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REINFORCING THE FIGHT AGAINST PLASTIC POLLUTION IN SENEGAL

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This document summarises a Master's thesis presented by **Charlotte DE NYS** (ICHEC, 2025), entitled '**How to reinforce application of the 2020 law on plastics to effectively reduce single-use plastic waste in Senegal. A comparative study'.**

The detailed data, analyses, bibliographic references and methodologies relating to the study are given in the original thesis.

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Abstract

This study concerns legislation aimed at reducing plastic waste and its environmental impact in Senegal. More specifically, it seeks to identify adjustments needed to the current law in order to strengthen enforcement and to ensure that in the future there is better management of single-use plastic in Senegal. Despite the initial ambition of the 2020 plastics legislation, numerous obstacles have hindered its effective enforcement on the ground, leading to a situation where banned plastics, and particularly single-use plastics, have continued to be massively manufactured, imported, marketed, used and discarded. This is a significant issue, especially in a country where plastic recycling peaks at 10%. A critical analysis of the 2020 law on plastics sets out to understand the reasons it has only been partially implemented and for its perceived ineffectiveness on the ground. The study then analyses the strategies adopted by three other African countries: Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa. With comparable contexts, all three countries have managed to overcome similar obstacles in their efforts to fight plastic pollution. This analysis identifies some of their good practices that could be adopted by Senegal to strengthen the effectiveness of its policy, whilst also underlining the importance of improvements in implementation suggested by stakeholders on the ground. The study thus highlights practical leads that could be followed at legislative and operational levels in drafting the law, its application and the mechanisms that support it. It concludes with the need for real cultural change in Senegal, which would focus on responsibility, education and cooperation between citizens, businesses and institutions, all sharing a common objective: to create a cleaner, healthier and more equitable future for generations to come.

1. Introduction

Plastic pollution endangers a society's biodiversity, health and economy. As such it is a major environmental challenge that many countries have decided to address in recent decades. Senegal is one such country and in January 2020, it enacted a law relating to the prevention and reduction of the environmental impact of plastic products. Yet despite the legislator's initial ambitions, results on the ground remain mixed, with single-use plastics omnipresent and a waste-management sector that is still poorly structured. This study set out to identify the levers that would be effective in strengthening enforcement of the law so as to effectively reduce the quantity of plastic waste in circulation in Senegal and its resulting pollution. To do so, the study used a comparative approach to analyse the experience of three other African countries, each with a relatively similar socio-economic context and each having achieved a measure of success with their policies to fight plastic pollution: Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa. And finally, recommendations have been drawn up aimed at strengthening the enforcement of Senegalese legislation and its fight against the threat posed by plastic. Based on the results from the comparative study, these recommendations also take into account the particularities of Senegal by integrating proposals suggested by Senegalese stakeholders who are rooted in local realities.

This summary intends to make accessible the key findings and recommendations contained in Charlotte De Nys's thesis (ICHEC, 2025), all of which were made on a sound scientific basis. In order to facilitate legibility, bibliographic references are not exhaustively given in this document and the data and analyses presented below refer to the original thesis.

2. Context: An overview of plastic pollution

a. Globally

Plastic has become an indispensable part of modern life. It is lightweight, strong, resistant, cheap and extremely versatile. Thanks to its technical qualities and considerable adaptability, industries were soon attracted to using it as an ideal way for increasing production. Since the end of the 1950s, plastic has profoundly transformed key sectors and contributed to the democratization of numerous consumer goods.

Plastic rapidly became an indispensable part of our lifestyles but, hand in hand with the exponential growth in its use, came a worrying growth in plastic waste. According to the United Nations, worldwide production of plastic grew from 20 million tons per year in 1950 to 460 million tons in 2019. More than one third (36%) of total production relates to packaging, revealing the extent to which single-use plastic is omnipresent in our consumption habits.

