

### ***Kigali Declaration and a “Call to Action” for a Circular Future***

Thousands of participants both in-person and online from across the five continents gathered for World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF2022) in Kigali, Rwanda from 6-8 December 2022. This international event was hosted for the first time in the Global South to collaboratively and in partnership with African nations and the world at large seek viable pathways to transition toward an inclusive low-carbon and climate resilient economy while tackling key societal challenges. The WCEF2022 discussion outcomes and key findings resonated that Africa can lead the world towards a new, more resilient economy – the circular economy. With an abundance of natural resources, a young population, strong entrepreneurship, culture and a spirit of collaboration known as “ubuntu”, the African continent can offer inspiration and guidance to the world. The WCEF attracted participants from across the African continent and the world at large, representing governments, representatives from the private sector, NGOs, national and international experts and organizations, local communities, youth, academia, development partners, investors and financial institutions. The WCEF2022 was organized Under the theme *“From Africa to the World”* and explored major themes (both opportunities and threats) relevant to Africa’s development and the rest of the world in which circularity will have to play a big role, including climate protection and nature regeneration, youth, infrastructure development, entrepreneurship empowerment and innovation acceleration, as well as fair trade and localised value chains. The forum identified priority actions to advance and strengthen circular economy tools and action to unlock great opportunities, potentials and possibilities for a thriving green growth and sustainable economic development in Africa and world. The WCEF2022’s delegates committed to act with determination/urgency to advance circular economy principles and take the right actions to address the existential threats to human health and ecosystem wealth, exacerbated with shocks and crises such as climate change, COVID19, wars and conflict at regional and global scale. All combined they lead to biodiversity loss, growing pressure on finite natural resources and global pollution the brunt of which is currently carried mostly by vulnerable countries in the Global South.

We, the participants in the first ever global south held World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF2022:

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- Recognizing that circular economy policies, strategies and plans are critical to lessen demand for natural resources, raw materials and its related need for new products, and consequently reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the production phase thereby keeping both biological and technical nutrients much longer in circulation;
- Being cognizant that circular economy policies, strategies and plans may contribute in various ways to halting environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, improving soil health, increasing flood resilience and yield many more circular system conditions that contributes to both climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Agreeing that a prominent part of global climate action is the transition to renewable energy technologies which will allow us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy production and use; and after understanding that circular economy strategies will/can help relieve the material management pressure on both the input and output ends, hence making the clean energy transition more feasible and sustainable;
- Acknowledging that greater public and private sector derived blended financing and investments in circular economy action (e.g. in form of Public Private Partnerships) is a key enabler for a just transition to green, circular and low carbon economic growth;
- Acknowledging the imperative needs for technology, innovation, creativity to shift to circular economy, fighting climate change, improve agriculture value chain and harnessing Nature Based solutions toward meeting the carbon zero economy at national and Global levels;

In particular we call for enhanced Pan-African collaboration, cooperation and partnership for advancing circular economy actions throughout the continent, involving all governance authorities and organizations, consistent with the pan-African Union's agenda 2063 with its goal for inclusive and sustainable development.

Hence we call for:

- African Countries via their governments and policies to create an enabling environment for circular businesses to thrive in for achieving the societal, economic and environmental benefits of the circular economy for African people and the world at large.

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- The circular economy policies, strategies and plans to be developed to contribute to the climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as halting biodiversity loss through reducing material consumption, waste and pollution, practicing regenerative agriculture and nature-based solutions.
- Strengthening circular economy policies, strategies and plans to play a major role in Africa's urbanization and infrastructure development agenda. This includes a commitment to strengthen the level of local self-reliance of all Africans, promoting local product development, manufacturing and use through shortening and localising value chains.
- Acceleration of the implementation of the (AfCFTA) to leverage the Africa's role in global value chains and the intra-continental trade in light of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). The demand for fair and inclusive trade agreements in future North South global trades that provide real benefits and more prosperity for all Africans.
- Recognizing the global nature of value chains Partnership and collaboration at national, regional and global levels, for policy dialogue, peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing as essential for ensuring just transition to a circular economy is global, regional and national where no country is left behind. This includes the acknowledgement that Africa's key challenge is "inequity of wealth" where progress in the CE agenda must be measured with Key Performance indicators reflecting African realities. (Monitoring the Gini index rather than measuring country GDP and evaluating SMME growth rather than number of jobs created in a formal economy).
- Recognize that new financing models are needed, as the current capital flows to sustainable business and circular ventures are still just a drop in the ocean compared to what is needed for the circular transition.
- Countries and financial institutions to cooperate to shift capital flows away from linear and towards circular economy by promoting sustainable finance strategies and green investments.
- Advancing scalable local technologies and leverage youth innovation to drive the circular economy in Africa and have also global potential. Scaling up existing circular economy

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solutions will bring economic and social benefits, while also reducing the negative impact of our economies on the environment.

**ACEA Call for Commitment to Action with the support of the WCEF2022 participants.**

Recognizing the important role and opportunities circular economy can play in advancing Africa's green growth and low carbon pathway, we invite policy makers, businesses, financial institutions, philanthropies, NGOs, multilaterals, as well as the academia/research community to:

- Work with all stakeholders and representatives of WCEF2022 now and in the future to create, plan, innovate, take action, and share the immense triple-bottom line benefits of a circular economy for Africa and the world at large.
- Invite all African member countries to become members of the Africa Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA) and invite all WCEF2022 stakeholders and representatives to support ACEA to undertake the development, advancement and implementation of circular economy policies, strategies and plans for sustainable development of African economies.
- Encourage the African Circular Economy Alliance to foster collaboration with other partnerships such as the Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE), and other regional networks to strengthen North-South and South-South cooperation.
- Invite all African businesses, individuals, academic institutions and civil society organisations to become members of the African Circular Economy Network (ACEN)
- Invite ACEA, ACEN and all partners in collaboration with World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) to convene Africa Circular Economy Forum (ACEF) as a strong platform to advance consistently Africa Circular Economy agenda.
- Invite all African countries to rift barriers that slowdown the implementation of the AfCFTA and promote circular economy on the continent.
- To communicate widely the WCEF2022 key outcome recommendations and call upon all governments and stakeholders to support implementation with a sense of urgency and work collaboratively and in partnership to monitor implementation.

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- To maintain the great positive spirit of hope and commitment for a circular future for Africa and the world at large and take concrete circularity actions and work in our respective countries and institutions.

In conclusion, we recognize and acknowledge the Government and people of Rwanda for hosting the WCEF, the great support of the World Circular Economy Forum global team and all its partners and everyone who supported to convene the WCEF2022 in global south for the first time as well as all participants who contributed to the rich content and discussions.