

## **The Role of the Private Sector in the Management of Plastics as an Environmental Challenge**

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### **Abstract**

Private sector support is crucial in managing plastics. The keynote presentation highlighted that plastic production in South Africa is ca. 1 841 700 tons of polymer (1 504 000 tons virgin material and 37 700 tons recyclate). There are about 60 000 people employed by the plastics industry, 49% of all polymer went into packaging. The country has a plastics per capita consumption of ca. 27 kg/person. The increasing demand for plastics packaging products in western Indian Ocean (WIO) region is majorly due to market access to more than 145million people, numerous investment opportunities, abundant labour force, high level of intra trade and cross border investments. The plastics industry faces several challenges; opposing single use plastics ban and producer fees, lacklustre voluntary commitments, opposing plastic tax and, heavy lobbying needed to implement bans. South Africa had developed an initiative to bring together key stakeholders to implement solutions towards a circular economy for plastics. It also included a collaborative forum and working groups from full plastics value chain. An **African Plastics Waste Management Strategy** is proposed and would encompass:

- Innovation and new technologies
- Investment support to plastics waste collection
- Recycling infrastructure,
- Changing human behaviour re-littering.
- Circular economy and design for recycling.
- Research – science based, knowledge generation.