



Policy Brief

February 2022



1

Jamaica - Kenya - Rwanda - Uganda

Executive summary

The same durability that makes plastic so useful for preserving food and maintaining hygiene also makes preventing plastic pollution a key global challenge, one recognised for its fiendish complexity as a wicked problem” meaning that solving it will require multiple types of solutions to be deployed by many actors in every corner of the globe.

The Governing Plastics Network is carrying out case studies of groups including citizen activists, NGOs, politicians and members of the private sector in seven developing countries who have successfully campaigned to create new anti-plastic laws and shape pro-environmental behaviour with the objective of discovering what methods of communication and strategies of persuasion are most effective in which contexts and why. This knowledge will then be used to provide evidence supporting real policy change both in other developing nations and around the world.

Key global findings:

Even in countries which successfully introduce well-developed legal frameworks on plastic there typically emerge two main implementation problems: 1) Cultural adherence – the difficulty of changing actual behaviour and the beliefs and habits underlying it; 2) Law enforcement – a lack of well-funded and well-supported infrastructure to police compliance and reward or penalise as required.

The project identified two types of communication campaign that worked well no matter the national context:

- 1) campaigns driven by national or regional entrepreneurs or activists who demonstrate the ability to influence and engage different stakeholder groups using strategically tailored means of communication to educate and persuade as necessary, becoming key plastic celebrities;
- 2) campaigns driven by international NGOs that generate attention and debate focused on refusing plastics, promoting alternatives and encouraging entrepreneurship ideas. Such ideas might include privately run waste management that can compensate for the under-resourced and underfunded public sector and limited recycling infrastructure. These organisations have the prestige, reach and connections to act as a nexus for building multi-sector stakeholder alliances capable of addressing all aspects of the plastic cycle.

Implications for policy and recommendations:

- Establish a network of key plastic ambassadors (NGOs, activists, entrepreneurs)
- Develop locally tailored but consistent messaging encouraging refusal of plastics, promoting a shift towards a circular economy and use of alternative materials.
- Engage civil society by utilising diverse communication methods in a manner sensitive to the preferences, beliefs and goals of target audiences (social media, mass media, artistic and creative works, advertising, organised events etc.).

Contents

Project Information 6

Research Approach 7

National cases studies 8

Jamaica 8

Kenya 15

Rwanda 23

Uganda 29

Conclusions 35



Project Information

Project coordinators:

Prof. Rosalind Malcolm, University of Surrey

Prof. Nicholas Ogue, University of Nairobi

Dr. Itziar Castello, University of Surrey

Dr. Noreen O'Meara, University of Surrey

Dr. Matthew Peacock, University of Surrey

Dr. Francis Oremo, University of Nairobi

<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/surrey-centre-international-and-environmental-law/governing-plastics-network>

Facebook: @plasticsgov

Twitter: @plasticsgov

Blog:

<https://blogs.surrey.ac.uk/governing-plastics-network/>

Contact: gpn@uonbi.ac.ke

The Governing Plastics Network is a project jointly created by the University of Nairobi in Kenya and the University of Surrey in the UK.

Funding: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) via Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) (UKRI/GCRF, AHRC, EPSRC) and the University Global Partnership Network.

Project Objectives: To help national partners to improve plastic pollution governance by identifying best practices on communication strategies and governance structures.

Key activities: 1) Map key national stakeholders and identify the most influential. 2) Analyse key stakeholder communication strategies and how they have affected the country's governance. 3) Analyse the country's current governance frameworks relating to single use plastic (SUP) and identify opportunities for improvement.



Research Approach

Research teams in seven Development Assistance Committee-listed nations each conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify a set of key national stakeholders involved in the management of plastic pollution. These ranged from government organisations and private sector groups to NGO's and individual activists

Stakeholders were identified using a salience-based model developed by Mitchell et al. (1997) based on the criteria of power (level of influence), urgency (willingness to exert influence) and legitimacy (social desirability of outcomes of influence).

Each team then applied a qualitative case study approach to investigate between two and of the most representative, diverse and demonstrably influential of those stakeholders in terms of changing policy or behaviour. The goal was to understand exactly what impacts they had achieved, the means by which they had achieved it and the various factors which contributed to their success or emerged as barriers to be overcome. Each case study drew on a combination of analysis of policy documents and examples of communication and messaging, along with interviews and questionnaires aimed at key individuals within each stakeholder group.



Results in each country were analysed and compiled into an extensive report and the findings fed back to national stakeholders and other interested parties in a series of national round table events, allowing the key messages to be refined further based on their input.

These synthesised findings are being reported via a variety of mediums including publications in the academic and popular press, social media messaging and videos, as well as a series of short national policy brief documents. These policy briefs form the basis of this report, which focus on four of the seven countries selected as best representing the scope of the findings and for which the fullest information was available.



National Case Studies

JAMAICA



As an island nation which imports the majority of its essential goods, single use plastic bottles, bags and other forms of plastic packaging have long been a staple of everyday life. However, recent years have seen growing concern over the glut of plastic waste polluting the island's landscapes, approximately 25% of which ends up in waterways and ultimately makes its way to the sea. This has resulted in a series of top-down measures to curb polluting behaviour, culminating in 2019's completion of a phased ban on the manufacture, import and use of many types of plastic carrier bags.

Ground-breaking though this was, problems of implementation have been common due to factors such as a lack of prior preparation, the difficulty of adapting a small island economy to sweeping changes, initial resistance from parts of the private sector and cultural factors such as a dispositional reluctance on the part of many citizens to be told what to do, especially when it meant changing their habits of many years. Enforcement of bans has been stringent, albeit hampered by insufficient resources and infrastructure.





What has Jamaica achieved so far?

Today Jamaica has one of the most robust environmental legislation portfolios in the region. In 1992 the Caribbean Law Institute identified approximately 140 enactments having some relation to environmental matters. There are two key legislative instruments when it comes to tackling plastic specifically:

1. The Natural Resources Conservation Authority (Plastic Packaging Materials Prohibition) Order, 2018
2. The Trade (Plastic Packaging Materials Prohibition) Order, 2018

The two Orders were gazetted on December 24, 2018. The parent Acts are the Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act (2018) and the Trade Act (2018). The promoters are National Environment and Planning Agency and the Jamaica Customs Authority. The law has been effectively enforced as far as the challenges of implementing untried laws using limited resources to regulate such a pervasive problem allow.

The two Orders were gazetted on December 24, 2018. The parent Acts are the Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act (2018) and the Trade Act (2018). The promoters are National Environment and Planning Agency and the Jamaica Customs Authority. The law has been effectively enforced as far as the challenges of implementing untried laws using limited resources to regulate such a pervasive problem allow.





Nonetheless many of the cultural and behavioural aspects of the plastic pollution problem remain poorly understood. Most of the work on plastic waste to date has focused on assessing and mapping impacts and on remedial activities such as beach clean-ups, which are important but do not address the supply chain nor attempt to address the attitudes and behaviour of the end consumer. For example, it is still widely believed that plastic wrapping is essential to preventing food contamination and that pre-packaged foods are safer, especially for children. The problem will only be resolved by changing beliefs and behaviour to eliminate non-essential use of plastics, and in particular single use plastics in favour of less harmful alternatives.

This research contributes towards the design of strategic multi-sector interventions that will build a sense of collective ownership of the SUP problem and motivate effective changes in behaviour to minimise the use of SUPs in Jamaica.

Who is making a difference? Examples of successful policy change

The research identified and focused on two key successful cases:

Case 1. Wisynco



Its status as Jamaica's leading manufacturer and distributor of Styrofoam and plastic straws make Wisynco a key player in the private sector's efforts to adapt to greener modes of production. As a responsible corporate citizen, Wisynco's Wisynco Eco arm has continuously promoted recycling in Jamaica since its inception in 2016. Wisynco Eco works to heighten the public's awareness and support of recycling with a focus on what to recycle, where to recycle and the importance of recycling. Today the company annually engages over 200,000 persons and collects over 40 million bottles through four primary activities, each targeting a different section of the population:



a. **Eco Troopers:** Guided by the principle that change comes from within, the company established Eco Troopers, staff volunteers who are not only





innovators in their work lives but committed to the environment. They lead the charge to increase environmental awareness among staff members both at work and at home and, within the community, lead recycling initiatives at beach clean-ups and help communities to establish local recycling facilities.

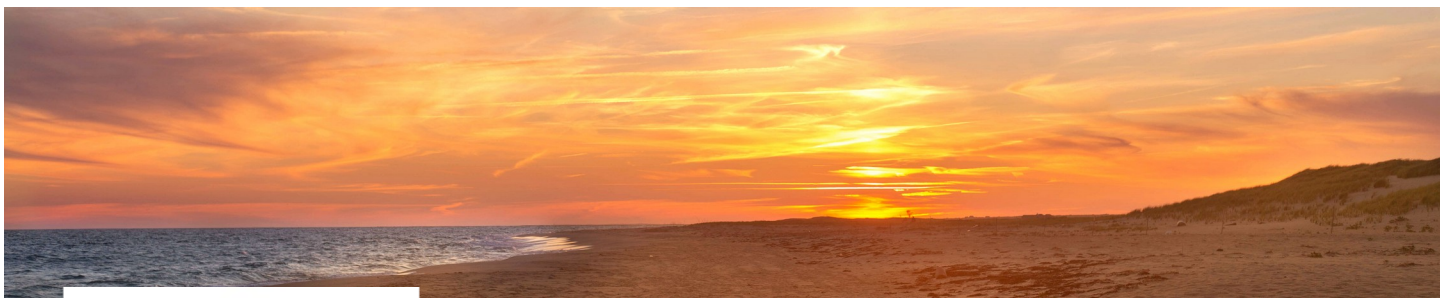


b. **Eco Club:** The aim of this program is to increase awareness and action on recycling and plastic bottle recovery in local schools. Eco Club educates students about recycling/waste management best practices, fosters environmental awareness in schools and surrounding communities and creates fun ways for students, teachers and the community to recycle.

c. **Recycle Me:** This initiative focuses on highlighting the multiple potential uses of plastic once it is recovered. The goal is to close the loop on plastic and encourage the return of plastic to convenient locations. Efforts focus on National Environment Awareness Week, which is held during the first week of June.

d. **Recycle Challenge:** This challenge targets corporate entities as a way of increasing their awareness and assisting them to become more mindful about the environment and recycling. This is done through staff engagement, sensitization, and incentivisation, hopefully leading to the formation of new habits.

Above all, the case of Wisynco illustrates the importance of working with private sector organisations with strong interests in plastics rather than working against them, and what can be achieved when an ethically motivated, ecologically aware private sector goes from being part of the problem to a vital part of the solution.





Case 2. Senator Matthew Samuda:



A key advocate for the environment, Senator Samuda launched a campaign that led to the introduction of Jamaica's plastic ban on January 1, 2019. The legislative process began three years prior when on October 7, 2016, the

Senate approved a private member's motion by Mr. Samuda proposing a ban on the use of Styrofoam containers and plastic bags locally. This culminated in the Trade (Plastic Packaging Materials Prohibition) Order of 2018 and The Natural Resources Conservation Authority (Plastic Packaging Materials Prohibition) Order of 2018.

