

## **Kenya disposes of disposable bags**

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**14 July, 2005**

## THE ARTICLE

### Kenya disposes of disposable bags

**BNE:** In an effort to clean up its act, Kenya's Environment Ministry has launched a campaign to encourage the use of biodegradable shopping bags at stores around Kenya. The *East African Standard* reported that Environment and Natural Resources minister Kalonzo Musyoka inaugurated the eco-friendly plastic bags, which are designed to reduce litter and curb pollution. A ministry spokesperson said: "This is an apt measure to make our landscape less of an eyesore. Everywhere you go, you see discarded shopping bags." Implementation of the new initiative is part of Kenya's involvement in the world environment protection programme.

Introduction of the bags did not come without controversy in Kenya. Manufacturers were adamant that doing away with the traditional plastic bags would cost 20,000 jobs. Environmentalists argued the social cost of litter, pollution and the threat of disease far outweighed employment concerns. The new biodegradable bags will help alleviate Kenya's high incidence of malaria. Non-degradable bags collect rainwater and are ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The new bags decompose and thus prevent conditions for waterborne diseases arising. A nationwide ban on plastic shopping bags is next on the agenda to rid Kenya of the scourge of disposable plastic.

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. PLASTIC BAGS:** In pairs / groups, talk about your thoughts on plastic bags from stores. Do you think about the cost to the environment? Do you take your own bag? Is there a policy in your country to reduce the use of plastic shopping bags?

**2. QUICK ROLE PLAY:** Students A are the bosses of companies that manufacture plastic shopping bags. You don't care about the environment. You only care about profits. Students B are environmentalists. You see plastic bags as a huge environmental threat. In pairs, role play a discussion between manufacturers and environmentalists.

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Kenya / supermarkets / shopping bags / eco-friendly / landscapes / eyesores / litter / pollution / malaria / mosquitoes / plastic*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. PLASTIC:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "plastic". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. PLASTIC OPINIONS:** In pairs / groups, discuss how far you agree with these opinions on plastic:

- a. Plastic should be banned worldwide.
- b. People should be educated to know how to correctly dispose of plastic.
- c. Plastic shopping bags are incredibly useful.
- d. Supermarkets shouldn't provide any bags. Lazy customers should bring their own.
- e. Litter bugs should be heavily fined for throwing bags onto the street.
- f. The biggest problem is that there aren't enough public rubbish bins / trash cans.
- g. Environmentalists worry too much.
- h. If people had to pay 10 cents for a plastic bag, the litter problem would disappear.
- i. I hate it when the handle of the bag breaks or there's a hole at the bottom.
- j. Plastic bags are a huge threat to the ozone layer.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. The Kenyan government has banned plastic shopping bags.               | T / F |
| b. Kenya's government is encouraging the use of "green" shopping bags.   | T / F |
| c. Plastic bags cause irritation to the eyes that can lead to blindness. | T / F |
| d. Kenya's shopping bag policy is part of a global clean-up campaign.    | T / F |
| e. Shopping bag manufacturers were happy with the new campaign.          | T / F |
| f. Environmentalists were very concerned about job losses.               | T / F |
| g. Plastic shopping bags encourage malaria to spread.                    | T / F |
| h. A nationwide ban on plastic toys is next on Kenya's agenda.           | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| a. inaugurated     | plan        |
| b. curb            | rate        |
| c. apt             | mess        |
| d. eyesore         | plague      |
| e. initiative      | greatly     |
| f. adamant         | instituted  |
| g. doing away with | insistent   |
| h. far             | appropriate |
| i. incidence       | scrapping   |
| j. scourge         | restrict    |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. In an effort to clean    | without controversy   |
| b. curb                     | measure               |
| c. an apt                   | the new initiative    |
| d. less of an               | of malaria            |
| e. Implementation of        | pollution             |
| f. did not come             | up its act            |
| g. the social               | of disposable plastic |
| h. Kenya's high incidence   | eyesore               |
| i. waterborne               | cost of litter        |
| j. rid Kenya of the scourge | diseases              |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

### Kenya disposes of disposable bags

**BNE:** In an \_\_\_\_\_ to clean up its act, Kenya's Environment Ministry has launched a campaign to \_\_\_\_\_ the use of biodegradable shopping bags at stores around Kenya. The *East African Standard* reported that Environment and Natural Resources minister Kalonzo Musyoka \_\_\_\_\_ the eco-friendly plastic bags, which are designed to reduce litter and \_\_\_\_\_ pollution. A ministry spokesperson said: "This is an \_\_\_\_\_ measure to make our landscape less of an \_\_\_\_\_. Everywhere you go, you see \_\_\_\_\_ shopping bags." Implementation of the new \_\_\_\_\_ is part of Kenya's involvement in the world environment protection programme.

Introduction of the bags did not come without \_\_\_\_\_ in Kenya. Manufacturers were \_\_\_\_\_ that doing away with the traditional plastic bags would \_\_\_\_\_ 20,000 jobs. Environmentalists argued the \_\_\_\_\_ cost of litter, pollution and the threat of disease far \_\_\_\_\_ employment concerns. The new biodegradable bags will help alleviate Kenya's high incidence of malaria. Non-degradable bags collect rainwater and are ideal \_\_\_\_\_ grounds for mosquitoes. The new bags decompose and thus prevent conditions for \_\_\_\_\_ diseases arising. A nationwide ban on plastic shopping bags is next on the agenda to \_\_\_\_\_ Kenya of the scourge of disposable plastic.