Globally, we can see that plastic waste is still poorly managed. Only 15% of plastic waste is collected to be recycled although, in reality, less than 9% is actually recycled due to it being unsuitable for this at various stages, contamination and technical limitations. A further 46% of plastic waste is sent to landfill, where it remains unused, 22% is not collected and 17% is incinerated.

These figures are particularly worrying because we know that, on average, plastic takes around 400 years to decompose. There are also significant differences in the lifespan of different types of plastic: whilst this varies from one sector to another, 40% of plastic products are discarded in under one month. Short-lived, or single-use plastics therefore represent not only an important part of plastic

production, but also a significant proportion of plastic pollution. Extensively used, discarded after only a few days and very rarely recycled, these products are one of the main contributors to plastic pollution, especially in countries where systems of waste management are poorly developed. It is for this reason that the present thesis focuses principally on single-use plastics, because it is they that pose the major environmental and socio-economic challenges, especially in Africa.

b. Africa

Africa represents 18% of the global population, yet accounts for only 5% of global plastic production and 4% of its consumption. However, whilst the consumption of plastic is relatively low in Africa, its impact on the environment is proportionally greater. This is due to the lack of appropriate infrastructures for plastic waste management (collection, sorting and recycling). Plastic management therefore relies largely on private initiatives, which are often isolated and try to set up small-scale recycling channels.
Average annual per capita consumption of plastic in Africa, which was 16kg in 2015, today remains well below the global average of 45kg and the Western Europe average of 136kg per capita per year. However, consumption is also highly disparate, with large national differences: annual per capita consumption of plastic in Nigeria is 6kg, whilst in South Africa, it is 24.7kg. Consumption of plastic in Senegal, at 11kg per capita, falls below the average for the whole of Africa.
In fact, at continental level, 34 of the 54 countries in Africa have legislated to ban certain single-use plastics. South Africa and Rwanda were among the pioneers in so doing, thus paving the way for a continent-wide initiative to curb plastic pollution.

c. Senegal

In Senegal, all of the plastic consumed is in fact imported, either as finished products or as raw materials that have been transformed, usually into standardized, single-use objects.
Each year, Senegal generates between 200,000 and 250,000 tons of plastic waste, of which only 10 to 15% is recycled. This low level is explained by the lack of infrastructure for recycling and waste treatment, but also by poor levels of environmental education, particularly from the early years. As a result, most plastic waste is either buried in landfill sites or incinerated in open waste dumps, or ends up polluting the environment.
80% of plastic waste in Senegal is household waste and Dakar, the capital city, alone accounts for almost half of national plastic waste. The proliferation of plastic waste in Senegal is due to a range of social and economic factors, as well as to a culture of daily fast food consumption, especially in catering. Each day, five million plastic bags are used in Senegal. A distinctive feature of the country is that many residents drink water from plastic sachets, which are cheaper than plastic bottles and provide affordable access to clean drinking water. Each year, 7,000 tons of water sachets are produced in Senegal, most of which end up being discarded in the environment.

Waste management

Waste collection in the cities is provided by the National Company of Integrated Waste Collection (Société Nationale de Gestion Intégrée des Déchets, SONAGED). Whilst some local authorities also provide waste collection, coverage remains partial, with rural and informal neighbourhoods being poorly served or not at all. This certainly explains why a significant proportion of plastic waste is

discarded in the streets or in the environment.
In Senegal, many of the activities relating to the collection and sorting of plastic waste are carried out by informal waste collectors, who nevertheless play a key – though often unrecognised – role in the waste management chain. These people collect, sort, store and re-sell the plastic they collect to intermediaries or to small, local re-cycling units. Whilst their activities are essential in limiting waste accumulation, their work is often precarious, poorly paid and carried out in difficult conditions, with no clear legal status, work contract or institutional recognition. Their contribution remains invisible in official statistics and yet they represent one of the most important links in the country's chain of recovery and recycling.
As for recycling initiatives, these are very limited. Up until now, most secondary raw materials are not re-used locally due to a lack of suitable infrastructures.

