Project Title

Enhancing Environmentally Sound Management on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) in Africa

(Discussion Paper with Mario Yarto)

Background

1. The New Patnership for Africa's Development has recognised information communication technology (ICT) as a critical factor in Africa's development. ICT helps to foster productivity and innovation as well as helping to achieve the MDGs. Africa has therefore been undergoing rapid advancement in ICT in recent years to bridge the digital divide. ICT explosion is faciliated by the importation of secondhand or used computers and mobile phones from rich, developed countries especially Europe and North America as less than 20% of the African population can afford new Electrical Electronic equipment (EEE). Used Electrical Electronic equipment (UEEE) is valuable to socio-economic development of Africa as most ICT activities including cybercafés, educational institutions and small businesses depend on imported secondhand EEE .

2. Importation of admixture of used electrical electronic equipment (UEEE), near EoL, and EoL UEEE or e-waste from developed countries especially Europe and North America without testing for functionality both in countries of export and import was prevalent. Most of the e-waste exported from developed countries is exported illegally in contravention to International laws (Basel Convention) or Regional (EU e-waste shipment regulation or Africa's Bamako Convention) .

3. Crude e-waste management occurs in the informal sector of the economy in African countries such as dumping on municipal refuse, burning of cables to recover copper metal or open burning of digital waste to reduce the volumes, involving thousands of people ignorant of the hazard of exposure to toxins in e-waste. The most vulnerable groups especially children and old women are actively involved in e-waste scavenging and crude recycling activities. Internally generated e-waste from consumption of e-products could be significant and often overlooked.

Overview of E-waste Problems in Africa

4. The general e-waste situation in the African region can be summarized as follows :

- Absence of infrastructure for appropriate e-waste management
- Absence of legislation dealing specifically with e-waste,
- Absence of any framework for end-of-life (EoL) product take-back or implementation of extended producer responsibility (EPR).
- Lack of a regional approach since countries have different approaches and capacities to the e-waste issue .

- Inadequate public education and awareness on the problems associated with the uncontrolled importation of near-end-of-life and end-of-life EEE

SBC E-Waste Africa Project

5. The landmark SBC E-waste Africa project which set out to lay ground work for environmentally sound management of e-waste in Africa through baseline information gathering towards taking informed decision for a sustainable solution to the e-waste problem took place between 2010 and 2012. The goal of the project was to enhance environmental governance for e-waste in selected African countries specifically Benin, Ghana, Cote d'voire, Liberia, Nigeria in West Africa and Egypt and Tunisia in North Africa.

6. Specifically the Programme aimed to :

The project has four components with the following objectives

- Improve the level of information available on flows of EEE and e-waste imported into West Africa – Component 1
- Assess the baseline situation in terms of the amounts of EEE imports, EEE in use and e-waste and environmental impacts of the e-waste sector – Component 2
- Study the social-economic aspects of the increasing volumes of used EEE and e-waste – Component 3
- Strengthen national capacities to monitor and control transboundary movements of e-waste and control of illegal traffic in e-waste – Component 4
- Cooperation between African countries and the adoption of a regional approach (e.g. ECOWAS) supporting environmentally sound management of e-waste as well as control of illegal traffic in West and Central Africa appears to be important in pursuing the solution to e-waste in Africa.

Output of the SBC E-waste Africa Project

7. The study has indicated exponential increase in the consumption of e-products and there is increasing demand for more use. Informal sector is efficient in e-waste collection. Refurbishment and scrap metal sector provide many jobs. Environmental hot spots exist in the scrap metal sector. Insight in existing enforcement structures, gaps and opportunities have been identified while 19 African officials were trained in Europe on e-waste management and monitoring issues. 124 law enforcement officers attended the national E-waste workshops in 4 African States (Benin, Egypt, Ghana, and Nigeria) . The development of capacity building tools and the establishment of EU-Africa Enforcement Network are valuable outcomes of the project.

8. The general conclusion from the project in respect of policy and legislation is the need to foster cooperation between African countries and the adoption of a regional approach (e.g. ECOWAS) supporting environmentally sound management of e-waste as well as control of illegal traffic in the region. West and Central Africa appears to be important in pursuing the solution to e-waste in Africa as Nigeria is the hub of e-waste in Africa and West Africa is the destination of most e-waste export to Africa.

Impact of the SBC E-Waste Africa Project

9. The Project has produced direct and indirect impacts which are vitally important towards finding sustainable solutions to the E-waste problem in Nigeria and Africa. The visible impacts in Nigeria include the following :

- Enhanced cooperation, hitherto lacking, among government agencies with mandates and functions relevant to e-waste control especially environmental regulatory agencies, Customs, Nigeria Ports Authority, Police and other security agencies
- Establishment of Multi-stakeholder National Committee on the Control of illegal traffic in e-waste
- Wide spread public awareness of e-waste as a resource as well as a threat to human health and the environment
- Periodic newspaper articles on e-waste educating the public on environmental and human health concerns Regular articles
- Enactment of E-waste Control Regulation in Nigeria, the first in Africa by the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) in 2011 through a participatory process including private sector, academia and the telecom sector
- Registration by NESREA of all importers and exporters of EEE and UEEE in Nigeria
- NESREA publicising periodic seizure of e-waste containers at the ports , arresting ships carrying e-waste, impounding them and sending them back to countries of origin has resulted in reduction of e-waste imports into Nigeria
- NESREA has been organising awareness raising seminars on e-waste issues for Nigerian Customs officers at the ports as well as for the informal sector associations
- Lagos state government organised an international Symposium on e-waste in February 2011 tagged '' Eko E-waste Summit ''
- The OEMs African Alliance comprising HP, Dell, Nokia, Philip and a UK Recycling Company '' Reclaimed Appliances '' was formed in Lagos last year and the alliance has been facilitating activities in partnership with UNEP, governments, etc towards finding regional solutions to e-waste problem including the proposed establishment of e-waste recycling facility in Nigeria.
- The project has resulted in exponential increase in research activities and publications on e-waste in Nigeria in national and international scientific journals
- Increased private sector participation in enterpreneurship in e-waste.

SECOND PHASE

Proposed Areas of Future Work

A. Development on National Strategy and Sub-regional Strategy

National strategy for the 5 west African countries that participated in phase 1. Similarly a sub-regional strategy plan for ESM of e-waste in cooperation with ECOWAs Commission.

B. – CAPACITY BUILDING : Training and Skills Development on ESM of E-waste

B1 Baseline Assessment E-waste Inventory for additional African countries

- **Get current conditions and deficits**

- **National Inventories in collaboration with BCRCs and BCCC based on Train the Trainers with experience from Phase 1 inventory studies**

---- Training Workshops on ESM of e-waste including use of PACE Guidelines and Extended Prodcer Responsibility (EPR) and

--- Training and re-training on ESM of e-waste for Informal Sector

- **Training of environmental regulators, customs officers, ports authority and security**

C- BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- **Pilot Study on sustainable e-waste Collection, Dismantling and Refurbishment in Nigeria towards formalisation of informal sector**
- **Development of framework and system for Extended Producer Responsibility(ESR)**
- **Encouraging private sector establishment of recycling facility through private sector partnership.**

D -- Area : Legal, policy and regulatory frameworks

E - Enforcing international, regional and national law concerning imports and exports of used electronic and electrical equipment and e-waste.

F----Financing Strategies for environmentally sound management of e-waste

G --Environmental, health, and socio-economic aspects of e-waste Management

H – Awareness Raising Activities

I- Development of Strategy for Political Endorsement of Programmes and Actions

J – Research and Development on Urban Mining in Nigeria

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