The ban covers the importation, manufacture, distribution and use of single-use plastic bags, Styrofoam and plastic drinking straws. The second and third phases of the ban expanded this to include a complete ban on Styrofoam and the importing of plastic straws attached to juice boxes and drink pouches, the last taking effect in 2021.

The introduction of the ban had the following positive results:

- Some plastic bag manufacturers switched to making paper bags or products that are outside of the banned criteria. Some textile companies started the manufacture of reusable bags, for example, Crimson Dawn Manufacturing.
- The formal trade has completely switched from the use of Styrofoam boxes and straws.
- The implementation of a Deposit Refund Scheme (DRS) through Recycling Partners of Jamaica. The goal is to achieve a 33% recovery rate of Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) bottles in 2021.

The case of Senator Matthew Samuda is a timely reminder that motivated individuals working with passion, patience and persistence can - and should - use the democratic mechanisms of governance to change the system from within and that ultimately one man can make a difference.





The way forward for Jamaica: policy implications and recommendations

- Building collective ownership to solve the problem of SUP pollution requires all stakeholders to play their part, which demands a high level of understanding from all the groups involved. Communication campaigns must be carefully tailored to speak to the values and beliefs of heterogeneous groups and communities in the community and attitudinal awareness integrated into policy initiatives. Extended producer responsibility schemes also have a key role to play in greening Jamaica's private sector.



- While there is on-going research, and policy and legislative mechanisms are being introduced, there is very little empirical evidence on the attitudes and behaviours of the population towards SUPs, especially among the school population, who produce a disproportionate amount of weight in the form of food and beverage cartons, packaging, straws and plastic cutlery, this particular group should not be ignored. It is also important to see children as major change agents in society, partly because both good and bad patterns of behaviour tend to be formed at school, and partly because many children are more environmentally aware than their parents and may influence their family change. Mobile technologies may offer an invaluable tool for reaching this vital group.





Summary



"Jamaica's legacy as an island paradise that we endeavour to preserve is under grave threat... Unfortunately, the fervour that drives economic pursuits often times does not consider our innocent environment as a casualty" (Senator Dr. Longmore cited in Government of Jamaica 2016, 18)

Jamaica has already moved farther and faster than its neighbours in transitioning its citizens and economy towards a more sustainable future, but in doing so it has uncovered various difficulties in challenges likely to be encountered by other developing small island nations attempting to make the same shift. Chief amongst these is the importance of addressing cultural attitudes and associated practices, as well as the guiding beliefs and values that underlie them. It is crucial that a new culture of environmental stewardship be cultivated and adopted as the guiding principle in curtailing the wicked problem of plastics management as well as in managing the nexus between culture and waste management.

There are recommendations for both effective communication and governance, which can be gleaned from the findings. Regarding governance, at the broad policy level, the focus should be on EPR and the circular economy discourse. Government should also resist the lobby calling for the continuation of the 500ml bottle of water on the market. With regard to communication style, the focus should be on children at both the primary and secondary levels. Also, a focus on behaviour change through public participation in waste separation for recycling is a useful message.

There is also a need to be more creative in enforcing these laws; not just formulating penalties with real weight but offering incentives to encourage good plastics management. Other considerations included the possible use of judicial discretion regarding penalties. Crucially, more work needs to be done to help citizens and manufacturers prepare in the periods leading up to the introduction of new legislation.

*This summary is based on research conducted by **Dr Kwame Emmanuel** at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, **Dr Andrea Clayton** at the Caribbean Maritime University and **Professor Anthony Clayton** at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica.*

Full policy briefs are available to download at:
<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/surrey-centre-international-and-environmental-law/governing-plastics-network/media-and-news>



Kenya



Kenya has emerged as a leader in fighting plastic pollution not just in Africa but globally by not simply pioneering anti-plastic legislation but by addressing the infrastructure required to make it work. Rather than simply adopting piecemeal measures it seeks to implement a broader plastic management programme to drive widespread change in the relationship between Kenyans, plastics and the environment.

This is not to say that plastic pollution is not still a wicked problem for Kenya. Waste management and enforcement capacities continue to fall short of what is needed to support effective recycling. Efficacy of anti-plastic legislation also varies from region to region because it is largely left up to local authorities to decide how to enact national legislation.

But change has also brought opportunities that impact on different sectors of society in different ways. In some areas entrepreneurs have generated prosperity by taking the initiative to bridge the gap between existing waste management capacity and actual need themselves. Amongst the poorest in society, however, these shifts have stimulated both an informal economy of largely unregulated and unprotected waste pickers and a thriving black market in the import and sale of illegal plastic.





Kenya remains, however, very much a nation in transition. In the short term its efforts to move away from a culture in which plastic products are wantonly consumed and discarded has created a climate of instability and opportunity in which innovative, informal and illegal economies can thrive. However successful it proves in attaining economic and environmental sustainability in the longer term, there is already much that can be learned from its successes, its failures and the challenges it faces today.

What has Kenya achieved so far?

It is difficult to overstate the significance of Kenya's decision in 2017 to ban the use, manufacture and import of plastic bags as a turning point both in terms of actual policymaking and as a declaration of legislative intent for the future. Even though the initial ban was flawed by a liturgy of exemptions and patchy implementation the fact that it existed at all was ground-breaking, and it was only the first move in a legislative campaign attacking plastic pollution on multiple fronts.

For example, its 2020 ban on plastic bottles, cups, straws and other single-use items in all national parks, reserves and other conservation areas demonstrated a strategic approach, aimed at protecting one of the nation's key assets, the natural biodiversity central to both its sense of identity and vital tourist industry. The measure, announced by presidential directive on the previous year's World Environment Day, was explicitly framed as an example to the East African community, demonstrating Kenya's aspiration to lead the sustainability agenda in the region, an example which to some extent has borne fruit. Add to that subsequent expansions of its initial plastic ban and efforts to introduce voluntary take-back and recycling schemes amongst the private sector, as well as its championing of Extended Producer Responsibility schemes, and Kenya's strategy of addressing the wider plastic cycle by interventions targeted at key points where leakage into the environment occurs becomes clearer.





