

Waste recycling an opportunity for Namibia

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by [Paulina Ndalikokule](#)



Some of the waste collected over the weekend along Maria Mwengere Road in Rundu in 2018. Photo: Contributed - NAMPA

THE Environment Investment Fund (EIF) chief executive officer, Benedict Libanda, said Namibia should start looking at waste as a resource that can create opportunities.

The EIF funds activities and projects that protect the fragile Namibian environment, maintain biodiversity and enhance the economic development as well as provides grants for initiatives that support conservation, create jobs and promote the efficient use of natural resources with the clear aim of ensuring their long-term use.

Pupkewitz Megabuild initiated the 'Break Free From Plastic' campaign' last year to change mindsets that a plastic-free environment is feasible for Namibia.

Last week, Pupkerwitz in partnership with Kaap Agri Namibia donated N\$60 000 as part of their social responsibility to the sustainability of Namibia's environment and ecosystem through The Break Free From Plastic Campaign.

Speaking during the handover in Windhoek, Libanda said he looks at waste as a resource that can create job opportunities rather than a problem.

Libanda emphasised that waste can be turned into creating up to 4 000 job opportunities by implementing existing legislation and policies correctly.

"I am convinced that this is possible," Libanda said.

He said the starting point of the process could be implementing targeted programmes that provide an enabling environment for local authorities, private sectors and small and medium enterprises, so they create economic conditions for their businesses. He stated that it is important to support the legal provisions for such practices to be a success.

Cabinet approved 30% of environmental taxes in 2018 to be channelled to the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia," Libanda said. Libanda said EIF would be able to launch a comprehensive environmental education and awareness programme on waste management and further opportunities in Namibia.

He added that EIF would also introduce a ring-fenced funding facility for recycling that will be deployed through high concessional principles.

"It will also promote new production and consumption patterns, which require drastic behavioural changes at the individual as well as collective and institutional levels," he said.

Pupkewitz Megabuild managing director Marcel Lamprecht at the event said the money donated came from the 'Break-Free-from-Plastic' campaign which was launched in December last year, charging plastics N\$0.50 cents for every plastic bag to their customers.

He said the two businesses decided to review all operations to identify areas of innovation as well as improvement aimed at supporting the sustainable use of resources and the protection of the environment.

"The aim is to align with government initiatives to encourage a responsible consumption behaviour. Customers pay N\$0,50 cents for each plastic bag, earmarked towards environmental projects" he said.

He said the project would be handing over quarterly what they collected to the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia for investments into environmental and waste management initiatives.

Also speaking at the event was deputy minister of environment Bernadette Jagger who applauded the EIF for its achievements over the years.

She said in three years EIF had mobilised about N\$ 560 million which is earmarked for climate and biodiversity-related projects.

Jagger said the private sector should participate in financing and creating incentives necessary to tackle environmental problems. On the same note, she encouraged people to work together in protecting the environment.

"We should not stop to educate our communities not to litter. Not littering means we will keep Namibia clean, and if our country is clean, we shall have a healthy nation," she concluded.