation: A Session & Exhibition (45 minutes):

- **Interactive Exhibition/ Marketplace:** Featuring booths and displays from African manufacturers and industries actively involved in circular economy practices. This could include companies working in areas such as waste management and upcycling, sustainable packaging, eco-design, and resource-efficient production etc.
- **18:35 – 18:45:** All invited guest will take their seats at the dining venue.

Event Master of Ceremony (MC): Connie Aluoch (tbc) – Renowned fashion stylist, image consultant, and lecturer with extensive experience across Kenya’s creative and media sectors.

- **18:45 – 18:50: Welcome Statement** by the MC and brief introduction of the programme.
- **18:50 – 18:55: Opening Remarks: Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema**, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme, *highlighting the strategic importance of a Circular Economy in Africa.*
- **18:55 – 19:00: High-level Remarks: H.E. Jessika ROSWALL**, EU Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy, *emphasizing EU's commitment to circularity under the European Green Deal, respectively the ‘Clean Industrial Deal’.*
- **19:00 – 19:05: Keynote Address: H.E. Moses VILAKATI**, AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy, *highlighting the significance of the Continental Circular Economy Action Plan.*

Event MC to facilitate the launch of the Continental CEAP for Africa (2024-2034)

- **19:05 – 19:15:** Official Launch of the Continental CEAP for Africa (2024-2034) by **AU Commissioner Moses VILAKATI** and **EU Commissioner Jessika ROSWALL**, witnessed by **Elizabeth Maruma Mrema**, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme, and by African Ministers present.
 - Symbolic Ribbon Cutting;
 - Call to Action Toast and Group Photo;

– 1st Dinner Course (Starters) being served –

- **19:15 – 19:40** Statements by **Ministers and Executive Secretaries of RECs** present

– *2nd Dinner Course (Main Course) being served –*

- **19:40 – 20:40:** Panel Discussion with Dinner Service: **"Unlocking the Potential for Circular Economy in Africa"**
 - **Panel Moderator: Dr. Matthias Naab**, Director, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa.
 - **Panelists:**
 - **Harsen Nyambe**, Director, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the African Union. Presentation: ***Highlights of the Continental CEAP for Africa (2024-2034)***.
 - **Matthias Reusing**, First Counsellor / Policy Advisor for Agriculture, Environment & Climate Change, and Digital Transition, EU Delegation to the AU. Presentation: ***Overview of EU Cooperation & Partnerships in Circular Economy in Africa***.
 - **Dr. Anthony Okon Nyong**, Director, Climate Change and Green Growth, AfDB.
 - **Wambui Mbarire**, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), The Retail Trade association of Kenya (RETRAK). Representative from the Private Sector.
 - **Q&A**

– *3rd Dinner Course (Desert) being served –*

- **20:40 – 20:45: Concluding Remarks & Official Closing**
- **20:45 – 21:00: Informal Networking**