

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITIZEN FORA

Theme: Sustainable Urban Development and Waste Management

Date: 20 November 2024

Venue: Guardian Hotel



1. Opening Remarks

The forum was officially opened by the Municipal Manager, who underscored the importance of sustainable urban development as a foundation for long-term economic growth, environmental protection, and improved public health. In his remarks, he emphasized that the Municipality is committed to transitioning from traditional waste disposal approaches toward a more sustainable and resource-efficient circular economy model. He noted that effective waste management is not only an environmental issue but also a governance and economic opportunity that can generate employment, enhance urban aesthetics, and improve service delivery standards.

2. Technical Presentation

The Public Health Officer, Isaac Ondieki, delivered a detailed presentation on the current status of solid waste management within the Municipality. It was reported that waste generation has increased due to population growth and expanding commercial activities, placing pressure on existing collection and disposal systems. While collection services operate in the central business district and selected residential areas, peri-urban zones continue to experience service gaps.

The officer outlined a proposed waste segregation strategy that aims to promote separation of waste at source into organic, recyclable, and residual categories. The strategy includes phased implementation beginning with pilot wards, provision of color-coded bins in public spaces, and structured engagement with waste handlers.

Progress updates were also provided on ongoing road and drainage upgrades, with emphasis on how improved drainage systems can reduce flooding and prevent accumulation of waste in waterways. The concept of a circular economy was explained as a system that minimizes waste by promoting reuse, recycling, composting, and value recovery, thereby transforming waste from a liability into an economic resource.

3. Issues Raised by Participants

a) Waste Collection

Participants expressed concern over irregular waste collection in peri-urban and informal settlement areas, where households often resort to open dumping or burning due to lack of reliable services. Residents also highlighted the growing problem of illegal dumping along roadsides and riverbanks, which contributes to environmental degradation and water pollution. Traders raised concerns about the insufficient number of waste bins in markets and other high-traffic areas, leading to littering and unsanitary conditions.

b) Recycling Opportunities

Youth representatives and community-based organizations emphasized the untapped potential in recycling enterprises. They requested structured municipal support, including access to collection points, training, and formal recognition. Participants proposed formalizing waste pickers and integrating them into the municipal waste management system to improve efficiency, safety, and income stability.

c) Infrastructure

Several participants noted that plastic waste frequently clogs drainage channels, exacerbating flooding during heavy rains. There were also calls for improved pedestrian infrastructure in the town centre to enhance safety and reduce congestion. Participants argued that better-designed infrastructure would contribute to a cleaner and more organized urban environment.

d) Public Awareness

The forum acknowledged that public awareness on waste separation at the household level remains limited. Many residents lack information on proper sorting techniques, composting methods, and the environmental impacts of poor waste disposal practices. Participants recommended intensified public education campaigns and school-based environmental programs.

4. Municipal Responses

In response to the concerns raised, the Municipality Environment officer, Morris Abere, indicated plans to procure additional waste collection equipment, including trucks and protective gear for waste handlers, to improve service coverage. The Municipal Manager confirmed that a pilot waste segregation program would be rolled out in selected wards before scaling up across the Municipality.

The Municipality also committed to strengthening public education efforts through community barazas, schools, religious institutions, and local media platforms to promote responsible waste management practices. Engagement of youth groups in recycling value chains was prioritized, with plans to facilitate partnerships, capacity-building initiatives, and possible allocation of designated sorting spaces.

Additionally, enforcement measures against illegal dumping will be reinforced through routine inspections and collaboration with enforcement officers, while continued drainage improvements will address blockages caused by solid waste.

5. Resolutions

The forum resolved to introduce ward-level waste champions to promote community ownership of waste management initiatives and serve as focal persons for environmental awareness. It was agreed that partnerships with youth recycling groups would be formalized to enhance efficiency and promote green enterprise development. Participants further resolved that enforcement against illegal dumping should be strengthened through consistent monitoring and penalties where necessary. Finally, the Municipality committed to incorporating clear

circular economy targets within its performance framework to ensure accountability and measurable progress.

The meeting concluded with appreciation to all participants for their constructive engagement and reaffirmed the Municipality's commitment to sustainable urban development and improved waste management systems.

Prepared by _____



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