

SA-EU Circular Economy Seminar held in margins of WEF on Africa 2017

The high-level SA-EU Circular Economy Seminar took place on Wednesday, 3 May, in Durban in the margins of the World Economic Forum on Africa. It brought together a number of high profile delegates and companies worldwide, as well as startups, experts and policymakers.



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South Africa's minister of Environmental Affairs Dr Edna Molewa and Daniel Calleja, director general of the European Union's Directorate-General for Environment, led the day-long seminar on the opportunities created by the circular economy model through testimonials and technical interventions.

The circular economy is an economic model that minimises resource input and waste generation. The value of the resources used in products is retained by returning them into the product cycle at the end of their use. Covering matters as varied as product design, waste management, symbiotic technologies and remanufacturing, the circular economy model creates enormous opportunities for sustainable and inclusive growth as well as new jobs.

Climate resilient economy

Molewa underlined the importance of the circular economy model for transitioning to a low-carbon, climate resilient economy. The minister further emphasised implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals as well as the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Calleja pointed out how the EU is pursuing the transition to a circular economy as a top priority: "We are undertaking independent reforms to enable Europe's economy to transition towards ambitious sustainability objectives while strengthening the competitiveness of our companies and maintaining a healthy environment for our citizens." He also emphasised the need to forge alliances between like-minded partners, such as the European Union and South Africa, not only at government level but also through innovative business and research partnerships.

The seminar follows the signing on 23 September 2016 of the new Terms of Reference for the Forum on Environment, Climate Change, Sustainable Development and Water between the European Commission and both the Department of Environmental Affairs and the Department of Water and Sanitation of the Republic of South Africa. The forum met in Pretoria on 3 May 2017 where the circular economy was also discussed amongst other issues of mutual interest.

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