The impact of plastic pollution

Plastic pollution impacts Senegal in several ways. Firstly, environmentally, with increasingly serious flooding that results from clogged canals, a fall in soil fertility and agricultural productivity, premature livestock deaths, toxic smoke emissions, air pollution and so forth. Pollution from plastic contributes to climate warming and jeopardizes local biodiversity. Alongside all of this, it has harmful effects on people's health, because at each stage of its life, plastic exposes local people to numerous toxic substances. This is particularly the case in certain areas where there are poor monitoring systems, informal recycling and people's proximity to areas of waste treatment or incineration. And finally, plastic pollution imposes significant economic costs on Senegal, due to its impact on key sectors such as fishing, tourism, agriculture and livestock rearing, as well of course as increasing public expenditure relating to waste management.

3. A critical analysis of legislation relating to plastic in Senegal

a. The laws relating to plastic waste management in Senegal

The issue of plastic waste was first dealt with in Senegalese legislation in the 1970s and related to regulations concerning household waste. This was strengthened between 2008 and 2015 by a ban on the importation, distribution and sale of non-biodegradable plastics. The country took a more decisive step in the fight against plastic pollution in 2015, with the introduction of a third generation of regulations. This 2015 Plastics Law marked a first step with a ban on low-micron plastic sachets, as well as establishing a minimum price for thicker sachets. It also established technical norms for their manufacture, composition and labelling. The law also imposed new obligations on manufacturers regarding the reduction, recycling and monitoring of waste and included legal penalties for non-compliance.

1. Almost 70% of animal protein consumption in Senegal comes from fish.

However, four years after implementation of this legislation, its provisions do not seem to be bearing fruit, with increases being registered in both plastic imports (+20%) and industrial production (+7%). The Senegalese government reacted to these statistics and decided to revise the legislation so as to increase its efficacy. This led to the law of 8 January, 2020 (which came into force on 20 April, 2020) concerning the prevention and reduction of the environmental impact of plastic products.

In its new formulation, the law bans disposable and single-use plastic products. It also mandates a system of deposits for plastic bottles and sets targets for the integration of recycled plastic into new plastic products. Among its notable advances, the 2020 law also introduced a tax on products manufactured from non-recyclable plastic, as well as the notion of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). The latter requires manufacturers to assume responsibility, individually, or via an approved eco-organisation, for the management of waste related to their products. Consumers, for their part, are required to deposit plastic waste at designated collection points. And lastly, the import and export of plastic waste is also forbidden.

b. Evaluation of the 2020 Plastics Law

Five years after implementation of the 2020 legislation, and despite initial ambitions, the situation on the ground falls short of expectations. Single-use plastics continue to flood the streets, beaches and markets of Senegal.

In fact, whilst plastic goblets have practically disappeared from everyday life in Senegal, the same cannot be said for other single-use products (bags, plates, drinking straws, sachets of water etc.). The reason for this is that, although the state prohibited the use of certain single-use plastics, notably water sachets, no such provision was made for their manufacture, in an effort to preserve employment in the sector. This produced a paradox. Local production of non-compliant sachets and plastic products therefore continues despite controls on their import. Furthermore, whilst the ban on plastic bags at supermarket checkouts is well-respected, the impact of the legislation is much more limited at local markets and in neighbourhood shops. Moreover, despite being banned, the clandestine import of plastic waste has continued, thereby demonstrating the inadequacy of control measures, although the practice is less visible today, thanks to the efforts of civil society organisations that remain committed to this problem. Finally, several decrees and orders relating to the plastics legislation have never seen the light of day, making it impossible to implement some of its provisions. This is notably the case for the EPR mechanism, the system of deposits on plastic bottles and the obligation to incorporate recycled plastic into the manufacture of new products.

2. Law N° 2015-09 of 04 May, 2015, relating to the banning of production, import, possession, distribution and use of low-micron plastic sachets and the proper management of plastic waste.
3. Article 4 states that: 'The following are considered as single-use plastic or disposable plastic products (…): « Cups, goblets and their covers, cutlery and plates, drinking straws and sticks for stirring drinks; sachets designated for, and used for, packaging water and any other drinks »; whilst Article 5 forbids « plastic bags with or without handles, with or without shoulder straps, at checkout desks, whatever their thickness ».