*eyesore*  
*curb*  
*initiative*  
*encourage*  
*apt*  
*effort*  
*discarded*  
*inaugurated*  
*cost*  
*waterborne*  
*outweighed*  
*adamant*  
*rid*  
*social*  
*breeding*  
*controversy*

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'plastic' and 'bag'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT PLASTIC BAG SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about plastic bags and the environment.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- act
- encourage
- inaugurated
- curb
- eyesore
- initiative
- controversy
- cost
- outweighed
- incidence
- waterborne
- scourge

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What is your opinion on plastic shopping bags?
- d. Have you ever thrown a plastic bag on the street?
- e. Would you say anything to someone you saw throw litter on the street?
- f. Are you a litter bug?
- g. What do you do to recycle?
- h. What would you think if supermarkets charged a fee for shopping bags?
- i. What is the best way to deal with the problem of plastic?
- j. Which is more important, jobs or the environment?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think of the initiative in Kenya?
- d. How does your country need to clean up its environmental act?
- e. Are there any parts of your town that are an eyesore?
- f. Do you think you should take your own shopping bag when you go to the supermarket?
- g. In what other ways do you use your plastic bags?
- h. Do you agree with a nationwide ban on plastic shopping bags?
- i. What other environmental scourges should be on the agenda to be done away with?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

### GOODBYE PLASTIC

In pairs / groups, find alternatives to the use of plastic in the products below. What are the alternatives? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives?

PRODUCT	ALTERNATIVES	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Shopping bags			
Food wrapping			
Pens			
Children's toys			
Bottles			
Your choice _____			

After you have finished, change partners and discuss your alternatives and their advantages or disadvantages compared with plastic. Decide whether or not an alternative material should replace the plastic.

Return to your original partner(s) and compare the decisions you made.

## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Kenya disposes of disposable bags

**BNE:** In an effort to clean \_\_ \_\_ \_\_\_\_, Kenya's Environment Ministry has launched a campaign to encourage \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ biodegradable shopping bags at stores around Kenya. The *East African Standard* reported that Environment and Natural Resources minister Kalonzo Musyoka \_\_\_\_\_ the eco-friendly plastic bags, which are designed to reduce litter and \_\_\_\_\_ pollution. A ministry spokesperson said: "This is \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ measure to make our landscape less of \_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. Everywhere you go, you see discarded shopping bags." Implementation of the new \_\_\_\_\_ is part of Kenya's involvement in the world environment protection programme.

Introduction of the bags did not come without \_\_\_\_\_ in Kenya. Manufacturers were adamant that \_\_\_\_\_ the traditional plastic bags would cost 20,000 jobs. Environmentalists argued the social cost of \_\_\_\_\_, pollution and the threat of disease \_\_\_\_\_ employment concerns. The new biodegradable bags will help \_\_\_\_\_ Kenya's high incidence of malaria. Non-degradable bags collect rainwater and are ideal breeding \_\_\_\_\_ for mosquitoes. The new bags decompose and thus prevent conditions for waterborne diseases \_\_\_\_\_. A nationwide ban on plastic shopping bags is next on the agenda to rid Kenya of \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ disposable plastic.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on plastic. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. RECYCLE:** Make a poster that shows the best way to recycle the things you throw away every day. Show and explain your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you put similar things on your posters?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to the head of Kenya's Environment Ministry to tell him / her what you think of the decision to promote biodegradable shopping bags. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. F      g. T      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. inaugurated	instituted
b. curb	restrict
c. apt	appropriate
d. eyesore	mess
e. initiative	plan
f. adamant	insistent
g. doing away with	scrapping
h. far	greatly
i. incidence	rate
j. scourge	plague

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. In an effort to clean	up its act
b. curb	pollution
c. an apt	measure
d. less of an	eyesore
e. Implementation of	the new initiative
f. did not come	without controversy
g. the social	cost of litter
h. Kenya's high incidence	of malaria
i. waterborne	diseases
j. rid Kenya of the scourge	of disposable plastic

### GAP FILL:

#### Kenya disposes of disposable bags

**BNE:** In an **effort** to clean up its act, Kenya's Environment Ministry has launched a campaign to **encourage** the use of biodegradable shopping bags at stores around Kenya. The *East African Standard* reported that Environment and Natural Resources minister Kalonzo Musyoka **inaugurated** the eco-friendly plastic bags, which are designed to reduce litter and **curb** pollution. A ministry spokesperson said: "This is an **apt** measure to make our landscape less of an **eyesore**. Everywhere you go, you see **discarded** shopping bags." Implementation of the new **initiative** is part of Kenya's involvement in the world environment protection programme.

Introduction of the bags did not come without **controversy** in Kenya. Manufacturers were **adamant** that doing away with the traditional plastic bags would **cost** 20,000 jobs. Environmentalists argued the **social** cost of litter, pollution and the threat of disease far **outweighed** employment concerns. The new biodegradable bags will help alleviate Kenya's high incidence of malaria. Non-degradable bags collect rainwater and are ideal **breeding** grounds for mosquitoes. The new bags decompose and thus prevent conditions for **waterborne** diseases arising. A nationwide ban on plastic shopping bags is next on the agenda to **rid** Kenya of the scourge of disposable plastic.