



UNITED NATIONS  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



# Global consultations on circular economy 2022-2023

Report of the regional preparatory meeting for the  
African Group







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## I. Introduction

1. The General Conference, in its resolution [GC.18/Res.7](#), requested the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to organize consultations on circular economy for experts from Member States with a view to facilitate exchanges on best practices, emerging innovations and the promotion and adoption of circular economy principles and practices by industries of Member States.

2. The objective of the global consultations on circular economy is to consider ways and means to promote circular economy principles and practices, in particular in developing countries, identify barriers and devise action-oriented solutions.

3. The global consultations will be convened using the UNIDO System of Consultations<sup>1</sup> as a guiding framework, taking into account developments since its adoption, lessons learned, outcomes of the respective evaluations and restrictions imposed by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

4. A series of regional preparatory meetings was convened in September 2022 to allow Member State representatives and other stakeholders, in particular from developing countries, to present their initial views on the topic of circular economy and identify issues that will shape the debate at the global consultations.

5. Member States were invited to communicate to the Secretariat topics for discussion at the consultations. As a result, the following topics and guiding questions were selected:

a) Topic 1: Climate-neutral industry and circular economy

- Which circular economy approaches can facilitate the decarbonisation of industry?
- Can you share experiences in integrating circularity and climate action in industry from your country or organization?

b) Topic 2: Governance, policies and roadmaps for circular economy

- What policy and regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements and collaboration mechanisms should be put in place to enable the just transition to a circular economy?

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<sup>1</sup>[https://open.unido.org/api/documents/4792485/download/THE%20SYSTEM%20OF%20CONSULTATIONS%20\(1648e.en\)](https://open.unido.org/api/documents/4792485/download/THE%20SYSTEM%20OF%20CONSULTATIONS%20(1648e.en)).

- Do you have a circular economy roadmap in your country? If so, what arrangements are in place to enforce and facilitate its implementation?
  - Can you share good practices of engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including industry and businesses, in designing and implementing circular economy strategies and roadmaps?
  - Do you have examples of building the capacity of entrepreneurs, businesses and enterprises for adopting circular economy practices?
- c) Topic 3: Enabling environments and investments in circular businesses.
- What is the business case for the circular economy?
  - How to attract private investments and finance to accelerate the transition towards a circular economy?
  - How can public finance support this transition?

6. The global consultations on circular economy are tentatively scheduled to take place in the first half of 2023.

## II. Organizational and procedural matters

7. The regional preparatory meeting for the African Group on circular economy was held in hybrid format on 26 September. Simultaneous interpretation in French and English was provided during the meeting.

### Participation

8. The following fourteen Member States of UNIDO participated in the meeting: Algeria, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

9. The following United Nations entities were represented: the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

10. The following international organization was represented: the Global Green Growth Initiative (GGGI).

11. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: General Confederation of Enterprises (CGECI), Green Energy Cluster Algeria, the Industrial Modernisation Centre (IMC), Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler Côte d'Ivoire (KPMG Côte

d'Ivoire), the National Concentration Council for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises (CNCDPME) and the Precision Mechanical Cluster.

### Opening of the session

12. The meeting was declared open by Mr. Stephan Sicars, Director, Division of Circular Economy and Environmental Protection, Directorate of Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Industrial Development, UNIDO, at 15:00 (CEST) on 30 September 2022.

### Facilitator

13. The meeting was facilitated by Mr. Khaled Elmenshawy, Counsellor from the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations in Vienna.

### Agenda of the meeting

14. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Introductory presentation by regional partner, UN ESCWA.
3. Interventions:
  - (a) Interventions by Member States;
  - (b) Interventions by observer organizations.
4. Moderated discussion.
5. Conclusions and adjournment.
6. Announcements by the Secretariat.

## III. Proceedings

### Welcoming remarks

15. Mr. Khaled Elmenshawy, Counsellor, Embassy and Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations in Vienna welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of promoting circular economy principles and practices to accelerate the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as fully implement the Paris Agreement, the emerging Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and stop plastic pollution. Mr. Elmenshawy further advised that circular economy-based measures

should be at the core of collective efforts of the global community to build back better and greener in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### [Introductory presentation by the secretariat](#)

16. Ms. Alla Metelista, Senior Advisor, Strategic Planning and UN Engagement Division, UNIDO, presented the mandate, objectives and expected outcomes of the global consultations on circular economy as well as the guiding questions for the regional preparatory meetings.