Several factors explain these rather mixed outcomes and they have all influenced the full and effective enforcement of legislation regarding plastic:

— The law's immediate entry into force without a period of moratorium, as well as a lack of clarity in its terms, has created difficulties for businesses because they did not have the time to adapt their manufacturing processes or their investments. At the same time, the costs of alternative products increased and shortages quickly appeared.
— There were few controls due to a lack of human resources and such controls as did exist were not very effective due to inadequate technical tools (agents were unable to identify with the naked eye those plastic products covered by the ban). Customs officials were not trained in enforcement and there was also a problem of corruption.
— There was a lack of affordable and accessible alternatives to plastic: no local industry was capable of producing these and the only available alternatives were imported and costly, making them inaccessible for most shopkeepers.
— There is low public awareness about the environmental and health problems associated with the use of plastic.
— A disconnect from local realities, accentuated by the absence of discussions with relevant stakeholders, particularly those working in the informal sector who represent an essential link in the plastics supply chain.
— Lack of support for initiatives in the circular economy.

4. Case studies

The objective of this research was to identify those levers for action that have been successfully implemented in other African countries facing similar issues and in similar contexts. Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa were chosen as case histories, on the one hand because they instigated ambitious and innovative policies to fight plastic pollution and, on the other hand, because their socio-economic context is similar to that of Senegal. In fact, just like Senegal, these three countries have a strong informal sector, their towns and cities have urbanized rapidly over recent years and their environmental challenges are rather similar.

a. Rwanda

Rwanda stands out for its strict ban on single-use plastics and the efficacy of enforcement of the law, which is notable for its progressive, but rigorous approach. Kigali, the capital city, is today considered to be the cleanest city on the African continent. Rwanda therefore represents an interesting country to study because of its strong political will, a centralized strategy, effective enforcement and strong citizen involvement resulting from awareness-raising campaigns. The country also promotes local alternatives to the banned plastics, which shows that a transition is possible despite resources being more limited.

I. A robust and evolving legislative framework

Rwanda first banned plastic sachets in 2008, before widening the ban to single-use plastics in general in 2019. This approach enabled the authorities to evaluate the results of the 2008 legislation, to identify its limitations and shortcomings and to prepare more comprehensive reform.

The 2019 law in Rwanda foresaw periods of transition designed to enable shopkeepers to liquidate their stocks (over 3 months) and manufacturers to redirect their production (over a 2-year period). This progressive approach came about as a result of the difficulties encountered in 2008, when the extremely rapid implementation of the legislation had prevented people from making the required adaptations and led to business closures, but without enabling alternatives to plastic bags to be developed. It should be mentioned that Rwandan legislation foresees some exceptions in the banning of plastics, notably where there are no appropriate alternatives and when their use is judged to be indispensable. These exceptions are governed by requests for special authorizations, which permit the limited and controlled use of plastic in sectors deemed to be essential or, for instance, in rural areas.

In addition to these restrictions, the 2019 law imposes an environmental tax on all imported goods packaged in plastic or single-use articles and it also introduced the notion of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

Already, in 2008, Rwanda had laid the basis for a rigorous framework of enforcement: shopkeepers, importers and even simple citizens, were all now exposed to very heavy sanctions in the event of non-compliance with the ban on single-use plastic. In 2019, this enforcement approach was further strengthened through stricter penalties and a wider scope of enforcement.

Finally, from 2008, strict and deterrent measures of control were rigorously applied across the country. This was a key element to achieving success in the reduction of single-use plastics. Entry points such as land border crossings and airports in particular were targeted and various institutions were involved in monitoring compliance with the environmental legislation. It should be mentioned that a more authoritarian political context bolsters the efficacy of the Rwandan model, based on a rigorous and systematic application of sanctions.

