



9TH ANNUAL Circular Economy Conference & Awards 2024
People & Opportunities in East Africa

SIB-K THE KNOWLEDGE CENTER UNDER KEPSA HOSTS THE 9TH CIRCULAR ECONOMY CONFERENCE AND AWARDS.

Nairobi, Kenya - November 14, 2024; The Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya (SIB-K), the knowledge center under the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) hosted its 9th Circular Economy Conference and Awards at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa Learning and Resource Center. The event themed, **'People and Opportunities in East Africa'**, is designed to spark conversations, foster collaboration and inspire actionable change toward a sustainable, inclusive future on the foundation of the **'WE economy'**, which lies in circularity, climate, and biodiversity awareness, the strength of people power, and a commitment to ethical business values. The event brought together over 300 delegates, including expert speakers, 25 exhibitors, and stakeholders, to discuss critical issues surrounding sustainability, biodiversity, and pollution management.

The event's keynote address was delivered by Dr. Jas Bedi, Chairperson, KEPSA. Other notable guests at the event include; Prof. Justus Munyoki - DVC Academics at CUEA, Karin Boomsma - Project Director SIB, Dr Ayub Macharia Director of Environmental Enforcement – NEMA, Shereen Shaheen Head of Corporate and Public Affairs Grand Middle East & Africa - TetraPak among many other guests.

Dr. Jas Bedi started by acknowledging that Sustainability challenges, including the waste crisis, climate change, and biodiversity loss, are accelerating faster than predicted, "In Kenya, 22,000 tons of waste are generated daily, with only 8% recycled. Global greenhouse gas emissions are rising by 1.1% annually, contributing to severe climate impacts such as rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and water scarcity. Furthermore, biodiversity loss is reaching critical levels, with 1 million species at risk of extinction. These challenges are not just environmental but have far-reaching effects on businesses, health, agriculture, education, and national security"

He further reiterated why KEPSA is at the forefront in advocating for the circularity and sustainability agenda, "Businesses and, indeed, the entire private sector have been identified as big consumers and polluters and, simultaneously, as critical catalysts to speed up Kenya's global transition to the sustainability agenda. The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) has positioned itself as a torchbearer in advancing the circularity and sustainability agenda to invigorate businesses to lower their carbon and ecological footprint" said KEPSA Chairperson, Dr. Jas Bedi. "KEPSA's knowledge center, Sustainable Inclusive Business (SIB), which is our host today, has implemented various projects to address the pressing plastic pollution crisis and champion the implementation of transformational regulatory frameworks" he added.

Karin Boomsma the Project Director SIB in her opening remarks, urged those present to reflect on where we are as a society, and why we are working so hard towards a world that respects both people and planet. "We live in a time where our choices have real consequences. Pollution

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is straining our planet, and inequalities are widening. Yet, we know that change is possible if we choose wisely, embracing sustainability in every aspect of our lives. Imagine a world where we produce without waste, where quality and durability define every product, and where natural cycles guide us to a circular way of life,”

The event featured several panel sessions addressing key topics such as; Circular Agriculture & Food Systems, Digital Access and Tech Connectivity: The Role of AI in Shaping Africa’s Workforce, Circular Opportunities in Kenya’s Textile Industry: Pathways to a Sustainable, Circular and Inclusive Future, Packaging in a Circular Economy in Kenya: EPR Guidelines, Innovation, and the Future of Waste Management, Community-Based Solutions in the Circular Economy – what’ happening on the ground and the Financing Opportunities and Skills Development for SMEs in a Circular Economy.

In one of the panel sessions moderated by Karin Boomsma the Project Director SIB, on the *Circular Opportunities in Kenya’s Textile Industry: Pathways to a Sustainable, Circular, and Inclusive Future*, speakers highlighted several ways in which the fashion industry can play a part in embracing sustainability, circularity, and ethical practices. Some of the issues highlighted include; having a wholistic approach when addressing circularity issues, using the curriculum approach in a way that fashion design students can be taught how to remake and repair clothes to give them new life, embracing innovation, localizing sustainability such that garments should be recycled in a locality where the opportunity exists and embracing the three Ps (People, prosperity and planet).

Delight School and Afrowema showcased a Sustainable Fashion Runway delivering an Art Statement highlighting the role of fashion in sustainability. Shanariha Evans, a young Environmentalist and Author of “The Ocean Warrior” spoke about the role of young people in sustainability and what needs to be done to further create awareness. The event also saw the launch of the “**Let’s Be Clear Challenge**” a Public Conscious Consumer Awareness Campaign that invites businesses and their consumers to embrace redesign and innovation around plastic packaging, to make plastic packaging in consumer products 100% reusable and recyclable by 2030.

At the event 8 trailblazers in the circular economy, were recognized and celebrated in the **2024 Inaugural Circular Economy Awards** by incredible partnership between Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya, under the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), and the Rondure Advisory. The award session was divided into the following categories; The Circular Economy Campaign/Community Action of the Year, The Circular Economy’s Most Innovative Project of the Year, The Circular Economy Best EPR Scheme of the Year, The Circular Economy SME of the Year (Food, Agriculture, textiles), The Circular Economy Technology Disruptor of the Year, The Circular Economy Financier of the Year, The Circular Economy Leader of the Year and The Circular Economy Young Champion of the Year Award.

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The award winners include;

The Circular Economy Campaign/Community Action of the Year Award - **Nyayo Estate Residents Association (NERA)**

The Circular Economy's Most Innovative Project of the Year Award - **Together for Better Foundation**

The Circular Economy Best EPR Scheme of the Year Award - **PAKPRO & KEPRO**

The Circular Economy SME of the Year Award (Food, Agriculture, textiles) - **T3**

The Circular Economy Technology Disruptor of the Year Award - **Safaricom**

The Circular Economy Financier of the Year Award - **Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC)**

The Circular Economy Leader of the Year Award - **Dr. Ayub Macharia**

The Circular Economy Young Champion of the Year Award - **Gisore Nyabuti**

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About Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA)

The Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) is the apex body for the private sector in Kenya. KEPSA brings together local and foreign business associations, federations, chambers of commerce, professional bodies that are sectoral umbrella bodies and individual sectoral business membership organizations, corporates, from multinationals to large and medium sized companies, SMEs, and start-ups from all sectors of the economy, across all parts of the country. This gives KEPSA a reach of over 2 million businesses directly and indirectly. KEPSA also serves as the national focal point of the East Africa Business Council (EABC), the umbrella body of businesses in East Africa. It hosts the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Kenya Chapter, a member of the ICC with a reach of over 45 million businesses globally.

<https://kepsa.or.ke/>

About Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya

Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya is a knowledge Center established through a fruitful partnership between the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and MVO Nederland with the support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Kenya. SIB-K spearheads the adoption of sustainable and circular business practices in Kenya through impactful knowledge-sharing and strategic collaborations. <https://sustainableinclusivebusiness.org/>

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About TheRockGroup

TRG is a leading sustainability consultancy offering bespoke circular business strategies and accredited educational programs in South Africa, Brussels, and the Netherlands. <https://therockgroup.biz/>

For Media Inquiries:

For more information on the 9th Circular Economy Conference and Awards, please contact:

Josephine Wawira, KEPSA Corporate Communications Manager - jwawira@kepsa.or.ke

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