17. Mr. Sean Ratka, Economic Affairs Officer Energy Section, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, delivered an introductory presentation on trends, case studies and lessons learned in the adoption of circular economy principles and practices in the region.

#### [Interventions by Member States](#)

18. Ethiopia stated that one of the priority areas of the revised national industrial development strategy is to promote and monitor green manufacturing practices. Circular economy is seen as an opportunity given that the country seeks to leverage industrial development while minimizing the environmental impact and footprint of businesses. Some manufacturing plants demonstrate good implementation of circular economy practices by recycling textile fabric carpets and producing yarn and related fabrics, manufacturing carpets from plastic fibers or producing blankets from carpets. With UNIDO, Ethiopia has launched a project to promote circular economy in the textile and garment sector, as well as a capacity-building programme. Ethiopia noted that the main challenges to wider implementation of the circular economy are low investment due to the novelty of the concept, lack of capacity to implement, enforce and monitor circular economy regulations and standards, limited human resources, lack of technical information on circular economy, and poor connectivity between industries that use waste as an input and waste generating companies.

19. Egypt reported on its efforts on circular economy, namely legislative, regulatory and institutional reforms, green sustainable programmes and projects as well as multistakeholder partnerships. Since 2012, projects on energy and water efficiency have been developed in collaboration with the European Union and UNIDO. A study on the status of the circular economy in Egypt post-2020 analysed the benefits of implementing circular economy policies in the country and provided recommendations to fill gaps in areas such as policy, investment or trade. The country is working on IWEX

Platform, an industrial waste exchange platform to leverage industrial waste from manufacturing plants and, through development and research, create a new by-product. During the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, together with Tunisia and Libya, Egypt is planning to sign a trilateral agreement to make the IWEX a regional project.

20. Algeria recognized the efforts of UNIDO in promoting the circular economy in the region, particularly following Agenda 2063. Algeria noted the gaps that many African countries face in terms of technology to meet the UNIDO roadmap on circular economy.

21. South Africa recognized the advantages associated with circular economy practices and called for consideration of the impact of the circular economy on countries dependent on raw materials and resources, especially for employment opportunities and the fight against poverty.

#### [Interventions by observer organizations](#)

22. UN ESCWA emphasized the role of the private sector, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in waste management, they are seen as industrial innovators. Waste from extractive industries can be taken and transformed into sustainable and commercially viable products. The role of governments in facilitating and enabling the support needed by the private sector, including providing access to waste products, was emphasized. ESCWA noted that government intervention through policy can create enabling environments for the private sector.

23. General Confederation of Enterprises stated that in coordination with the State it has undertaken numerous actions concerning plastic waste at the private sector level. An organization whose members furnish plastic waste on the market was set up and is a good example of a waste collecting project. The Confederation underlined its role in helping the State to include all the legislative mechanisms available that promote eco-organizations managing collection, treatment, and elimination of all waste, in the new environmental code. Eco-contribution will be put in place to make the recycling waste sustainable. Waste from public works, buildings and demolition of buildings is also being addressed.

24. GGGI informed on its actions on the African continent. Since more than 50 per cent of waste in the majority of African countries is organic, it should be a key focus for mitigation projects, while other types of waste should be avoided. Broad access to



clean drinkable water was mentioned as a means to reduce plastic bottles and other containers. Proper recovery lithium and other precious minerals from batteries should be prioritised. Financially sustainable plastics businesses exist in developing countries, but they tend to be small-scale due to low access to finance. GGGI noted that strengthening supply chains with strong government backing, training financiers, developing risk mitigation tools, and expanding producer responsibility would help address these issues. The importance of moving from carbon to waste projects was stressed.

### Conclusions and adjournment

25. Mr. Khaled Elmenshawy highlighted the need for finance for SMEs and raising public awareness, as well as the importance on accelerating the adoption of circular economy as means to support the achievement of the SDGs and fully implement the Paris Agreement. He thanked the participants for their engaging interventions and the exchange of inspiring experiences. Mr. Elmenshawy encouraged the participants to learn from successful circular economy initiatives, take them on board and replicate in their respective countries as appropriate.

26. Mr. Elmenshawy closed the meeting at 4.18 p.m. 16:18 (CEST) on 30 September 2022.

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