Even though the Government is beginning to move to the front-line in dealing with plastic issues; the role of individuals and the private sector should not be underestimated since both informal and private actors are implicated in plastic pollution via their roles in supply of raw material to plastic production system and plastic waste management.

Who is making a difference? Examples of successful policy change

Successful cases: Two successful actors were identified in Kenya as:

Case 1: James Wakibia

James Wakibia is an Environmental activist and a photo journalist driven by a passion to protect the environment. Speaking to the UN Mr Wakibia described himself as being literally obsessed with achieving for a complete ban in Single-Use plastic bags. Indeed, he is credited in large part with inspiring Kenya's 2017 ban, utilising diverse communication strategies to





drive change at every level of society from the behaviour of individuals to the policies of the Kenyan government.

Notable examples include:



- By using social media to share photos, videos and messages around plastic pollution (@JamesWakibia), James Wakibia became known to Kenyans as the man behind the trending hashtag that led to the Plastic bag ban #BanPlasticKe

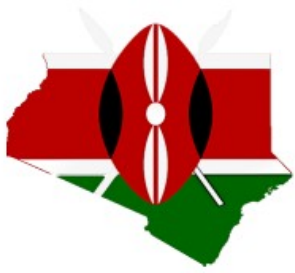
- Drawing on his background in photojournalism, James Wakibia used photography and social media to highlight the roles played by members of the public in fighting plastic pollution to drive home the importance of taking individual responsibility #ISupportBanPlasticKe

- Taking on the role of campaign ambassador, James Wakibia worked with the charity Flipflop to build a dhow made entirely of recycled plastic to encourage communities to embrace alternative uses of plastic waste #RethinkPlastics



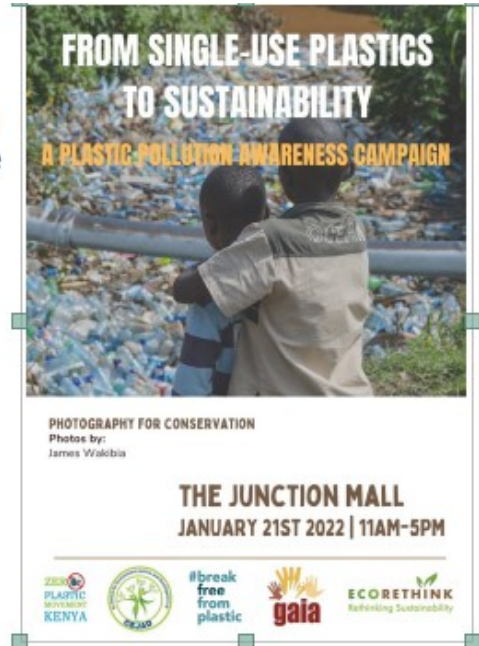
- James Wakibia campaigns to enlist the public to petition the government to take action on plastic waste





James Wakibia's multi-media approach frequently combines elements such as text, audio, images, animations and video into a single communication campaign to capture maximum attention, enhance interaction and inspire action. He has been very successful in tailoring his messages to appeal to the interests, knowledge and communication preferences of diverse stakeholder groups.

James Wakibia is an indication that the benefits of legal regulation aimed at generating behaviour change through fear of sanctions or desire for reward can also be achieved indirectly if one can identify and effectively utilise the right communication messages and strategies.



Case 2: Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM)



KAM is a private sector organization that represents the manufacturing industries of Kenya, many of whom make or use plastic products. KAM's advocacy unit provides fact-based policy guidance and advice on industrial policies. It acts as a communication nexus between the government and private sector, helping Kenyan companies adapt to the growing raft of plastic-related legislation but also representing the interests of industry members to policy-makers and other stakeholder groups. The wider aim is to provide a benchmark for neighbouring countries and across the world who facing the challenge of adapting their private sector to a greener, more circular model.

- KAM has been consistent in promoting messages such as *TrashRight*, ***"Protect our environment, Recycle Plastics"*** *RecycleRight* and include *#Strides2Sustainability* via billboards, social media, engagement fora, websites, advertisements, banners and reports to create awareness



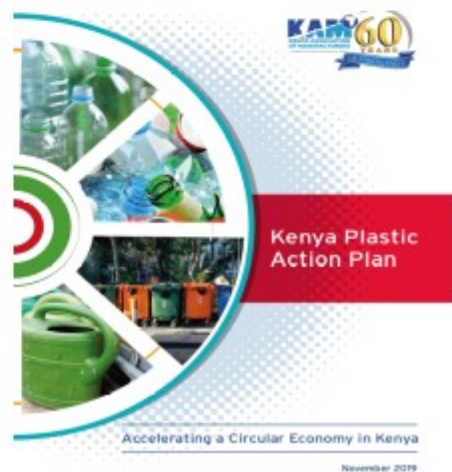


amongst its members about the proper management of plastic waste in their operations.



Along Garissa Rd at Thika
CBD Garissa Rd junction

- KAM has used these **communication strategies** to set the pace for enactment of incoming regulations to curb plastic pollution. For example, via billboards strategically erected at points where drivers are likely to have to drive slowly due to heavy traffic. Examples include a billboard along Nakuru-Naivasha highway on proper disposal of plastic waste and along Thika Super Highway on waste segregation
- **Policy change at the National level** - In November 2019, KAM published an industry-led Kenya Plastic Action Plan aimed at promoting a circular economy.
- **Policy change at the County level** - KAM continues to engage with county-level authorities to promote adherence to the Model County Solid Waste Management Policy (2018) developed in partnership with the Kenya Alliance of Residents Association (KARA).





