

African Circular Economy Network (ACEN) and ACEN Foundation

Expert Partner input to COP11

Greetings to all delegates and colleagues with a common passion and commitment to the sustainable future of this beautiful region.

I welcome this opportunity to introduce the African Circular Economy Network (ACEN) and the ACEN Foundation

ACEN was established in 2016 to create an African Voice for the circular transition in Africa, by Africans.

The vision of ACEN is to build a restorative African economy that generates well-being and prosperity, inclusive of all its people, through new forms of economic production and consumption which maintain and regenerate its environmental resources.

To enhance the capacity of ACEN, and create stronger North-South relations, we created the ACEN Foundation in 2021 through an agreement between ACEN and Trinomics

The success of ACEN is tangible as it is now represented through more than 500 members in 42 African states and more than 23,000 followers across the globe. The Foundation has offices in Rotterdam and Brussels, with regional coordinators in Nigeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Sout Africa. Collectively we have generated Circular Economy Roadmaps and Action plans for 12 African countries, and currently busy with an additional 5 countries. We have also recently completed the Circular Economy Action Plan for the African Union Commission (AUC) as alluded to by our AUC colleagues on the first day of the COP11 talks. This has been ratified by 45 African Countries and created capacity and alignment between and within States to achieving a positive circular transition.

Between ACEN and the Foundation, we have become the indisputable voice of circularity in Africa. ACEN works as a network of networks, embracing partnerships and collaborations across all economic sectors where circular principles can drive positive change in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of partner countries, and display significant impact and outcomes in climate change, biodiversity protection, energy, water, infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, mining and tourism. All of this is critically linked to achieving sustainable blue outcomes, so critical to the objectives of COP11, the Nairobi Convention and all contributing parties.

In addition to roadmaps and policy development, ACEN is driving:

- The CE-IT for the OBF – targeting viable circular project development in the WIO region
- The Rwanda Circular Food Systems project
- The JUST2CE project in Africa
- BSF development across three countries
- The STI4CE Strategy for South Africa through CTCN
- And many smaller projects across Africa driving the CE agenda in all sectors

On a personal note, there are far too many plans, strategies, incubators, accelerators and action plans. The time is now to drive action and measurable impact on the ground. To this end, our private sector partners are mobilising multiple large-scale projects across Africa using climate and carbon financing specifically to address the key issues across the continent in Water, energy, food security, biodiversity and the just transition to a circular economy.

Due to energy and food needs, Africa is currently experiencing an unsustainable level of deforestation, losing some 4.4 million Ha of forest every year – dwarfing the losses in the Amazon. 70% of the population of Africa rely primarily on charcoal for cooking and washing.

SIDSs have become unsustainable through primarily import-based economies, yet provide the perfect platform for complete low-carbon sustainable diversified economies by embracing circular Economy transition.

We look forward to continued contributions from ACEN and ACEN Foundation in the WIO Region in collaboration with all partners and stakeholders in the Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention.