

# [BASEL WASTE NEWS]

[BCCC-AFRICA]

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## **BAN: US federal government allowing e-waste recycling at lowest standards**

A new [report](#) by federal agencies at the US Postal Service headquarters in Washington, DC, claims that the federal government is “leading by example” in how it handles its own electronic waste (e-waste). But the Basel Action Network (BAN), a

operations in China, West Africa, and South Asia.

The US government’s current policies and programs allow federal e-waste to be managed by recycling companies that may have some of their

**["We should preserve every scrap of biodiversity as priceless while we learn to use it and come to understand what it means to humanity"- E.O. WILSON]**

global toxic trade watchdog organization, strongly challenges this claim, noting that the government continues to allow use of the weakest available recycling standard, which in turn allows so-called recyclers to export the hazardous e-waste to developing countries. Such exported e-waste often winds up being processed by desperate laborers in dangerous back-yard

facilities certified only to “R2” – the weaker of two available e-waste recycling standards. Only the e-Stewards® Standard, created by recycling industry leaders and environmental organizations, requires its recyclers to fully adhere to the decisions agreed to by the 181 countries that are parties to the Basel Convention. These decisions forbid the export of hazardous wastes, including

## *Mercury levels in surface ocean have tripled*

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New research suggests human activities since the Industrial Revolution have tripled the amount of mercury in shallow parts of the ocean, posing a threat to human health worldwide.

The study presents an impressive set of empirical data collection across oceans, says David Streets, an environmental policy scientist at Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont, Illinois, who was not involved in the research. “This is the first time, to my knowledge, that a group [has] tried to give an overview of all the major ocean areas,” he says. “It’s a valuable data set.”

But monitoring mercury levels in the oceans has proven a challenge for researchers because the metal is present only in tiny concentrations in seawater, and gathering samples from different oceans requires time and resources.

*Culled from: [Science Mag.org](http://news.sciencemag.org/environment/2014/08/mercury-levels-surface-ocean-have-tripled)*

*See [more: http://news.sciencemag.org/environment/2014/08/mercury-levels-surface-ocean-have-tripled](http://news.sciencemag.org/environment/2014/08/mercury-levels-surface-ocean-have-tripled)*

e-waste, to developing countries.

### **Continuing mass exportation of hazardous e-waste**

“The continuing mass exportation of hazardous US e-waste to countries such as India, China, and Ghana, where it is managed in disastrous conditions, remains a shameful stain on US trade and environmental policy,” said Jim Puckett, Executive Director of BAN. “The Obama Administration could do much to prevent this environmental and human rights injustice through its federal programs and policies, but by not requiring the e-Stewards Standard, or strict adherence to the Basel Convention’s decisions, they utterly fail to do so.”

Culled from **Basel Action Network**

See more: <http://recyclingportal.eu/Archive/6048>

### **IWMSA calls on South Africans to dispose of e-waste correctly**

The e-Waste Association of South Africa (eWASA) has been collecting, sorting and disposing of e-waste in an environmentally friendly way since 2008. The Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) urges South Africans to support eWASA and dispose of e-waste correctly.

“E-waste falls under the larger waste spectrum and the general public are urged to dispose of electronic waste correctly. E-waste can be defined as anything that runs on electricity and includes goods that require batteries to operate,” says Dr Suzan Oelofse, president of IWMSA.

“E-waste should not be discarded with municipal waste as it contains heavy metals such as mercury, which can contaminate water resources. It should be collected and separated as the discarded equipment contains valuable, rare and hazardous materials”, says Keith Anderson, chairperson of eWASA.

“The valuable and rare resources can be recovered and enter the product life cycle again as raw materials, while the hazardous components need to be treated and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.”

South Africa has a well-developed, formal e-waste management system that collects, refurbishes, dismantles and recycles discarded products. Most urban centres have various

collection points for e-waste, and eWASA member companies and their partners, including retailers such as Makro and Pick n Pay, are working to expand the current footprint of 635 collection sites.

“Recycled e-waste plastics are used to manufacture fence droppers, roof tiles and guttering. Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) glass can be used for road surfacing and Waste2Art projects create crafts, jewellery and arts using dismantled e-waste,” says Anderson.