KAM @KAM_Kenya · Nov 9, 2018

Producers, users, **collectors**, transports and recyclers consulting and contributing on their experiences and challenges in PET Waste Management to the success of EPR models in Kenya.

#TrashRightRecycleRight
#RecyclePET



- KAM has already helped counties including Uasin Gishu and Meru counties to comply with the bill. KAM has also engaged the National Solid Waste Management Technical Committee to discuss its proposals for the National Solid Waste Management Bill 2019. KAM urged the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to hold more consultations on the Bill to ensure private sector feedback is incorporated and facilitate research on the best way to implement Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Schemes.

The way forward for Kenya: policy implications and recommendations

- Generating real change requires combined communication efforts on the parts of different types of stakeholders including individuals, private sector organisations, NGOs and government alike. Therefore, an engagement framework is needed to ensure optimal contributions to plastic waste management.
- Public sensitization and awareness campaigns are key to encouraging behaviour change and individual action.
- Policies around privatization of waste management would be of great impact in streamlining the process, enhancing quality and accelerating progress towards a circular economy.
- A progressive policy environment on plastics is needed to ensure policies are put into action and accountability demanded from the custodians. This will also help facilitate harmonization of policies and regulations.
- Effective waste segregation requires legal frameworks and strategies to exist which advocate for segregation at the collection points or at source.
- Enhanced communication and closer collaboration between the national and the county governments are needed to ensure a more consistently effective approach plastic governance and waste management.





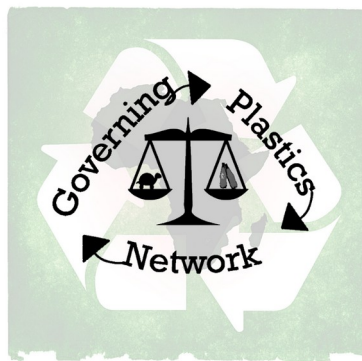
Summary

Kenya had made progress in preventing the production and import of single use plastics, but a major challenge remains in finding ways of dealing with the plastic already in circulation. Appropriate measures include consolidation of existing laws into one comprehensive piece of legislation on plastic pollution, increased regulation, new tax incentives on manufacture and use, investment in technology to produce viable alternatives or new measures to ensure manufacturers re-use and recycle any plastic they use.

This can only be achieved if all stakeholders are involved in the formulation of regulations and policy. Moreover, a great deal of public education and raising of awareness needs to be carried out, backed up by heavy investment in appropriate technologies and strict laws to deal with transgressions. Ultimately what is needed is a concerted effort from all sections of Kenyan society to ensure that the right to a clean and healthy environment is realized as soon as possible.

This summary is based on research conducted by Hellen Omondi at the University of Nairobi and Irene Maithya at Moi University, Kenya.

The full policy brief can be downloaded via the Governing Plastics Network's media page.



RWANDA



More than half of Africa's 54 nations are now pursuing some form of anti-plastic legislation. Amongst these how has Rwanda, a country with a particularly troubled history, become informally known as one of the cleanest on the planet?

Rwanda was one of the first of its neighbours to take up the fight against plastic pollution, implementing a ban on some single use plastics as early as 2008. Moreover, it seems to have succeeded in infusing a love of clean cities, clean water and clean land into the popular consciousness via officially sanctioned initiatives including formalized community service days on the last Saturday of each month, a large part of which work comprises waste collection. This custom of "Umuganda" is led from the top, with politicians and community leaders rolling up their sleeves and playing their part. Public participation is not merely encouraged but enforced, with police empowered to fine any able-bodied adult who refuses to take part.

Rwanda's unique approach to plastic governance is therefore reflective of its unique culture, distinctive approach to politics and the legacy of a turbulent past.

What has Rwanda achieved so far?

Rwanda has adopted various measures to better manage and reduce the use of plastics, including law no 17/2019 of 10/08/2019 prohibiting the manufacturing, importation, use and sale of plastic carry bags and single-use plastic items. The transition to a circular and eco-efficient economy is being promoted through the National Policy on Environment and Climate Change of 2019 and the Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy of 2011 and is under revision since 2020.





In addition, a large number of policy instruments – ranging from awareness campaigns to inspections and penalties in the form of fines and confiscation of prohibited plastics– are being applied. The country has also been successful in significantly reducing plastic bag waste by enforcing the law through joint-monitoring and inspection by different institutions (e.g. Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Rwanda National Police, and local administrative entities). The country also uses a range of communication channels to raise awareness about the dangers of plastic pollution. Crucially, effective awareness campaigns have been found to require the use of multiple communication channels, focusing on community-based awareness campaigns (e.g. Umuganda, Umugoroba w'umuryango).



Rwanda also promotes cleaner production through its Cleaner Production & Climate Innovation Centre (CPCIC) which offers advisory services on adoption of cleaner production and climate resilient technologies, helping businesses transition to alternatives.

Nonetheless, there remain a number of limitations to what Rwanda has been able to achieve:

- 1) Current policy and legal frameworks do not cover all plastics.
- 2) Existing communication strategies only reach a limited proportion of the public.
- 3) There is a lack of recorded data on enforcement.





4) Efforts to implement alternatives such as recycling and circular economy activities are hampered by a lack of technical and financial resources, an area sorely in need to attention.

5) Tailoring of communication products and channels to specific audiences remains limited.

Who is making a difference? Examples of successful policy change



1. Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA)

As a public institution responsible for advising the government on policies, strategies and legislation related to the management of the environment and an enforcing agency, REMA has undertaken various successful initiatives or activities related to plastic pollution prevention, utilising various communication strategies to influence policy and behaviour change.

