

The Rwandan government has announced that it is going to impose a tax on imported plastic products, in order to avoid the pollution caused by them.

This will be done in order to implement the law banning the manufacture and import of plastic products, which supports the government's plan to cut back on plastic bags and other environmental hazards in 2008.

Juliet Kabera Director General of the National Environment Agency (REMA), underlined on Friday October 15th that Rwanda cannot stop importing plastic products however by reducing them, it is taxing on the environment as it is more harmful to agriculture.

"Plastic parts that go into the soil are harmful to agriculture because the plant cannot be white on top of plastic and does not rot," he said.

He added that the proceeds from the sale of these products will be used to deal with plastic waste, which will be covered by the Rwf 690 million donated by the Private Sector Forum PSF.

Rwanda banned the use of single plastics, under Law No. 17/2019; adopted on 10 August 2019 and came into force upon publishing on 23 September 2019. It repeals Law No. 57/2008.

"The manufacturing, importation or sale of plastic carry bags and single-use plastic items is prohibited." Art. 3. A person who intends to manufacture, import, export, or use prohibited items for an "exceptional reason" may apply for authorization in writing. Art. 4.

Plastic is defined as "a material derived from petrochemicals that are lightweight, soft and non-compostable." Art. 2(6).

Single-use plastic item is defined as "a disposable plastic item designed to be used once before it is discarded or recycled. Single-use plastic items include plastic carry bags, oxo-degradable plastics and other items whose part is made from plastic material." Art. 2(1).