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WALKING THE TALK: HOW CORPORATES CAN TACKLE PLASTIC POLLUTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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Humanity currently faces a triple planetary crisis: climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution, largely from plastic waste. These wastes are a threat to keeping global temperatures below 1.5°C, as greenhouse gases are emitted throughout the plastic life cycle. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s 2021 "Drowning in Plastics" report, over 400 million metric tons of plastic are produced annually, with half being single-use plastics and less than 10 percent being recycled.

Closer to home, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) estimates that Nairobi generates about 2,400 tons of solid waste daily, 20 percent of which is plastic. Only 45 percent of this waste is recycled, reused, or repurposed to yield economic or ecological benefits. It is against this backdrop that

on 8th April 2024, NEMA announced a ban on the use of plastic bags for the collection of organic waste like leftover food. In addition, all organic waste generated by households, both public and private sector institutions, functions, and events, will have to be segregated and placed in 100 percent biodegradable garbage bags. This means plastic bags will not be allowed in markets and trash collection points from July 8th.

We can all agree that plastic pollution has become an urgent global issue, impacting our environment, ecosystems, and human health. The responsibility to address this crisis does not rest solely on individuals; corporations too have a crucial role to play. As major contributors to plastic waste, businesses must proactively take steps to minimize their environmental footprint and lead the way towards a more sustainable future.

First and foremost, corporations have the power to influence consumer behaviour by providing clear information about the environmental impact of their products and educating customers. Encouraging the use of reusable products, offering incentives for recycling, and promoting sustainable lifestyles can significantly reduce plastic waste generated by consumers.



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Tackling plastic pollution also requires collaboration between corporations, governments, and civil society organizations to develop innovative solutions and share best practices. By working together, corporations can accelerate the transition to a circular economy and drive systemic change in the production, use, and disposal of plastic.

Companies should set clear goals and targets to reduce their plastic waste and regularly report on their progress. Implementing robust monitoring and reporting systems demonstrates a commitment to addressing plastic pollution and builds consumer trust. Engaging stakeholders, including employees, investors, and communities, in sustainability efforts further strengthens corporate accountability and promotes environmental responsibility.

With corporates across the world fast-tracking the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, Minet Kenya has subscribed to the United Nations Global Compact affirming its commitment to adopting ethical and responsible business practices in its day-to-day operations, and organizational culture.

As such, the imperative to corporations is clear: to actively eliminate plastic pollution as part of their climate action commitments. By embracing sustainable practices, promoting responsible consumption, collaborating with stakeholders, and fostering transparency and accountability, businesses can make a significant positive impact.

Corporations must therefore recognize that their actions can influence consumer behavior, drive innovation, and shape the future of our planet. By prioritizing environmental stewardship and integrating sustainability into their core strategies and practices, we can lead the way toward a plastic-free and sustainable future for generations to come.

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