

## Day2

Title : 3. Panel Discussion on Data Collection and  
Appropriate SDGs Monitoring Methodologies in Africa

Speakers :

Moderator: Ms. Ludgarde Coppens, Head of Unit, SDG Data and Information Unit, Science Division, UNEP

Dr. Graham Alabaster, Unit Leader, Waste Management Unit, Urban Basic Services Branch, UN-Habitat

Dr. Kees Balde, Senior Programme Officer, Sustainable Cycles Programme (SCYCLE), Vice Rectorate in Europe, United Nations University

Mr. Andy Whiteman, Director, Wasteaware, Resource and Waste Advisory Group, RWA Group

Mr. Hisashi Yamauchi, Deputy Advisor, JICA Project for Integrated Solid Waste Management System in Federal Capital Territory in Nigeria

Ms. Nouzha Bouchareb, General Director, Hydroprotec Consult, Morocco

## Summary

Ms. Coppens opened the session by welcoming all panelists and audience members and giving a brief introduction to her work in the SDGs Unit at UN Environment. Thereafter, the discussion was launched on the importance of reliable data for informed decision-making in the field of waste management. Indeed, she noted that it is not possible to effectively manage what one cannot measure, and sound data collection systems are therefore essential to the realisation of the objectives of the African Clean Cities Platform, namely to have clean and healthy cities in Africa by 2030. The symmetries with the Sustainable Development Goals were noted, and the other panelists were invited to contribute their thoughts on this important subject.

The first panelist, Mr. Alabaster, began his intervention by noting the sometimes crippling costs of solid waste management, which he had personally witnessed in several regions. Furthermore, he emphasized the health risks of improper waste management, citing the example of the recent Zika virus outbreak in Latin America as having been driven by improper waste management. Finally, Mr. Alabaster noted a peculiar trend in Africa whereby small and mid-sized towns were seeing waste generation rates similar to large cities, however they continued to be considered as rural regions and therefore their waste was not managed to the same standard as the larger cities.

The second panelist, Dr. Baldé, drew attention to the important and rapidly growing issue of e-waste, also known as Waste Electric and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), and its particular ramifications in the African region. Indeed, with a rapidly growing middle class and rapid technological change, WEEE is being consumed and discarded at worrying rates. Dr. Baldé emphasized the parallel opportunity and risk in this, as WEEE contains potentially valuable materials that could be recovered at material gain, as well as potentially hazardous materials that can cause environmental and human health problems.

The third panelist, Mr. Whiteman, spoke about the Wasteaware indicators which he co-wrote, and how these could be used for the collection of pertinent statistics on waste. He emphasized the importance of indicators being adapted to practical circumstances, as there is no use in collecting data that a waste manager does not need. Finally, Mr. Whiteman noted that a primary function of the SDGs was to standardize statistical methods and draw attention to them, and that the ACCP would be a key vehicle for this in the African region.

The fourth panelist, Mr Yamauchi, spoke of his experience working in waste management around the world including in several African countries, and highlighted the importance of not simply collecting data for data's sake: it is essential for data and information collected to inform a national plan of sorts, to ensure positive returns to the people of the country.

The final panelist, Ms. Bouchareb, noted the importance of quality data being collected homogeneously across the countries to maximize comparability and analytical potential, highlighted the broad insufficiency of resources for adequate waste management and for necessary environmental statistics, and drew attention to the importance of training materials and capacity building for the advancement of waste and statistics in low- and middle-income countries such as Morocco.

The audience responded with questions regarding data on e-waste and the Global Monitor that UNU was developing, how to resolve challenges in data collection such as time lags. Another question inquired into cases where good data led directly to good investments.