

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



RWANDA ENVIRONMENT  
MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (REMA)

**“Rwanda, the land of thousand hills, welcomes you and wishes you a pleasant stay and safe journey back home. The country with a vision to maintain the beauty of our environment has totally banned the use of plastic bags.**

**The current strong political will coupled with community participation in environmental management, has helped to make this a reality. Rwanda is on the move, the journey still continues on the path to sustainable development”.**

## Rwanda encourages environmental friendly bags



Traditionally Rwandans packed in materials locally known as “*Inkangara, ibitebo, ibyibo*” and other different types of packaging materials. Such materials were cheap, durable and environmentally friendly. In 1990’s plastic bags were introduced in the country as substitutes for the original packaging materials. Many people adopted plastic bags since they were considered to be fashionable and exotic.

However, plastic bags used in Rwanda are non-biodegradable and very difficult to dispose of. They are toxic and dangerous to the environment. Littered all over the place, the materials trash the beautiful scenery and aesthetic values which make the environment unpleasant. The situation leads to water pol-

lution and land degradation hence affecting human health.

### Total ban of plastic bags

Rwanda having committed herself to promote a clean and healthy environment for all people has totally banned the use of plastic bags. Banning manufacturing and importation of these hazardous packaging materials in the country is a necessary move to halt environmental degradation in order to maintain the beauty of the environment.



*His Excellency the President of the Republic of Rwanda Paul Kagame, with the population, in a campaign against plastic bags during the community work locally known as Umuganda*

## Reasons behind the total ban of plastic bags

Plastic bags used in Rwanda are non-biodegradable materials, difficult to decompose and in most cases act as breeding ground for vectors which spread diseases.

Plastic bags prevent water penetration into the soil which leads to low agricultural production. They are also deadly to our livestock when ingested, when burnt, plastic bags release toxic fumes that may cause respiratory diseases.

Drainage channels are clogged with plastic bags and this could cause flooding and other associated adverse environmental consequences especially during the rain season.

The materials are so light that they are easily blown away by the wind from one place to another which leads to littering of the environment.



*Rwandan women benefit from weaving environmental friendly packaging materials*

## Message to our travelers

Passengers ought to carry and package in environmentally friendly materials such as baskets, bags made of clothes, palm leaves and banana fibres. These are recommended to be used as alternatives for plastic bags in the country.

Be a responsible passenger by joining us in this campaign against plastic bags.

**Adopt environmental friendly packaging materials to avoid littering of our environment. Environment has no boundaries, we can make a difference. The future is in our hands.**

OUR ENVIRONMENT, OUR FUTURE