II. Economic development strategy

The Rwandan government has pursued a proactive environmental policy by considering this ban not only as a response to local problems (soil pollution, blocked drainage systems, dangers to livestock, etc.), but also as a strategy to build a positive international image for the country. In this respect, it meets Rwanda's economic ambitions, since the country relies on a development model based primarily on tourism. The ban on plastic bags has thus become an instrument of economic policy serving a strategic positioning. In other words, ecology is considered as a driver of attractiveness and influence at regional and global levels. These aspects facilitate adherence to the legislation, making the law against plastic part of a national project to which citizens themselves can contribute. The ban on plastic bags has thus become a symbol of collective identity and national pride.

III. Intensive awareness building in the community and active support for alternatives

Rwanda has well understood the importance of raising awareness and informing its people in order to guarantee the efficacy of the law on plastics. The first information campaigns were launched four years prior to the official banning of plastic bags in 2008. Media campaigns are broadcast in Kinyarwanda, the local language, making them understood by everyone. A variety of other activities take place alongside the media campaigns, including collective marches, posters and public debates. This awareness-building is particularly effective during the Umuganda, the monthly community service days, in which all Rwandans participate. This multi-channel communication strategy has amplified the effect of awareness building.

A final part of the Rwandan strategy is that of providing support for stakeholders affected by the ban on plastics, by ensuring not only that alternatives to plastic are available, but that they are affordable too. This is done by imposing price caps as well as fiscal and financial advantages designed to support those who manufacture alternatives. Thanks to this approach, recycled paper bags have now replaced plastic bags in Rwanda.

b. South Africa

South Africa is both one of the largest consumers of plastic on the continent and also one of the best countries at recycling, with a rate that is higher than the global average. As early as 2003, South Africa was one of the first African countries to introduce a tax on plastic bags, thereby offering valuable hindsight in analysing this type of policy. Instead of a policy of prohibition, South Africa prioritised recycling and recovery, using a circular economy model. A system of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) was implemented together with the active involvement of the private sector in managing plastic waste. Thanks to a strategy that is gradual and also focuses on economic instruments, South Africa today has a recycling rate of roughly 43% for locally-produced plastics, one of the highest in Africa.

I. The tax on plastic bags

South Africa prepared the ground for its fight against plastic waste in 2003, with the introduction of a tax on single-use plastic bags that was passed on directly to the consumer. The tax related to bags made from plastic of more than 24 microns whilst those made from finer plastic were simply prohibited. The measure was supported by large-scale information campaigns from the very beginning. The effect was immediate: use of plastic bags fell by 80-90% in the first few months following its introduction. Over time, however, the law became less effective due to cost inflation of alternative sustainable alternatives and the absence of new campaigns to re-enforce awareness of the problem of plastic waste.

II. Extended Producer Responsibility

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is an environmental policy tool designed to make plastic products manufacturers responsible, both financially and operationally, for the entire life-cycle of their products, including at the end of their life. It therefore covers the collection, sorting, recycling and re-use of plastic waste. Unlike the traditional model, which places the burden of waste management primarily on public authorities, this policy encourages more sustainable practices throughout the production chain.

Taking inspiration from several voluntary initiatives already in operation in the country, South Africa made EPR mandatory for plastic products in November 2021. In practice, manufacturers come together in PROs (Producer Responsibility Organizations). These are collaborative structures that organize waste management (collection, sorting, recycling) on behalf of producers, in compliance with regulatory requirements. The PROs are financed through eco-contributions, which are calculated in function of the type, quantity and weight of products marketed. PROs can also operate on other fronts, such as conducting awareness campaigns, encouraging eco-design and improving the traceability of material flows. Such a comprehensive mechanism facilitates transition towards a circular economy.

The South African government played an active role in the implementation of EPR and contributed to its success through tax incentives, as well as through informing and supporting economic stakeholders and providing technical support for structuring recycling chains.

The introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility in 2021 profoundly influenced the dynamics of plastic waste management in South Africa and its effects were soon visible on the ground. According to industry statistics, not only did the volumes of plastics put on the market fall (from 1,904,924 tons in 2021 to 1,570,181 tons in 2023), but the volumes recycled also increased (344,527 tons in 2021 and 431,800 tons in 2023), meaning that the level of recycling rose from 21.7% to 27.5%. The implementation of ERP thus led to systematic change in the plastics value chain in South Africa, reducing pressure on landfill and encouraging an approach of circular waste management.

III. A comprehensive strategy that reconciles economic development and ecological transition

South Africa also introduced tax incentives to encourage the use of recycled materials in manufacturing. This policy is of twofold interest to the country: firstly, by reducing dependence on virgin polymers and secondly by strengthening the country's industrial autonomy. Focusing on the practices of recycling and the circular economy appears to be a strategic lever for a nation that is particularly dependent on imports regarding plastic raw materials.

In the same vein, the South African strategy relies on the integration of informal waste collectors, who are key stakeholders in waste management. Minimum price mechanisms for the waste they collect and sell secure their incomes, whilst digital tools such as BanQu professionalise their work.

This approach improves traceability for businesses and structures the recycling sector, to make it more efficient and support the circular economy. Alongside this, a new labelling standard introduced in 2023 that obliges producers to clearly indicate the components of their packaging, further strengthens these circular objectives because it facilitates waste sorting and recycling operations.

In an environment where citizens are extremely aware of issues relating to plastic and its impact, South Africa has been able to mobilize an arsenal of regulatory tools to serve a policy of economic development and ecological transition.

c. Kenya

Kenya stands out for having implemented one of strictest bans of single-use plastic bags and with the results of this becoming visible very quickly. The country favoured an integrated approach that combines dissuasive sanctions with extensive public awareness campaigns and support for those in business to encourage sustainable alternatives being adopted. This model has proven successful despite a context in which there is insufficient waste management infrastructure.

I. A strict legislative framework and greater control

After four unsuccessful attempts, due to fierce opposition from powerful economic stakeholders, in 2017 Kenya adopted a law that banned the use, manufacture and import of all plastic bags destined for commercial or domestic use. The only exceptions are primary industrial packaging where no alternative exists. The 2017 legislation is seen as being particularly strict because of the harsh accompanying sanctions that foresee up to four years' prison or a 40,000 dollar fine for offenders. It should be noted that the entry into force of this law at a time when no immediate and easily available alternatives were available put a number of businesses in difficulty. Nevertheless, the ban, which is considered to be one of the harshest in the world, has delivered success, with a significant reduction in plastic waste, estimated by the Kenyan government to be 80%.

Whilst use of plastic bags is falling, consumption of other single-use plastic continues to rise. It was for this reason that Kenya adopted a new law in 2020, based on a ban of single-use plastics in certain protected areas. This sectorial ban enables effective enforcement thanks to controls facilitated at entry points into these defined zones.

Kenya added a final piece to its legislative framework in 2024. This new legislation aims to increase awareness of the problems of plastic waste among both citizens and businesses, notably through the introduction of practices such as sorting waste at source.

4. BanQu is a digital platform based on blockchain technology, which registers the transactions of informal workers (including the types and volumes of materials collected, prices, dates etc.). It enables a digital economic identity to be created, together with a history of activities, which facilitates access to financing, institutional recognition and supply chain traceability.

Beginning with the 2017 law, Kenyan legislation has been accompanied by a strict system of controls. NEMA, the environmental authority, appointed no fewer than 86 inspectors tasked with ensuring respect for the legislation on plastics. Secondly, agents from the national police force were mobilized across the country and partnerships were established with local police forces, particularly at strategic frontier posts, in an effort to strengthen enforcement of the law. The combination of strict controls and heavy fines that were actually levied contributed to dissuading producers, sellers and importers of plastic and to reducing their presence in Kenya.