These have included:

- High-level conference addressing plastic pollution of 29 May 2018.
- Beat plastic pollution walk of 3 June 2018.





- Direct communication with the public during inspection and monitoring of the implementation of the current plastic law (e. g: 10-11 September 2020).
- Collaboration with various public and plastic institutions in the fight against plastic pollution.
- Sensitization of laws and regulations governing plastics among the public using different communication channels: direct presentations, mass media (TV, Radio, etc.)
- REMA played a major role in adoption of Law no 17/2019 of 10/08/2019 relating to the prohibition of manufacturing, importation, use and sale of plastic carry bags and single-use plastic items.

2. Cleaner Production & Climate Innovation Centre (CPCIC)

CPCIC is a government-owned company established in 2019 under the National Industrial Research and Development Agency. It provides policy guidance based on interactions with the private sector especially with regards to regulatory requirements. Some examples include the following:

- CPCIC organized a workshop on “Identified Industrial Symbiotic Exchanges for Circular Economy projects”, 3 March 2021. Its achievements included identifying opportunities for industrial symbiosis related to plastic waste management, eg, turning plastic waste into plastic paves or polythene tubes and PET bottles waste into PET pre-forms.
- CPCIC used various communication channels including direct presentations and discussions, mass media (tv, radio, press), social media (twitter, flickr) and street advertisement (banners). These contributed to legal and policy framework implementation and enforcement, encouraging behaviour change.





The way forward for Rwanda: policy implications and recommendations

- Revise existing plastics-related laws or regulations to encompass the management of all plastics, covering the entire life cycle from manufacturing to disposal.
- Conduct regular communication activities related to plastics management and governance through tailored communication products and channels aimed at specific audiences including mass media campaigns (broadcast and online), sponsored articles in news publications, email updates for stakeholders, podcasts and other audio media, You Tube, interactive platforms and webinars, representation at cultural events and community-based awareness campaigns
- Systematically record data on enforcement of plastics-related laws and regulations
- Provide training in plastics recycling and how to build a circular economy
- Provide more incentives to mount innovative projects which contribute to the management or reduction of plastic waste.

Full policy briefs are available to download at:
<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/surrey-centre-international-and-environmental-law/governing-plastics-network/media-and-news>





Summary



In Rwanda important advances have been made in building laws, policies and infrastructure for plastics governance. Crucially, enforcement of these laws is facilitated by REMA's collaboration with a Rwanda National Police unit specifically tasked with assisting in enforcement of environmental laws. Rwanda's coupling of plastics-related policies and legal instruments and institutions entrusted with their implementation is a powerful one, albeit limited by a lack of data on enforcement and the fact

that current policies and legal frameworks do not cover all plastics.

Stakeholders are able to utilise a number of communication channels to sensitise the public to the perils of plastic pollution, as well as to existing laws, regulations and policies that govern plastics management. Platforms also exist that enable multiple stakeholder groups to collaborate in a mutually supportive way. Nonetheless, additional community outreach activities are needed to enhance communication with the public, promoting awareness of existing instruments and enhancing implementation of incoming policies and laws.

In recent years Rwanda has begun taking plastics management, waste recycling and the need for a circular economy extremely seriously, but remains hampered by a lack of both technical know-how and funding. There is also a need to ensure that financial resources and legal incentives are available to support and encourage both education for sustainable working and living and investment in plastics recycling, cleaner production and the circular economy.

This summary is based on research conducted by Dr Aime Tsinda and Dr Marie Rose Turamwishimiye at The University of Rwanda.

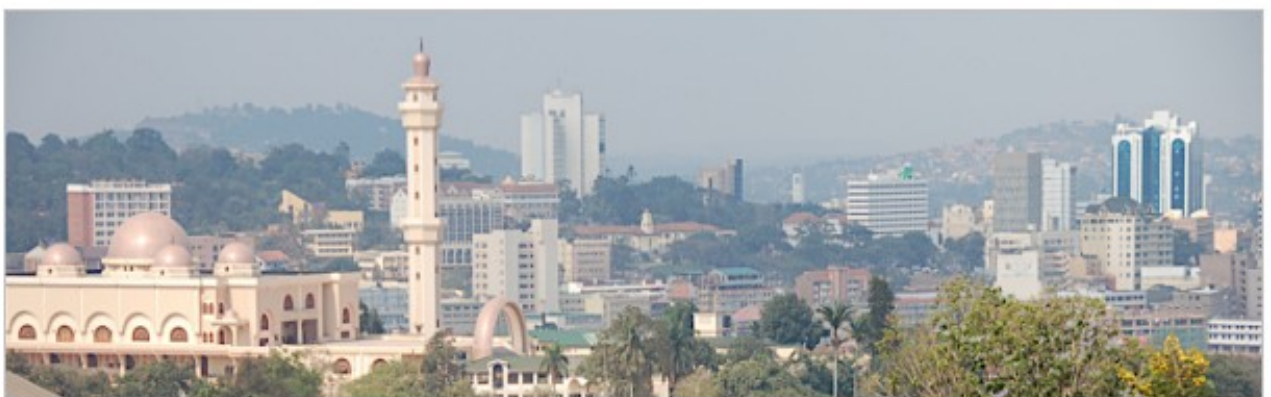


UGANDA



In June last year Uganda became the first nation in Africa to join the 63 signatories of UNEP's Clean Seas Campaign. Though landlocked, Uganda sits above Lake Victoria, the largest freshwater ecosystem in Africa, a natural wonder which is both crucial to the country's economy and the final destination of much of the single use plastic dumped in its rivers and streams. Dubbed the "Pearl of Africa" by Winston Churchill for the colour and diversity of its wildlife, Uganda nonetheless lags behind its neighbours Rwanda and Kenya in demonstrating the political will to protect this natural bounty.

