

Africa called on to support circular economy

Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa says South Africa is committed to its long-term vision of transitioning to an environmentally sustainable, climate change resilient, low-carbon economy and just society.



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The minister on Thursday, 16 November, said through the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, South Africa can help to realise the objectives of the circular economy.

Speaking at the launch of the African Circular Economy Alliance on the side-lines of the Conference of Parties (COP23) in Bonn, Germany, Molewa said the conversation among African countries and other role players in waste management should be mostly about the economics of the circular economy.

The circular economy is an alternative to the traditional linear economy, where people manufacture, use and dispose. In the circular economy, people keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them while in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life.

“It would be silly to forget that resource use is strongly connected to environmental and social issues, especially for us as Africa and for the African Circular Economy Alliance,” Molewa said.

She said there is also a great potential for reducing environmental harm in applying the circularity concept, and many

proponents of circularity see this as an important argument in favour of the concept.

“The alliance will also help us in providing more opportunities for the African continent. As leaders in African governments, we want to support the circular economy.

“We believe that relevant policies are needed to achieve both economic growth and reduced negative environmental impacts. Important results have been achieved in some activity sectors such as in waste management, where large waste recycling rates can be achieved,” Molewa said.

To achieve a circular economy, the minister said all role players of all sectors must be involved, including society. She emphasised a need for an economic return on investment in order to provide suitable motivation to companies and investors.

“It is mainly through our commitment and continued participation by all role players that we can achieve what we want to achieve through the adoption of the circular economy and the establishment of the alliance.”

Molewa was leading the South African delegation to the 23rd United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP23). The conference started its meeting in Bonn on 6 November under the Presidency of Fiji, with the High Level Segment scheduled for 15-17 November 2016.

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