II. Plastics credits

Rather like carbon credits, plastics credits enable businesses to compensate their plastic footprint by financing projects to reduce plastic waste. Each plastic credit represents one ton of plastic collected or recycled, which does not therefore end up in the environment. This system works on a voluntary basis and is based on an international standard defined by the NGO Verra. Two types of credits exist: one relating to collection and the other to recycling. Companies wishing to work with the system can therefore buy their credits from plastic collection or recycling projects, all of which have been certified by Verra and verified by independent auditors.

In this way, Kenyan projects involving the clean-up of plastic waste or the circular economy can benefit from additional financing to enable them to develop their activities. Two pioneering initiatives illustrate the potential of plastic credits. The ClimeCo–Enaleia project has mobilised fishing communities to remove between 1,000 and 3,000 tons of plastic waste from marine environments, which has resulted not only in generating plastic credits, but also protecting their ecosystems and generating income for over 350 local fishermen. TakaTaka Solutions on the other hand, has developed a local chain to collect, sort and recycle products made from soft plastic, which are more difficult to process. Soft plastic accounts for 50% of plastic waste in Kenya, but only 1% of such waste is recycled. The system of plastic credits is not mandatory, but it is a promising initiative in the fight against plastic waste, in supporting local economies and in the mobilization of national and international financing.

III. Extended Producer Responsibility

Prior to the implementation of a mandatory system of Extended Producer Responsibility, the Kenyan government had initially authorized a programme of EPR volunteers, which enabled businesses to experiment with ORPs and associated processes. This phase of apprenticeship provided a smoother transition to the more mandatory framework introduced in 2022. Other distinctive aspects of the Kenyan system include the fact that the ORPs are not-for-profit organizations, so as to preclude commercial interests from overriding environmental objectives. The coexistence of several ORPs is also encouraged in an effort to guarantee healthy competition, based on quality of service and performance rather than profit.

IV. Awareness building at multiple levels

The success of Kenya's plastics policy relies on strong citizen and international mobilization. In 2017, a widely-publicized campaign highlighted the health and environmental impacts of plastic

pollution, which prompted the government to act. Debates that had been taking place since 2005, when the country began looking at legislation on the subject, also raised awareness among both citizens and businesses. Kenyan environmental legislation is part of a broader strategy, namely that of improving the country's image internationally, so as to improve the country's attractiveness, particularly vis-à-vis that of another African country, Rwanda, which is already recognized for its advances in environmental issues.

It is therefore the convergence of renewed political ambition, an economic policy concerned with its image, strong mobilization and strict but progressive implementation of legislation that have enabled Kenya to successfully enforce a ban on plastic bags.

5. Recommendations for Senegal

This section sets out a selection of good practices that have been implemented in the three African countries studied and which have been selected as potentially able to support a plastics policy in Senegal. Each of the recommendations has been adapted to meet the specific context of Senegal. They also integrate a series of proposals specifically formulated by Senegalese stakeholders who are firmly rooted in the local reality of the country.

In terms of raising awareness, an approach based on regular collective mobilization, inspired by the Rwandan Umuganda, seems the most promising. Thus, creating a monthly citizens' Day of the Environment, which is both voluntary and festive, would enable local mobilization around environmental education and the establishment of a sustainable collective culture of cleanliness. In order to reach the widest possible audience, multiple communication channels should be employed, including social networks, street theatre, community radios broadcast in the local languages etc. and which involve influencers and artists. Together In parallel to all of this, creating awareness about the environment should begin as young as possible, at school, through lessons and workshops devoted to the issue of plastic waste.

Furthermore, in order to effectively combat plastic pollution, it is essential that Senegal is able to develop practical, local and affordable alternatives to single-use plastics. To this end, support mechanisms could be implemented such as tax exemptions on manufacturing equipment, the availability of subsidized spaces in industrial zones and the capping of retail prices.

