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Plastic recycling in Douala, Cameroon

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The economic growth, changing consumption and production patterns have resulted into rapid increase in generation and use of plastics in the Cameroon. The Cameroon annual consumption of plastic materials has increased tremendously between 1990 to 2013. This implies that more resources are needed to meet the increased demand of plastic, and more plastic waste is being generated. In Douala alone, plastic consumption has increased much more than the other region due to rapid urbanization and economic development. Due to the increase in generation, waste plastics are becoming a major stream in solid waste. After food waste and paper waste, plastic waste is the third major constituent at municipal and industrial waste in the Cameroon. Even the rural communities in Cameroon with low economic growth have started producing more plastic waste due to increased use of plastic packaging, plastic shopping bags, PET bottles and other goods/appliances using plastic as the major component. This increase has turned into a major challenge for The Cameroon Ministry of Environment, and Nature Protection is responsible for solid waste management and sanitation. Due to lack of integrated solid waste management, most of the plastic waste is neither collected properly nor disposed of in appropriate manner to avoid its negative impacts on environment and public health and waste plastics are causing littering and choking of sewerage system. Due to extremely long periods required for natural decomposition, waste plastic is often the most visible component in waste dumps and open landfills in the Cameroon. Hence plastic waste recycling can provide an opportunity to collect and dispose of plastic waste in the most environmental friendly way and it can be converted into a useful energy. In most of the situations, plastic waste recycling could also be economically viable, as it generates resources, which are in high demand. Plastic waste recycling also has a great potential for resource conservation and GHG emissions reduction, such as producing fuel from plastic waste. This resource conservation goal is very important for The Cameroon govern, where rapid industrialization and economic development is putting a lot of pressure on natural resources.

Biography

Maria Atongajua is a final-year MSc candidate in Natural Resource, and Environmental Management at the University of Buea, Cameroon. Prior to arriving at University of Buea, she was involved in research at International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Cameroon Station, (IITA), with a focus on Agricultural Waste Management and Recycling. She is a recipient of the Presidential Award/Scholarship during 2010, 2011 and 2014, and earned her Bachelor's degree in Geography from the University of Buea, Cameroon, in 2011. Her research involves integrated waste management in agriculture, REDD+/Climate Change, Land Use/Remote Sensing and Environmental Management.

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