

Open response to UMA's article

EDITOR: This is an open response to the Uganda Manufacturers Association's (UMA) article titled, *Plastics are central to Uganda's growth; do not tax them out of the economy*.

Greenwatch appreciates your concern regarding the proposed excise duty on plastic raw materials in your article published in the *New Vision* newspaper dated Thursday, May 28, 2026 on page 11. Your article rightly noted in paragraph one that poor waste management and not plastics per se, is the root cause of environmental pollution. However, several key concerns in your article require scrutiny if Uganda is to design a policy that balances industrial growth with genuine environmental protection.

The Voluntary Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems are not a substitute for regulation. Uganda's voluntary schemes suffer from parasitism. Manufacturers not party to such systems bear no responsibility and there are no legally-binding collection or recycling targets. Your article boasts a future ambition of 75% recycling in eight years, yet no independent audit verifies current rates. Proper management requires mandatory EPR with enforceable penalties, public reporting and integration of informal waste collectors, none of which you clearly addressed.

Problematic non-recyclable plastics are also ignored. Not all plastics are equal. Their differences in as far as this response is concerned are in chemical structure and recyclability. Multilayer laminates and thin carrier bags are unrecyclable in Uganda's current infrastructure. The claims have always been that they clog sorting machines and consequently find their way into drainage channels or open burning.

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Read the full version at www.newvision.co.ug