The Waste Classification and Management Regulations under the Waste Act call for a total ban of the disposal of e-waste in landfill sites by 2021, with a ban on mercury bearing lamps by 2016. “E-waste workers can be exposed to many harmful effects of carcinogens and other hazardous substances found in e-waste,” explains Anderson.

*Culled from Publicity Update See more: <http://www.publicityupdate.co.za/?idstory=70282>.*

## *Johannesburg to produce its own electricity from waste*

Johannesburg has launched its first methane gas-to-power project which will be operational by 2015.

At the top of Johannesburg's largest landfill site, Robinson Deep, not only is there a 360° view of the CBD and southern suburbs, but it is also the top of the city's first methane gas-to-power project.

To be operational in early 2015, four 1MW generators, costing about R10 million each, will be installed at the base of the landfill mountain, initially to pump 4MW of energy to national energy supplier Eskom.

Robinson Deep, in the city's southern suburb of Turffontein, is Joburg's largest landfill site. Trucks roar up the one-kilometre track to the top from 7.30am to 2am, disgorging their loads on to the growing mountain of garbage. Men in gloves sort out plastic, metal and anything else of value. Once they have separated the recyclables, their loads are weighed and taken to a recycling depot at the base of the landfill.

Joburg has five landfill sites – besides Robinson Deep, there's Marie Louise in Dobsonville, one each in

Linbro Park and Ennerdale, and Goud Koppies in Eldorado Park. Robinson Deep was opened in the 1930s and takes up about 124 acres of land. The methane gas it produces is 21 times more harmful than carbon dioxide. In May 2011, as a result of a flood of complaints about the smell from Robinson Deep, the city started flaring the gas by means of a network of 68 wells sent down into the landfill, to tap the gas. But towards the end of October, an independent power producer, Ener-G Systems Joburg, will start installing the four generators.

*Source: The South African.com*

*See more:*  
<http://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/johannesburg-to-produce-its-own-electricity-from-waste.htm>

## *Chad cancels Chinese exploration permits for environmental violations*

The government of Chad has withdrawn five oil exploration permits issued to a Chinese company and will press charges in a row over a \$1.2bn fine for environmental violations.

Chad's oil minister, Djerassem Le Bemadjiel, said this at a news conference on Saturday. He said the move was to avoid further environmental degradation in the country.

The China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) was forced to suspend operations in Chad in May after refusing to pay a 1.2 million dollar fine for what the oil ministry termed "unacceptable practices" which led to "noxious spills" around drilling sites.

Also speaking at the press conference, Secretary-General of the government of Chad, Abdoulaye Sabre said "...amicable negotiations are no longer possible. All efforts have been in vain." "Next week a government delegation will go to Paris to file a complaint with the commercial court for refusal to pay a fine."

He said a complaint has already been made in the capital Ndjamena for environmental degradation and endangering the lives of others. Chad, which began exploiting its oil deposits in 2003, has a long history of rancorous relations with Chinese companies operating in the country.

*Culled from: Reporters365*

*See more:*  
<http://reporters365.com/top-news/chad-cancels-chinese-exploration-permits-for-environmental-violations/world.com/articles>

## **ABOUT BCCC-AFRICA**

The Basel Convention Coordinating Center for Training and Technology Transfer for the African Region (BCCC-Africa) was established on 20th Of September 1994 by the defunct FEPA (which has been absorbed into the Federal Ministry of Environment in June 1999) following Basel Convention COP2 approval. The Center has a dual mandate to serve as a National Institution as well as a Regional Institution. As a National Institution, it serves as Federal Ministry of Environment linkage center with the University of Ibadan. This linkage center has a mandate for Cleaner Production Technology and Hazardous Waste Management. The Center also, as a Regional Institution, has the mandate to serve as the Basel Convention Coordinating Center for the African region, to assist African Countries implement the 1989 Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their disposal. The Centre also coordinates the Basel Convention Regional Centre (BCRC) for Arabic-speaking African countries based in Egypt, French-speaking African countries based in Senegal and English-speaking African countries based in South-Africa respectively. This is the only Linkage Center of the Ministry that is a United Nations designated capacity building center with mandate to service Wastes and Chemicals Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), these are the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

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