

Media immersion and training for journalists on Africa's circular economy (13 – 16 October 2025)

Statement Delivered by Charles Akol, Environment Affairs Officer, on Behalf of ECA

Media Partners,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to extend a warm welcome and to address this esteemed gathering, on behalf of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), at this pivotal media immersion and training workshop dedicated to Africa's transition to a circular economy.

Let me begin by expressing sincere appreciation to the Secretariat of the African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA) and Africa21 for their partnership in organizing this timely and strategic initiative.

Why This Initiative Matters

This media immersion is more than a training. It is the foundation for building a network of journalists who can report accurately, compellingly, and consistently on Africa's transition to a circular economy.

At ECA, we believe that your role goes beyond reporting. We see you as future practitioners and champions of the circular economy. Because for us, ideas must lead to action.

The Urgency of Transition

Resource scarcity is no longer a distant threat. It is a global reality. By 2060, global consumption of natural resources is projected to rise by 60%. Africa's population is expected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, with youth making up a significant proportion. This demographic shift presents both a challenge and an opportunity.

The current linear economic model, based on extraction, production, and disposal, is responsible for half of global greenhouse gas emissions and over 90% of

biodiversity loss and water stress. For Africa, the cost is already high: climate change is causing annual GDP losses of up to 5%.

The Circular Economy: A Transformative Pathway

At ECA, we see the circular economy as a transformative and integrated solution: one that promotes economic growth, job creation, climate resilience, and improved human and ecosystem well-being.

This is why ECA has been at the forefront of promoting circularity:

We've partnered in developing the Continental Circular Economy Action Plan and Guidelines.

We're working to cascade these efforts to subregional and national levels.

We are in the process of becoming a strategic partner of ACEA, building on our already productive collaboration.

ECA's Priorities for Circular Transformation

To catalyze a widescale transition to circular economy models in Africa, ECA is prioritizing the following strategic areas:

1. **Localization of the Continental Framework:** Cascading circular economy principles to national and subnational levels through coordinated efforts with regional economic communities and development partners.
2. **Capacity Development:** Building endogenous capacity through equipping with a toolkit and large-scale skilling, reskilling, and upskilling initiatives—delivered via formal and non-formal education platforms.
3. **Demonstration of Impact:** Showcasing evidence that circular economy models deliver results aligned with national development circumstances, needs, and priorities, including employment generation, economic diversification, social equity, climate resilience and ecological sustainability.
4. **Mobilization of Finance:** Supporting enterprises to adopt circular business models, enhancing capacity to design bankable projects, and integrating circularity into financing mechanisms for climate action, digital transformation, trade, and biodiversity conservation.

The Role of Media in Driving Circularity

In light of these priorities, ECA recognizes the media as a critical stakeholder in driving the transition to a just and inclusive circular economy. We call upon you, our media partners, to assume the following roles:

1. **Translators of Complexity:** Simplify and contextualize technical concepts and terminology related to circularity, making them accessible to diverse audiences across linguistic and cultural boundaries.
2. **Amplifiers of Visibility:** Elevate the circular economy to the forefront of public discourse and policy deliberation, thereby mobilizing support from decision-makers, businesses, and communities.
3. **Agents of Accountability:** Encourage transparency and responsibility in consumption, production, and policy choices—advocating for sustainable development, equity, and justice.
4. **Catalysts of Confidence:** Share success stories, innovations, and best practices to inspire belief in the viability and benefits of circular models.
5. **Facilitators of Dialogue:** Foster strategic partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement to amplify impact and accelerate the transition.

Conclusion: A Collective Call to Action

The circular economy is not merely a policy framework—it is a movement. It demands the collective commitment of governments, businesses, civil society, and indeed, the media, to redesign systems that serve both people and the planet.

The time to act is now. The cost of inaction is a future marked by depleted resources, diminished resilience, and compromised well-being.

Let us, therefore, explore avenues for sustained engagement and collaboration to advance Africa's transition to circularity.

Thank you for your kind attention.