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UN Environment Management Group High-Level Panel Discussion Sustainable: Consumption and Production of Electrics and Electronics

Elevating electrics and electronics to the forefront of the circular economy, in an integral and multi-disciplinary approach

13 March 2019

Conference Room 13 (16.30-17.30)

United Nations Environment Assembly IV, Nairobi, Kenya

This high-level dialogue will focus on the need for a new vision for the electrics and electronics industry, according to the principles of circular economy. It will refer to the multitude of actors across the life-cycle of equipment, and the mountain of e-waste generated from our throw-away society. This event, organized by the Environment Management Group, will build on the recent efforts by the UN E-Waste Coalition including the launch of the report [A New Circular Vision for Electronics – Time for a Global Reboot](#) at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, in January 2019.

The generation of electrical and electronic waste (e-waste) is growing rapidly in parallel with a greater number of people joining the global information society and digital economy every day. According to the Global E-waste Monitor 2017¹, all the countries in the world combined generated a staggering 44.7 million metric tonnes of e-waste in 2016. Every-day consumer products which are thrown away like phones, fridges, laptops, televisions and sensors contain materials that are considered toxic, such as mercury, cadmium and lead. More often than not, these hazardous substances are subsequently released into air, soil and water due to inappropriate recycling methods posing considerable environmental and human health risks. Inadequate consumer awareness, shorter product lifespans, low domestic collection rates and lack of waste management policies, poor recycling practices, and in some cases illegal international movement of used and end-of-life electrical and electronic products, all contribute

¹ Baldé, C. P., Forti, V., Gray, V., Kuehr, R., Stegmann, P. Global E-waste Monitor (2017)



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to a challenging international need to address a rapidly growing mountain of e-waste. What is not managed through appropriate systems domestically, often ends up left in cupboard drawers, incinerated or landfilled, or in some cases escapes the official system to end up in highly polluting waste dumps, most commonly established informally in parts of Africa and Asia.

Despite the negative associations with e-waste, there is huge potential to shift the current model of a throw-away society towards a circular economy. Such a waste stream managed properly, could offer an opportunity for green jobs in the recycling sector and for recovery of secondary materials through urban mining. Up to 60 elements of the periodic table can be found in electronics, with many being technically recoverable. Overall, the United Nations University estimates that the resource perspective for secondary raw materials of e-waste is worth 55 Billion € per year. These materials can include: gold, silver, copper, platinum, and palladium.

In this light, the UN Environment Management Group is organizing a discussion at the high-level during the 4th session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly in Nairobi, to bring more attention to this multidisciplinary and multi-actor topic. The Dialogue aims to explore the wide-range of actors and multidisciplinary nature of the topic, to promote efficiency and coherence at different stages of the life cycle. The Dialogue will highlight the importance of promoting sustainable patterns of electronics production, consumption and disposal to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the need for different sectors and actors to collaborate efficiently in this regard.

The session outputs will feed into the ongoing design and development of a new vision for electrics and electronics, a programme area of the E-waste Coalition, a group of seven UN entities coordinated by the Environment Management Group, that have come together to increase cooperation and more efficiently provide support to Member States and Parties to address the e-waste challenge. This vision will be captured in a forward-looking and multi-stakeholder report and communication campaign to generate awareness about the growing impact of e-waste, among governments, businesses and consumers.

This dialogue builds on the e-waste sessions that took place at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, in January 2019, where the report [*A New Circular Vision for Electronics – Time for a Global Reboot*](#), was launched as a collaboration among the E-waste Coalition, the World Economic Forum and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. **Time**

13 March, 2019

Venue

Conference Room 13

UN Environment Assembly, UN Compound, Nairobi, Kenya





Session composition

Moderator:

Mr. Satya Tripathi, UN Assistant Secretary-General; Head of New York Office, UN Environment and Secretary, UN EMG.

	<p><i>E-waste Video Session</i> <i>A video will be played on e-waste as participants are sitting down, the moderator will then introduce the session.</i></p>
	<p><i>A new vision for electrics and electronics</i> <i>The panel discussion will focus on the need for a new vision for the electrics and electronics industry, according to the principles of circular economy. It will refer to the multitude of actors across the life-cycle of equipment, and the mountain of e-waste generated from our throw-away society.</i></p> <p><i>The panel will profile the work of the E-waste Coalition – a grouping of seven United Nations agencies aligned on waste electrical and electronic equipment – whilst showcasing initiatives from the private sector and governments.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) ○ Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions ○ Mr. Nikhil Seth, Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research ○ Mr. Lawrence Thuo, Executive Director, E-waste Initiative Kenya (Ewik) ○ Prof. Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng, Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Ghana (TBC) ○ A high level official from Kenya (TBC) ○ A high level official from Japan (TBC) ○ Ms. Sanda Ojiambo, Head of corporate responsibility, Safaricom (TBC)
	<p><i>The moderator will call on the panel to share a few highlights from the dialogue (2 min each) before bringing the session to a close.</i></p>