On the question of water sachets, which are particular to Senegal, a combined approach is recommended, which would combine:

— raising awareness of the hygienic, economic and economic advantages of re-usable water bottles;
— imposing a retail price cap on these;
— the deployment of low-cost public drinking fountains;
— the deployment of mobile refill points for 19 litre, re-usable water bottles with a deposit on them, using re-trained former vendors of plastic water sachets as drivers.

This strategy would improve the accessibility of water whilst also progressively phasing out plastic sachets. A transition period would perhaps be necessary for these actors in order to redirect their activities towards jobs that were less impactful on the environment. Collecting waste generated as part of EPR could provide a temporary solution prior to a full ban on these products of significant mass consumption.

Insofar as controls and sanctions are concerned, what happened in Rwanda and Kenya illustrates that a successful ban on single-use plastics relies on diversification of the institutions responsible for enforcing the law and on close collaboration between the organisations concerned. Establishing a sufficient number of strict controls across the country and targeting points of entry such as border crossings have also been key deterrents. Moreover, it might also be in Senegal's interests to take inspiration from Kenya's 2020 law which bans single-use plastics in protected areas, which would imply instigating controls at the entrances to national parks and nature reserves.

Lastly, the South African experience has shown that an EPR mechanism can be a really effective instrument in the fight against plastic pollution. For such a system to become really operational in Senegal, several conditions need to be met. Firstly, a Senegalese EPR should be introduced progressively and using incentives. Such a system would be based initially on voluntary EPR, with information sessions for the economic actors and tax incentives to support the creation of chains for collection and recycling. Secondly, it would be essential to impose a registration system of all manufacturers with a competent authority. This registration could be coupled with a system of six-monthly declarations of waste, so as to establish a culture of transparency and traceability, thereby promoting accountability among economic stakeholders. And lastly, the success of EPR in Senegal will also depend on the integration of informal waste collectors, who are key actors in plastic waste collection. The introduction of minimum prices for plastic waste collected by them, legal recognition of their status, experimentation with digital tools such as BanQu and the creation of a professionalized training fund financed by the EPR would enable them to secure their income, improve their working conditions, structure the sector and improve the efficacy of the circular economy

Senegal might also take inspiration from the system of plastic credits implemented by Kenya, which finances plastic waste clean-up whilst also generating supplementary income for local workers. Integrated with the EPR, this type of initiative would strengthen the environmental impact whilst also supporting those working in the informal economy.

In conclusion, in order to render plastics legislation fully operational, it is essential to adopt decrees for enforcement without delay and to introduce transition periods designed to strengthen adherence to the new provisions.

6. Conclusions and perspectives

Plastic pollution is one of this century's major challenges. Despite the Senegalese government's commitment and the initial ambition of its legislation, the 2020 legislation on plastics has not had the desired effects on the ground. Single-use plastics remain omnipresent in the public space and particularly in the informal sector. The comparative analysis conducted for this research shows that other African countries have been able to overcome similar obstacles. Rwanda has focused on ongoing awareness campaigns and rigorous law enforcement. Kenya, for its part, has combined widescale controls, heavy penalties and emerging alternatives. In South Africa, the producer responsibility policy has enabled the development of a real circular economy in relation to plastics. Such experience enables effective and action levers to be identified and transposed for use within the Senegalese context, namely the rapid adoption of enforcement decrees, the strengthening of control mechanisms, support for local alternatives, the integration of informal waste collectors and raising awareness among the public. Their implementation requires strong political commitment, sustainable funding and greater consultation with stakeholders.

In this regard, the Senegalese Minister for the Environment and Ecological Transition launched national consultations in December 2025 with the aim of developing solutions through an inclusive approach. Aware of the limitations of the 2020 legislation, at the end of these consultations, the Minister called for an in-depth review of the legislation so as to adapt it to the economic, social and environmental realties of the country today. The present document is intended to contribute to these discussions, by providing practical suggestions for strengthening the Senegalese legislation and contributing to making Senegal an exemplary actor in the field of ecological transition.

5. Africa Carbon and Commodities is beginning to implement a system of plastic credits, even though, at national level, the impact is still somewhat mixed.