

Nestlé, Chilanga Cement partner in plastic neutrality initiative

Nestlé East and Southern African Region (Nestlé ESAR), in partnership with Chilanga Cement, has launched a plastic neutrality project that aims to reduce plastic pollution in Zambia and the surrounding region. This programme forms part of Nestlé ESAR's new RE sustainability initiative in the country.



Supplied image: Nestlé and Chilanga Cement signing partnership agreement during the launch event. Pictured (from left to right): Chibuye Mbesuma Ngulube, general counsel & company secretary at Chilanga Cement, Honorable Gary Nkombo, Minister of Local Government and Rural Development and Zubayer Davids, country manager, Nestlé Zambia and Malawi.

The launch of this project in Zambia is in line with this year's Global Recycling Day (18 March) theme, which is 'creative innovation'. Nestlé ESAR and Chilanga Cement are bringing together the private sector and local communities using an innovative solution that addresses plastic waste.

Plastic waste is collected by waste reclaimers from Recyclemania, a waste management enterprise in the local community in Lusaka, who work with Chilanga Cement's sustainability division, Eco Unit. Recyclemania currently collects 120 tonnes of plastic monthly, which is sorted into recyclable PET plastics that gets sold to enterprises that reuse plastic waste. About 10 – 14 tonnes of the remaining non-recyclable plastic are collected, weighed, and co-processed using innovative technology, a process that takes disposal plastic and transforms it into energy recovery, instead of the norm of taking it to dump sites where they end up in landfills.

This disposal is incineration in a closed loop system without residue, ensuring a more environmentally friendly processing that has a direct impact to reduction of landfill waste. The project's target is to collect 160 tonnes of plastic waste generated in the value chain to be processed monthly which essentially means plastic neutrality for Nestlé in the country.



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Speaking at the launch of the project, Zubayer Davids, country business manager for Nestlé in Zambia and Malawi, said, “This is an exciting project for us here in Zambia, and we are pleased to be partnering with a leading local business and the local community in delivering meaningful change in managing waste. We are taking charge, aiming our efforts at reaching plastic neutrality by rethinking how we reduce plastic waste in landfills. Innovation in the ways we dispose of the plastic is at the heart of this project.

“Equally important to note is how this project will help sustain and improve livelihoods in Zambia. We have created and sustained jobs for 37 direct employees and indirectly impacted over 600 community-based collectors within the plastics waste recovery programme, majority who are youth and women in Zambia. This is how we are making the ultimate goal of a waste free future, and reaching net zero by 2050, matter to local communities in the region,” Davids continued.

“With this partnership, will help reduce our carbon footprint by diverting domestic waste from landfills and transforming it into energy resources. We are proud to be part of this project, as it is an example of how companies can work together to create positive change for our environment. This is an important milestone in our journey to achieve net zero waste going to landfills,” said Jianping Chai, chief executive officer of Chilanga Cement.

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