Despite the Government's long-standing interest in regulating the import, manufacture, distribution and use of plastics, for years implementation and enforcement of its anti-pollution laws has continued to be lacking. Of late there encouraging signs this may be changing (Behuria, 2019), so what is being done and is it enough?





What has Uganda Achieved so far?

On paper Uganda's commitment to fighting plastic pollution is impressive.

From 2009's Finance Act to Prohibit the Importation, Local Manufacture, Sale or Use of Polyethene Bags to the National Environmental Management Act of 2019, the Ugandan government has created a broad-based policy environment for regulation of the sub-standard plastics in Uganda. In particular, The National Environment Management Act of 2019 bans the importation/manufacture of plastics bags of less than 30 microns. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) is the lead agency in the enforcement of these policies while the Uganda National Bureau of Standard (UNBS) is in charge of enforcing standards of manufactured or imported goods, including plastics. A range of stakeholders, both public and private, are also fighting plastic pollution at national and local levels.

Despite all this plastics waste remains a huge challenge in Uganda with only about 5% of plastics being recycled with the rest ending up in dumping sites, burnt or indiscriminately dumped into the environment.

Despite all this plastics waste remains a huge challenge in Uganda with only about 5% of plastics being recycled with the rest ending up in dumping sites, burnt or indiscriminately dumped into the environment.

Who is making a difference? - examples of successful policy change

1. Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA)

UMA was first established in the 1960s and revived in April 1988. It currently has a membership of over 1300 companies from sectors including agriculture, autos, construction, chemicals, plastics, cosmetics, electronics and energy efficiency among others.





|

UMA has engaged in several initiatives aimed at improving plastics pollution governance in Uganda. Together with Coca-Cola, UMA has created plastic collection centres in the five divisions of Kampala city. UMA has allowed scavengers (waste collectors) into the landfill (in Kiteezi Wakiso district) to collect discarded plastics and sell them to reusers or recyclers. It also encourages schools in Kampala to separate their waste so that the plastics are collected by plastic dealers, earning income for the children. UMA also helps small formal groups engaged in plastics collection to access government grants to support their work. The team at UMA continues to preach against the manufacture of plastics without provision for recycling or disposal. They also work to continuously educate the public about the consequences of poor management and disposal of plastics.



Through these initiatives, UMA has promoted the transformation of its plastic industry members to encourage systematic collection and recycling of plastic waste and worked with other plastics industry players to promote recycling, even partnering with recyclers.

UMA adopted different channels of communication for engaging with different stakeholders and the public these include email, PowerPoint presentations, print and broadcast media, street advertising, a website (uma.org.ug) and an active Twitter handle([@newsUMA](https://twitter.com/newsUMA))





2. ECOAction Uganda

Since 2011, ECOAction has focused on skills development, advocacy and awareness creation regarding plastics management. ECOAction implements its activities with the guidance of the 3 Rs of Solid Waste Management including Reduction, Re-use and Recycling of plastics waste.

Through these initiatives, communities in Banda (a suburb in Kampala) have been sensitized about proper waste management including sorting waste at the point of generation. Also, tons of plastic waste have been collected and removed from the environment. This has provided livelihoods for youth (male and female) and women who engage in waste collection and reuse. In nearby schools too, ECOAction initiatives have improved waste management and school children have been organized into clubs and have been engaged in appropriately collecting, sorting and reusing waste. ECOAction Uganda has also successfully used social art as a tool for advocacy.



One of the key messages ECOAction Uganda emphasizes is that plastic waste is a resource and that we all have to acquire the appropriate knowledge, attitude, and skills needed in order to better manage plastics.

During capacity building sessions, direct presentations are often used. Other communication channels adopted by ECOAction Uganda include Print and Broadcast Media (Televisions, radios, press-newspapers etc.), active Twitter handle([@ecoaction](#)), and an active website.





For schools, ECOAction Uganda has developed a training manual on plastic waste reuse in urban farming, arts and crafts as well as the development of educational materials. ECOAction Uganda engages key stakeholders including plastic collectors, youth groups (male and female) and women. ECO action has partners supporting these efforts like VIVO Energy, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), Stanbic Bank Uganda, and NBS Television among others.

The way forward for Uganda: policy implications and recommendations

- All levels of society must be enlisted in the work of recycling plastics and preventing waste.
- More rigorous Implementation of laws and policies or laws for properly managing plastic waste is paramount to ensure that no waste is leaked into the environment.
- Engagement of all stakeholder groups including the public is crucial especially in building sustainability policies and implementing laws. Roles and responsibilities must be spelt out with guidance tailored to help each stakeholder can deliver on their roles and responsibilities.
- It is important that the work of plastic manufacturers directly informs the work being done by policy developers and implementers so as to synchronize and align efforts towards the proper collection, sorting, management, disposal, and recycling of plastic waste.
- More widespread education is needed about the hazards of plastic waste pollution.
- Community engagement (skills development) for plastic waste management, disposal and recycling must enable the involvement of all, therefore informing sustainability of processes.





Summary



Uganda already possesses clear policy, legal and institutional frameworks for addressing plastics pollution, what is most lacking is implementation. For example, despite the law banning plastic bags in 2009, no evidence of implementation was visible by 2015 and ten years later the law morphed into the National Environment Act of 2019.

The institutional frameworks which govern implementation are equally broad and lacking in coordination. A multi-sectoral approach coupled with more effective coordination is critical for effective implementation of the existing legislation in order to deal with current and future challenges of plastics pollution in Uganda.

