

***Communications for all in East Africa***

**JUBA COMMUNIQUE ON E-WASTE MANAGEMENT**

We, members of the East African Community under the auspices of the East African Communications Organization met for three days from 11th – 13th March 2024, at Imperial Plaza hotel, Juba South Sudan, and exchanged ideas and experiences in management of e-waste within our region, under the *theme* **“Sustainable Strategies for e-waste Management in South Sudan and EAC region: A holistic approach”**

1. **OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP**

The following were the Objectives of the awareness workshop:

1. Promote the adoption by various stakeholders of other sustainable e-waste management practices.
2. Provide a synopsis on the global trends in e-waste management including best practices and successful case studies from around the world.
3. Discuss how Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a solution to sustainable e-waste management.
4. Devise mechanisms of enhancing collaboration among governments, industry, and civil society in addressing e-waste management challenges.
5. Identifying and addressing barriers to sustainable e-waste management
6. **PARTICIPATION**

This workshop was attended by 130 participants physically (109) and virtually (21) from the EACO Member States, Africa and Europe. presenters were done both physically and virtually. The 6th EACO Regional E-Waste workshop was attended by stakeholders, as follows: -

1. EACO Member States and partners;
2. Law makers;
3. Policy makers in relevant Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Local Government/States (County) Governments, Environmental & ICT Regulators;
4. National Standards Bodies;
5. Private Sector Players/Recyclers;
6. Academia/Training Institutions;
7. Consumer Organizations and the public/consumers of ICT services.
8. **OPENING SESSION (SESSION 1) - REMARKS BY GUESTS**
9. Welcome Remarks by the Master of Ceremony, **Mr. Paul Demetry of Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) South Sudan** who warmly welcomed the particpants to South Sudan and to the workshop; and wished them fruitful deliberations.
10. Introductory Remarks by **EACO Executive Secretary, Dr. Ally Yahaya Simba**. He South Sudan for organising the workshop. He updated the meeting on the various regional and national Steering Committees established and thanked South Sudan and other EAC Partner States for the steps taken to regulate E-waste so far.
11. Opening Remarks by **Director General of the National Communication Authority (NCA) South Sudan, Eng. Napoleon Adok Gai.** He welcomed the guests and reminded the participants that South Sudan having only recently emerged from the war has a lot to learn and also share on the influx of electronics (NGOs and Government institutions) as well as on matters of E-waste handling.
12. Opening Remarks by the **Permanent Secretary for Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) of South Sudan; Hon Joseph Africana Bartel**. Stressed the need to come up with regional strategies to cater for plastics pollution and E-waste Management in the region. This is exacerbated by the ever-increasing population for instance in cities such as Juba. He also updated that the law on environment in South Sudan was in the offing, laying a platform for review.
13. Opening Address/Chief Guest of Honour – **Minister for Information, Communication Technology and Postal Services of South Sudan – Hon. Michael Makuei Lueth – who was represented by Dr. Lado Wani Kayi, the Under Secretary Ministry of ICT and Postal Services.** He welcomed the participants of the workshop and thanked the organisers for always bringing on board MoEF of South Sudan which is a major stakeholder, if not the most relevant entity, in the fight against E-waste.

He mentioned the importance of the workshop which has brought together Policy makers, Academia, researchers, stakeholders, students etc. He further hinted on the 2022-2027 E- waste Management strategy highlighting the importance of regional initiatives that can be the basis for solving individual State problems on E-waste. Since South Sudan has fewer laws, it was set to develop these with synergies and knowledge shared in the workshop.

1. **Keynote speech.** The Keynote speech entitled “Sustainable Waste Management,” was delivered by Dr. Thomas Musili (PhD) of WEEC. He described what E-waste is and explained the need to have sustainable waste management practices. He advocated for embracing the principles of a circular economy, that is Reducing, Re-using and Re-cycling E-waste. He spoke of the need for massive sensitisation for people to understand the need for e-waste management. The need for extended producer responsibility, technological tracking and set up of automated facilities to undertake e-waste management. Above all, he called for brotherliness and collaboration at regional and bilateral level to enable progress in addressing the challenge of E-waste in the EAC region

**KEY OBSERVATIONS AND TAKE AWAYS**

**Presenters technical, academia, consultants, practitioners, and**

1. The meeting was guided by the Regional E-waste management strategy 2022 – 2027, and Member States shared the status of implementation of the document. It was evident that the document is a very crucial reference in shaping member states in addressing the e-waste challenge through appropriate customization.
2. We explored the volumes of e-waste within our national borders and learnt that each member state has tens of tonnes of e-waste that requires appropriate disposal. The volumes are expanding exponentially as a result of rapid technological changes, increase in population, increased automation of services, change of appetite among users of electronic equipment, importation of obsolete technologies and rudimentary e-waste collection, recycling and disposal technologies.
3. We learnt that member states have identified e-waste pollution as a major challenge and have put in place different types of legislation to address the menace. The policy and legislative framework was however felt to have many gaps and need to be strengthened. In addition, Member States agreed to embrace the e-waste Guidelines in place to help the players/actors in the area of e-waste to work in a conducive environment in combating e-waste challenges and also in harnessing the opportunities.
4. On infrastructure to manage e-waste, all member states reported differing levels of inadequacy. Collection systems were poor as well as inadequate recycling and poor final disposal. This is an area that requires immediate intervention to enhance e-waste reduction and recycling. It was noted that member states may not have adequate finances to invest in e-waste management and hence the need to explore other innovative sustainable resource mobilization approaches.
5. Members were taken through use of Extended Producer Responsibility models by different countries and noted that if embraced in the region could help inject more resources and technologies for e-waste management. Countries agreed to mainstream EPR in their legislation and require producers to take care of their products and waste arising therefrom beyond their end of life.
6. On coordination, members appreciated the role of EACO in bringing together member states to reflect on ways to address e-waste management. This was noted as a crucial platform to share experiences between Member States on addressing e-waste as a region. It was resolved that these regional initiatives and collaboration among Member States should be strengthened as the basis for solving individual country problems on e-waste by developing synergies and knowledge sharing.
7. Public awareness leading to behavior change among the consumers was noted to be inadequate. It was agreed that sensitization and awareness should be enhanced to both private and public players to understand the importance of e-waste management to avoid pollution and degradation of the environment. The EPR schemes should be compelled to undertake awareness to inform the public on dangers of handling e-waste and appropriate collection sites and disposal methods.
8. To upscale public awareness, Member States also noted that we have not harnessed all the platforms for public awareness. The Member States agreed on the urgency to develop a Communication Strategy to aid in spreading the conversation about e-waste management e.g. via social media, local radio and TV.
9. It was also noted that there was inadequate capacity on e-waste management among all the value chain actors. It was agreed that the EACO should consider having a capacity building programme for players in the e-waste value chain. The EPR schemes should take up capacity building as a key component in their programmes to enhance appropriate e-waste management.
10. The meeting noted that some Member States have undertaken some rudimentary survey on the status of e-waste within their boundaries. The surveys were however felt insufficient and had not yielded credible data to enhance decision making. Members agreed that we cannot make meaningful progress if we do not have meaningful baseline data upon which to monitor progress of ongoing interventions. Member States agreed that baseline surveys should be enhanced and development partners should come in and assist in this priority need.

**RAPPORTEUR TEAM; AND ALL THANK YOU ALL**