

Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Effective Chemical and Waste Management in Developing Countries: the Liberian Case Study

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Chemical and Waste Management can degraded the environment and also cause or effect human health if not effectively managed. On the other hand it can used to protect human health and the environment. Developing countries have use for chemicals as in industrial development and generate waste which implies the need for effective chemical and waste management. There are lots of challenges which will face developing countries as well as availability of opportunities in implementing effective chemical and waste management. However, we will mention this with regards to the Liberian case.

In general, in developing countries and specific to Liberia, especially after fourteen (14) years of civil crisis or other countries which have encountered a war situation, there is the challenge of lack of or inadequate information and or data, leading to inadequate knowledge. Without knowledge and information or data, public awareness will be lacking or inadequate, further causing people not to be well informed, hence, they cannot participate in decision-making and decision-making will not be proper. Similarly, laws and regulations will not be respected or adhered to by the public as they will not care for the consequences of their actions and or activities.

The challenge of institutional framework, implying there is the lack or inadequate legal institutions and policies. Similarly, there is lack of or inadequate strategies. Again, there is no coordination among the relevant institutions.

Linked to the above mentioned challenges is another one being lack of or inadequate training and or trained personnel. The training and or trained personnel will have to develop and or establish data, information and others for dissemination to provide knowledge, plus working in the institutional framework.

Climaxing is the usual challenge of lack of or inadequate financial resources. Financial resources are needed to implement effective chemical and waste management.

The list of challenges is not exhaustive but just limited due to time and space for now.

Though Liberia is just coming from fourteen (14) years of civil war, activities such as:

- 1) Preparation of instructional materials and information on chemical and waste management is in process of being developed. There is also gathering of baseline information on chemical and waste management.
- 2) There is presently review of strength of enforcing mechanism about use of chemical

and waste management. Also review of existing laws for harmonization in chemical and waste management.

- 3) Ensuring of the participation of people in designing chemical and waste management related laws and enforcement guidelines through stakeholders meetings and consultations being held regularly.

There are opportunities in developing countries for implementation of effective chemical and waste management

There is the willingness of the International Community noticing that Developing Countries lack or have inadequate capacity in implementing Chemical and Waste Management. Hence, willing to build this needed capacity. This falls in line with the Millennium development goals.

Similarly, there is the involvement of civil society, including private sector; and their willingness to work, collaborate or cooperate with Government in the implementation of Chemical and waste Management in Developing Countries.

There are activities such as the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Project for Liberia being sponsored by UNITAR.

There is the National Steering Committee which involves all stakeholders comprising of government, civil society and the private sector.

There is the completion of the Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) Policy Council and Board of Director in Liberia presently to formulate, guide and implement environmental policies, enforcement of environmental laws, etc.

In conclusion, Liberia though coming from civil crisis is slowly trying to implement a participatory process in chemical and waste management. However, due to financial hindrances and lack of capacity is determined with the help of the international community to push forward in order not to be left behind.