*This summary is based on research conducted by **Dr Lynne Atuyambe**, **Harriet Adong** and **Felix Walyawula** at Makere University in Kampala.*

Full policy briefs are available to download at:
<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/surrey-centre-international-and-environmental-law/governing-plastics-network/media-and-news>



Overall Conclusions, recommendations and future directions



Each nation had a unique story to tell of the long and complex process of changing behaviour, policy and practice to reduce plastic pollution in service of an eventual transition to a circular economy. For example, Jamaica's status as a small island nation at the end of a long supply chain presented unique challenges for its plastic ban. Similarly, Rwanda's top-down approach to changing both culture and practice provided a strong

platform for inter-sector collaboration, its success in part due to its unusually hierarchical approach, as reflected by the fact that both Rwandan stakeholders studied were government-affiliated organisations. While Kenya has made great strides, its devolved model of local governance means that while some parts of the country have made impressive progress in cleaning up their environment, other areas, often the poorest, have been left behind.

Unique as they each were, each national narrative also offered lessons that could be applied in almost any national context. One such lesson was a widely acknowledged need for active education and engagement campaigns to prepare both the private sector and the public at large before introducing legislation that will require fundamental changes to everyday behaviour, as was exemplified by Jamaica. Similarly, its thriving black market in plastics attests to the risk that making plastics illegal will have the unintended consequence of raising its market value and creating a new revenue stream for criminals. The cases of Rwanda and Uganda demonstrate the need to make alternatives to plastic products accessible and affordable to the public and encourage their use before a ban comes into force. In Jamaica, for example, culturally astute education and marketing has made sustainable alternatives to the once-omnipresent plastic "scandal bags" not just practically indispensable but socially desirable.



As with Rwanda and Kenya, the importance of developing the means to enforce bans, penalising breaches and incentivising compliance, is clearly evident in Jamaica, along with the need for sufficient manpower, funding and infrastructure to support these efforts. The difficulties of implementation found particularly in Uganda underline the lesson that anti-plastic legislation and the institutional frameworks to implement it are of limited use without effective coordination between agencies. The cases of Uganda and Rwanda especially demonstrate that without keeping systematic records of both compliance and enforcement activities it is very difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of new measures, and Rwanda in particular suffered from a lack of technical know-how and funding to back up its robust laws and infrastructure.

Successes in Kenya and Jamaica also demonstrate the importance of engaging the country's vital manufacturing base so powerful industrial groups feel able to work with new legislation rather than fight against it. Finding ways to help companies remain profitable in the short term in order to survive long enough to achieve economic sustainability in the long are also crucial. Smaller companies, particularly in a relatively small economy such as Jamaica's, may have particular difficulty making this shift without advice and assistance from government agencies, manufacturer's organisations or from other more powerful members of their sector. Jamaica's Wisynco and Kenya's Association of Manufacturers are key examples of how organisations which assume such leadership roles have benefited in turn from good publicity and enhanced public profile.



Most strikingly, the stakeholders who proved most successful in driving profound and lasting change were those able to act as a nexus for diverse stakeholder interaction. Just as plastic pollution recognises no national borders, so the most effective campaigners were those able to engage with diverse individuals and groups at local, national and international levels, and help those groups work with each other. Individual activists employed flexible media and messaging to influence national policy and public. Manufacturing groups helped translate the intentions of government into practical ways forward for private sector organisations and in turn provided a conduit for those



organisations to communicate their needs back to government. International NGOs utilised their reach and reputation to interact with global forums and synergise their efforts with those of local activists and national governments.

By the same token, the lessons learned from the successes and failures of regional leaders such as Jamaica and Kenya can be applied by those about to face similar challenges, both among the Caribbean and East African nations and other countries across the globe. Local solutions can help to solve global problems as long as the connective tissues exist to allow the stakeholders who possess such knowledge to coordinate their efforts, learn from each other and apply the solutions that have been shown to work on a wider stage. These scaled-up solutions have the potential to provide practical ways for nations to live up to the demands of future global legislation introduced by the UN to govern plastics pollution, including the propositions currently being debated with their emphasis on national action plan frameworks.



Achieving a global circular economy requires each country to forge its own path to a sustainable future, but the hard-won lessons of countries like Jamaica, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda mean they will not have to reinvent the wheel. The Governing Plastics Network exists in part to help disseminate this knowledge, grow these relationships and provide a timely reminder that truly wicked problems can only be overcome by truly collaborative solutions.



Policy Brief compiled by the Governing Plastics Network team

The Team



Prof Nicholas Oguge
The University of Nairobi
Network Director



Prof Rosalind Malcolm
University of Surrey
Network Co-Director



Dr. Itziar Castello-Molina
University of Surrey
Lead, Communications



Dr. Noreen O'Meara
University of Surrey
Lead, Legal

- Organised by the University of the Nairobi in Kenya & the University of Surrey in the UK
- It's composed of key actors in the academia, government, private sector, civil society & development partners



Dr. Matthew Peacock
University of Surrey
Network Manager



Dr. Francis Oremo
University of Nairobi
Network Manager



Dr. Tiago de Melo Cartaxo
University of Surrey
Post-doctoral
Research Assistant



Salome Ondigo
University of Nairobi
Project Assistant

Photo credits:

<https://unsplash.com/@dwoodhouse>
brian-yurasits-JMMUqHlw c -unsplash
bas-emmen-EXpa pyXkHA-unsplash



The **Governing Plastics Network** blog

features news, opinions and expert insight into current issues and provides a forum for engaging with topical events

<https://blogs.surrey.ac.uk/governing-plastics-network/>



University of Nairobi



Thank you!

GPN Team

gnpn@uonbi.ac.ke

To receive information about our activities and research, sign up to

[join the Governing Plastics Network](#)

: gnpn@uonbi.ac.ke.

Follow us [@plasticsgov](#)



Governing Plastic Network