

# Coca-Cola's plan to tackle the plastic waste problem in Africa

In line with its World Without Waste campaign, The Coca-Cola Company is accelerating the collection and recycling of PET plastic bottles across Southern and East Africa, the company announced today in recognition of Global Recycling Day.



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The Company, along with its bottling partners and other industry partners across Southern and East Africa, will invest over \$38 million (approx. R545 million) to stimulate plastic recycling industries and educate people about what, how and where to recycle. This is in line with Coca-Cola's commitment to help address the plastic pollution problem and to accelerate the implementation of its global World Without Waste vision, which aims to collect and recycle the equivalent of 100% of the packaging it sells by 2030.

The campaign will fast track three pillars of the World Without Waste vision: Design; Collect; and Partner. The idea is to design bottles which are easy to recycle and are themselves made partly out of recycled material; create collecting opportunities by stimulating recycling industries; and partnering with others in the value chain to reduce plastic waste.



Coca-Cola Company pledges to cut plastic packaging waste

22 Jan 2018



The campaign will focus on the following:

## Expanding the PETCO model from South Africa to other African markets

In South Africa, PET plastic recycling is primarily driven through the PET Recycling Company (PETCO), which was established in 2004 with the help of industry players and The Coca-Cola Company. As a result of PETCO's efforts, 67% of all PET bottles are collected and recycled in SA. This has created over 65,000 new income opportunities in the recycling

sector.

Last year, with industry partners, Coca-Cola helped to launch the PETCO model in Kenya. Subsequently, 1,800 tonnes of PET bottles were collected and recycled in 2018, compared to 867 tonnes in 2017. The target is to accelerate this to 20,000 tonnes this year, and also to launch the PETCO model in Ethiopia and Uganda.

## Increasing recycled PET content in packaging

Locally, the company has a goal to ensure that 50% of its primary packaging is made from recycled content by 2030. This will help to reduce the use of new (virgin) PET and help to close the loop on creating a green circular economy. Currently, all Coca-Cola PET bottles in South Africa contain up to 25% of recycled PET (rPET) and later this year, the company aims to launch a new bottle under the Bonaqua brand made entirely out of previously used PET – 100% rPET – no new PET resin is used in the making of this bottle.

## Using brands, assets and packaging to educate consumers

One powerful way to reach recycling goals is through education and marketing. The company will start by using some of its brands and its labels to educate consumers about the small little actions they can take to add value to the local recycling industry and increase recycling rates.

For example, later this year, the company will remove colour packaging (green bottles to start with) from some of its brands. This is because clear or blue PET has more end-use applications by the recycling industry. Collectors also receive more money for clear or blue PET plastic than coloured – so if consumers reach for clear or blue bottles, they are helping collectors earn more money in a day.



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## Supporting community collection activities and businesses

The company says it will support more community clean-up activities as well as empower communities through basic business education to increase waste recycling infrastructure and job creation. Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa (CCBSA) Project Hlewkisa already empowers over 200 people and 10 buy-back centres.

“We have shifted our business priorities to ensure value is added to our post-consumer plastic bottles so that they don’t end up as waste. I like to think of it as creating a new currency with plastic – developing our bottles into valuable resources that can drive a green economy,” says Bruno Pietracci, president of Coca-Cola Southern and East Africa.

“We want to be part of the solution, so we have created an end-to-end approach to address waste throughout the entire packaging lifecycle. This Global Recycling Day we look forward to a future where we can work in partnership to create an Africa without waste, at the same time as creating jobs and educating people,” Pietracci added.

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