



## ENVIRONMENT

# Think sustainable waste management for Kenya

Improper administration of landfills in Kenya has led to illegal waste management practices with cartels nearly taking over in the cities. There are various ungazetted dumping sites.

According to the World Bank, the global burden of urban waste management is rising rapidly due to increased urbanisation and purchasing power in many countries.

A 2017 report by the National Environment Management Authority's (Nema) National Environmental Complaints Committee said an average of 45 per cent of waste goes uncollected in Nairobi, Kisumu, Thika, Nakuru, Mombasa and Eldoret. The towns generate 6,000 tonnes of waste daily but only 3,962 tonnes (66 per cent) is collected.

## Lacks capacity

The Nairobi County government has admitted that it lacks the capacity to collect and sort the city's daily 2,745 tonnes of waste. The Dandora dumpsite is due to be decommissioned with no alternative site.

In Mombasa, the latest attempt at closing down the Kibarani dumpsite last June was postponed indefinitely for reasons such as the alternative, Mwakirunge, is on a flight path.

There needs to be a comprehensive and coordinated system that monitors commercial, residential and industrial waste flow.

One of the most workable and sustainable remedies is proper

separation of recyclable resources.

In 2015, Nema came up with the National Solid Waste Management Plan, which sought to have waste considered a resource that can be harnessed to create energy, wealth and employment and reduce environmental pollution. It envisaged recycling 80 per cent of solid waste by 2030.

For that, a waste separation at source system is necessary. Recycling firms would be handed sorted quality recyclables through a combination of manual sorting at the household level and collection through kerbside collection schemes or automatically separated in materials recovery facilities.

However, this requires legal/political goodwill to ensure that the county governments put in place structures for refuse removal, provision and maintenance of refuse dumps and solid waste disposal, as mandated in the Constitution.

Integrated waste management can contribute significantly to what has come to be known as a 'circular economy' — one that is restorative and regenerative by design. For example, the global cement industry wants to increase the use of alternative fuels for production to reduce dependence on conventional fossil fuels for energy and to mitigate their adverse environmental impact.

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